

Safeguarding Statements and Policies of Solihull URC

**Policies relating to the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults
and others at risk of abuse**

Version 1 - Month 2017

Introduction

These Safeguarding Policies of Solihull United Reformed Church are designed to help Solihull URC and all of the organisations that operate under the covering of Solihull URC to provide a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults and others at risk of abuse, so that they may thrive and develop physically, intellectually and spiritually. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages, and it is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional or other abuse of all people, not just children, young people and vulnerable adults. We also seek to protect our workers (paid or unpaid) from unfounded accusations or from behaving in ways which may be well-intentioned but inadvisable.

Following the lead of the URC nationally these policies seek to go **“beyond the minimum safeguarding requirements of statute and to foster best practice as an expression of God’s loving concern for all”** (Good Practice 4, page 12)

A number of Policies and Statements have been adopted by Solihull URC that together form the policy of the church. This document is also used as part of the training for volunteers working with Solihull URC. Many of the policies contained here are explicit for working with under 18’s, but most of the principles and many of the details are equally applicable to working with vulnerable adults.

Each volunteer or paid worker in these areas will be issued with a copy of the policy statement on protecting children and vulnerable adults, and a notice drawing attention to the policy is displayed in the Church Sanctuary and Hall. They will also have access to this document of Safeguarding Policies, and training will be regularly offered in the contents of the document and the implications of the various policies it contains.

These policies use the Home Office code of practice for working with young people Working Together to Safeguard Children (Appendix 4 page 59) as a cornerstone for the work with children. This document has been based on the United Reformed Church’s “Good Practice” guide (4th Edition), and the policies recommended by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board; those in use at River Ministries (Norfolk) and extensively the “Protect the Vulnerable” Policy Document of Riverside Church, Sleaford, Lincolnshire written by Rev Steve Faber.

These Safeguarding Policies are not a threat to existing work. Rather, they are a way of making even more effective the care and love which inspires both the work and the workers.

Finally, it must also be understood that all of us are vulnerable at different stages in our life. All those associated with Solihull URC and working on our behalf at all times are expected to treat every other person with due courtesy, care and respect. Some of the policies in this document apply to many other situations (for example, the policy on confidentiality is relevant to all pastoral care situations.)

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January 2017

(From this point onwards, the term “children” is used in its legal sense – any person under the age of 18. Teenagers, “Youth” and “young people” are therefore included in this term.)

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POLICY STATEMENT

The protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

As one of its major activities, Solihull United Reformed Church (“the Church”) seeks to serve regularly adults who are vulnerable by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness. We also seek to serve the needs of young people, promoting holistic development.

In doing so, the Church takes seriously the welfare of all vulnerable adults, young people and children who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.

The Church aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring, Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

The Church recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and unpaid, to prevent all forms of abuse including the neglect, physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of vulnerable adults and children and to report any abuse discovered, disclosed, or suspected.

The Church recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent, and to be alert to, such abuse.

The Church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with vulnerable adults and children, and to providing appropriate supervision.

The Church is committed to maintaining good links with the statutory child care and community or social care authorities.

Any groups or organisations who work with vulnerable adults or children and who wish to hire/use the Church premises must have their own Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy in place and/or undertake to follow the Home Office code of practice *Safe from Harm* for children

POLICY DOCUMENT 1: The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults – Health, Safety and Good Working Practice

Introduction

The purpose of this policy document (Policy Document 1: The protection of Children and vulnerable Adults – Health, Safety and Good Working Practice) is to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults attending any activity organised and/or run by Solihull United Reformed Church are kept safe. It will outline what is expected of everyone, including parents/carers, employed staff, volunteers, children and vulnerable adults. Expectations in order to maintain a safe physical environment are included.

Maintaining a safe environment

It is impossible, and probably undesirable, to create a completely safe environment in which services and activities for children, vulnerable adults and others are completely free from risk of harm. However, in common with all organisations, **Solihull United Reformed Church has a duty to minimise unacceptable risks as so far as is possible to provide a safe environment for work, learning, and play.**

Leaders of any activity have the first responsibility to ensure that risks in their immediate environment are minimised, and rooms and other areas and all equipment that will be used for the activity must be checked for safety on each occasion that they are to be used. Most of the measures that will need to be taken are simple and common-sense.

General Safety

- **Ensure all rooms used for activities with children are fit for purpose, including toilet areas;**
- **Check all equipment regularly, especially electrical and activity equipment;**
- **Keep a register of those attending, including workers;**
- **Ensure that others, not part of the event, who enter the building, are monitored;**
- **Ensure that younger children cannot leave the building on their own;**
- **Adopt a ‘signing in and out’ procedure for a youth group;**
- **Make sure children know who their leaders are and their names;**
- **Ensure that children leave with someone who has parental responsibility or parental permission to collect them, unless children have parental permission to make their own way home (see Arrangements for leaving and collecting Children page 11)**
- **Make sure parents and carers are clear about when the responsibility for the care of their children returns to them following Junior Church or other children’s activities;**
- **Ensure that a telephone is available or the location of one is known;**
- **Ensure, where required, there will be a named First Aider with suitable training; in other instances the location of the First Aid box will be known and ensure that an accident report form is completed for all accidents and when First Aid applied;**
- **Ensure Fire Policy will be familiar to all leaders and helpers (see Fire Safety Duties page 9) and ensure all leaders are familiar with Fire Instructions which are displayed throughout the church buildings;**
- **All groups will follow appropriate food and drink safety and hygiene requirements. This may require formal training and registration depending on the activity.**

Fire Safety Duties

- We will check that the building complies with fire safety regulations and guidelines; Including in our checks equipment, exits, regulations and signs, making sure they are clearly visible to all;
- We will appoint designated people to be fire marshals and ensure they are properly trained;
- We will make sure that all users of the building are aware of emergency procedures;
- We will organise regular safety drills and testing of fire safety equipment;
- We will keep accurate records of all checks, drills and tests.

First Aid

- We will provide an adequately an appropriately equipped first aid box which is clearly located and recognisable;
- Where appropriate we will ensure that there is at least one trained first-aider on the premises. We will ensure a list of trained first aiders is readily accessible and that all leaders understand where the responsibility for administering first aid lies.

Guidance for leaders – First Aid

Respond – call an ambulance if necessary. First aid should be administered in view of others, if at all possible, although the child's welfare should be the paramount consideration. When giving first aid, the worker should explain to the recipient what they are doing and encourage the child or young person to do what they can for themselves while giving appropriate help where necessary.

Record – make sure that accidents are recorded in the accident book which is kept with the First Aid Box. The forms should then be filed in the appropriate folder in the office.

Report – notify parents/carers of any accidents and of any first aid given.

Restock – notify the person responsible for keeping the first aid kit fully stocked if any of its contents have been used.

Review – notify the person responsible for health and safety in the church of any accidents so that they can consider if any action needs to be taken to improve health and safety.

Food and drink safety and hygiene

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) provides up to date information on all matters relating to food supplied outside domestic and family settings: www.food.gov.uk. The FSA provides advice and information on legal requirements regarding food prepared and served as part of church activities, the need for a Basic food Hygiene Certificate and advice on good practice in food preparation, handling, storage and disposal of waste. This is especially relevant for residential and camp contexts.

If food and drink are provided during an activity, follow practical considerations as advised by the FSA. There may be a requirement for certain activities, where food is supplied, to register with the local authority.

Travel and transport

Transport arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of parents if they make informal arrangements amongst themselves. However, if someone organises travel arrangements for children on behalf of the church, then they assume responsibility for following good practice as outlined below. **A risk assessment should be carried out for travel arrangements as well as the rest of the event. Details of travel arrangements should be included with the consent form for the activity/event and it should be clearly understood by all concerned at which point responsibility for the child is passed from parents/carers to the church and at which point responsibility is returned to parents/carers.**

Guidance for Leaders - Other important matters for travel and transport include:

Sensible drivers – the church should check the credentials of prospective drivers including viewing their full drivers licence. Minibus drivers must have passed a MIDAS test (unless they have D1 on their licence).

Safe vehicles – the church should satisfy itself that vehicles to be used are roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts for each passenger. Drivers have a legal responsibility to ensure that seat belts are used by children in their car and that appropriate car seats or booster cushions are used by younger children.

Suitable insurance cover – drivers should have appropriate insurance cover for any driving they do on behalf of the church. Drivers should check with their insurance company to make sure that they are covered.

Supervision – there should be adequate supervision in cars (ideally one driver and one additional worker), minibuses and coaches (one driver, additional workers in line with minimum adult/child ratios for offsite activities). Where possible, workers should avoid giving lifts to children alone. There may be occasions where a child or young person requires transport in an emergency situation and/or where not giving a lift could place a child at risk. Such circumstances should always be recorded and reported to the person in charge of the church's work with children as well as parents/carers. If a worker has to be alone in a car with a child or young person, they should ensure that another leader is aware of the situation and the reasons for it. Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a vehicle with a child and children should travel in the back seat of the car. (See Arrangements for leaving and collecting children page 11 for further information)

Stops – for longer journeys, stops should be carefully planned, including allowing time for head counts. Contingency plans should be made in case of breakdown or other emergency.

Standard Permit (formerly known as a Section 19 permit) – if people are contributing to the cost of transport by minibus, then the transport provider requires a permit from your local authority. For more details, contact the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) on permits@vosa.gov.uk or call 0300 123 9000.

Risk Assessments

All activities will have a Risk Assessment document formulated and available to volunteers or paid members of staff. Solihull United Reformed Church has a Risk Assessment document for the buildings but individual groups should formulate their own for their specified undertaking.

Guidance for Leaders - How to Carry Out a Risk Assessment

The five steps suggested by the Health and Safety Executive require risk assessments to:

- identify hazards;
- decide who might be harmed and how;
- evaluate risk and decide what precautions need to be put in place. The level of risk arises from the likelihood that someone will be harmed by a hazard together with the severity of harm which would be caused. The levels of risk may vary for different groups of people;
- record findings;
- be reviewed and updated;

Insurance

Solihull United Reformed Church has adequate Public Liability Insurance which is reviewed annually. Different types of cover may be needed for different activities and advice should be sought from the insurance provider. **No activities may be undertaken which might invalidate the insurance cover.**

There are some particular safety considerations that apply to work with children, and the following sections deal with those and set out policy for them.

Adult/child ratios

It is the policy of Solihull United Reformed Church that a minimum of two adults will be present for any activity involving children, and ideally a minimum of three; if a second adult is not present, the activity must not commence. Wherever possible, activities should be planned to allow at least one male and at least one female adult, but it is understood that this will not always be possible.

Depending on the size of the group, more adults may be required, and children's workers will conform to the requirements of the Children Act 1989. In line with this the following are recommended by the 'Safe Network' a government initiated network, and slightly adjusted to age groups more commonly used in churches as follows:

- For indoor activities with children aged 0-2: 1 adult to three children;
- For indoor activities with children aged 2-3: 1 adult to four children;
- For indoor activities with children aged 4-7: 1 adult to six children;
- For indoor activities with children aged 8-11: 1 adult to eight children;
- For indoor activities with children aged 12-18: 1 adult to ten children;

always subject to the requirement to have at least two adults present.

For outdoor activities and activities that inherently contain a greater degree of risk, the number of adults should be increased so that a greater degree of supervision and vigilance can be maintained.

Always subject to the minimum-two-adults-present rule, the recommended ratio for outdoor activities is:

- For children aged 0-2: 1 adult to three children
- For children aged 2-3: 1 adult to four children
- For children aged 3-7: 1 adult to six children
- For children aged 8-13: 2 adults to fifteen children and one further adult for every extra eight children (or part thereof).
- For children aged 13-18: 2 adults to twenty children and one further adult for every extra ten children (or part thereof).

For journeys abroad, a minimum of three adults must be present for up to ten children, with at least one male and at least one female adult for mixed groups. An additional adult is required for each addition of up to ten children (thus a group of 30 children would need 5 adults).

Arrangements for leaving and collecting children

Parental consent for children taking part in Solihull United Reformed Church activities is assumed when the parent/carer accompany's their children and remain with them, or in the building, throughout the activity.

For any activity where the children are left solely in the care of Solihull United Reformed Church staff, a signed parental consent form MUST be obtained.

For regular children's work activities, this consent may be obtained and renewed annually, but consent will only be valid for the named activity (i.e. consent to attend Friday night Youth Club activities does not imply consent for the child to attend Thursday 'Music Group' or Monday 'Drama Workshop' even if they are run by the same church member.)

Parental consent should additionally and specifically be obtained for any activities that take place away from the normal venue for the activity. For instance, if consent has been given for a child to attend a Story Room group, which normally meets on the church premises, additional consent will be required to take the children, for example, to visit the park or to go ten-pin bowling. It would be acceptable, however, to obtain a "blanket" consent for all of a single group's activities, including events around or away from the town during the normal

session time provided that is made clear on the form that consent for these additional activities is being sought.

Additional and specific consent should be sought for activities outside the normal meeting day or times. Also, additional, specific, consent will be required for all residential activities where the children will not be accompanied and under the supervision of their own parents/carers, regardless of any existing consent obtained for the children to take part in other activities run by that particular group or organisation within the church.

The consent form must include the name, date of birth and address of the child, emergency contact details for the parents/carers, and any allergies, health or other special needs that the child has. The name of the person/people eligible to take the child home should be sought. A sample form is included at the end of this policy (see page 46)

When children are collected at the end of the activity, the leaders are responsible for ensuring that the child only leaves with an adult named on the consent form, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance. It is acceptable, however, for young people over the age of 13 to sign in and out of the event, unless parental objection has been made. The time that the teenager arrives and leaves must be noted, and where young people arrive more than ten minutes late or leave more than 10 minutes early, the parents/guardians should be informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

On occasion it will be helpful for workers to collect or drop off children at the child's home. This should only be done with the prior knowledge and consent of the parent/carer. On all such occasions, if the law requires a child to use a booster seat, this must be provided by the parent/carer and the worker is responsible for seeing that the child uses it. In any case, all children travelling in cars, minibuses or coaches must use an appropriate restraint (seat belt or approved child seat) at all times that the vehicle is moving. The driver should have suitable insurance for using their car in this role.

Wherever possible, the child(ren) should be in the back seat of the vehicle, and the worker should not be alone in a vehicle with one child.

Use of photographs

Photographs taken during Solihull United Reformed Church activities may be used for display on the church premises, used in the press, or published on our own website. Any such photograph may be used only if, under the Data Protection Act 1998, permission has been received from the subject of those pictures or in the case of children under 16, a parent/carer of those children. **Written Permission will be sought for photographs taken on behalf of Solihull United Reformed Church.** The consent form can be found on page 50.

Photographs used publicly will not:

- Use the name of children or any identification of home address or other contact details;
- Be used to embarrass or humiliate any individual;
- Be of any person who is dressed unsuitably or in a sexually provocative pose.

Where children appear in the photograph, they will only be used if they are obviously part of a group activity or have obvious adult supervision.

Where local press request to use the name of a child or vulnerable adult with a picture, the member of the press should make their own arrangement to do so with the parent/carer.

Intimate care

It may sometimes be necessary for a worker to do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults, particularly with young children or people with disabilities. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer. In an emergency situation that requires this type of help, parents/carers should be fully informed as soon as is reasonably possible.

In such situations, it is important that all staff are sensitive to the child/vulnerable adult and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion. **In all cases, an Incident Report Form (page 51) must be completed** so that there is a record of the actions taken. This is primarily to protect the worker from malicious allegations.

Digital communications

The use of the Internet and mobile devices has become an integral part of church and home life. There are always going to be risks to using any form of communication which lies within the public domain. It is therefore imperative that there are clear rules, procedures and guidelines to minimise these risks and especially when children use these technologies.

It is also important that workers and church members are clear about appropriate procedures so that they are safeguarded from misunderstandings or allegations through a lack of knowledge of potential risks.

The Church does not currently have any internet provision however we recognise that members bring their own computers onto the premises from time to time and may have access and that many people have internet access on personal mobile devices.

Email

We will operate safe email communications with children and young people.

When using email to communicate with children and young people, workers will:

- obtain parental agreement before they use email services to communicate with a child or young person
- use clear, unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation
- ensure that all messages can be viewed if necessary by the worker's supervisor and that this policy is explained to children and young people.

Mobile Phones

We will make appropriate use of mobile phones where they are needed.

Not every child or young person has the use of a mobile phone and, even if they do, parents may not want a worker to have the number. Workers will therefore have alternative means of communication and will ensure that communication goes through parents if this is their preference.

Mobile phones should only be used where necessary and will be guided by the following considerations:

- where appropriate group rather than individual texting will be used
- care will be taken with the language used, avoiding ambiguous abbreviations such as 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and always end with people's name.
- any texts or conversations that raise concerns will be saved and passed on/shown to the worker's supervisor
- workers will not give out their personal mobile number to children
- as well as ensuring that calls / texts are not sent after 9pm or before 9am, workers will also ensure that calls and texts are not sent whilst the child is at school / college, as this may be against the educational establishment's rules
- workers will enable a password/lock on all devices to ensure data protection and will prevent unauthorised access being gained

Instant Messaging Services

We will consider the appropriate use of Chat & Messenger Services and whether these are necessary.

Instant Messenger Services (IM) are internet programmes that allow people to write and receive messages in real time.

As with other forms of online communication, workers will take care with regard to language and content, as well as when and for how long a communication lasts.

Workers will ensure that all communications using IM services adhere to the following:

- communication will not take place between the hours of 9 pm and 9 am
- workers will ensure that they enable settings when using IM services which allow for significant conversations to be saved as text files and will keep a log of when and with whom they communicated
- children/young people will be made aware that conversations will be recorded and kept (via text files or similar)

Social Media

We will make safe and appropriate use of social media platforms when communicating with young people.

When using social media platforms we will ensure that the following guidance is used by all workers:

- workers will not add young people with whom they work to their personal social media platforms if they are under the age of 18.
- workers will set up a Facebook group / page for the church or church group and invite young people (in the appropriate age group) to be members
- workers will only use an agreed social networking account for contact with young people with whom they are working
- workers will ensure that their personal profiles on any social media platforms are set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature
- messages sent to young people regarding youth activities will be posted openly and 'inbox' messaging should be avoided. If this is necessary in exceptional circumstances, a copy will be sent to an identified person to assist transparency

Sanctions

Workers will be made aware that not complying with any of the above will incur sanctions, which could include suspension or dismissal and referral to appropriate authorities.

We will store data securely

There are a variety of ways that data can be stored. Where digital data of any form about children is stored this will be password protected. If this is not possible then a record will be made of where the data is stored.

We will respond appropriately and sensitively to all online safety concerns.

In the event of concern that there may be an online safety incident, this will be reported to the church's designated safeguarding co-ordinator in the same manner as the reporting of any other safeguarding concern. The safeguarding co-ordinator will then determine if the matter should be reported to the statutory authorities or other appropriate agencies, including CEOP or the Internet Watch Foundation.

Guidance for Leaders – Digital communications

- The golden rule: Remember you are a representative of the United Reformed Church – therefore it is important that you are a responsible ambassador for Christ, the Church and your part in it. In essence, if you wouldn't say it, in a loud voice, in your local pub on a Saturday night, wearing your dog collar or a very big badge saying: 'I'm a member of the United Reformed Church' then don't say it online.
- If you have any known public role within the United Reformed Church (elder, member, minister of Word and sacraments.) then, when you post, you are posting as a representative of the United Reformed Church. This applies whether you're posting in an official capacity on a church account or on your personal account – you are representing the denomination and cannot hide behind statements made on personal social media accounts. What you say privately (and social media is far from being a private forum!) will reflect on you and the denomination.
- Although it may appear that the internet has little or no regulation, all content is subject to the same laws that apply in the 'real' world. You are completely responsible for the things you post and so could fall foul of the laws relating to libel and defamation.
- There is an internet code of conduct. Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of legally prohibited social media conduct include: Posting commentary, content or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or any material that could be seen to create a hostile environment.
- It is important to remember that any content you post to social media could attract wider media interest – so be prepared for additional publicity, both positive and negative. If you do receive media interest (hopefully positive interest because you have posted some good news about local church life on a social media platform) then do feel free to contact the URC's central press and media office for advice, if you feel you need it. If you have posted something that attracts negative media interest, you should contact the URC's central press and media office for advice. Call the switchboard on 020 7916 2020 and ask for the press and media office.
- Social media is fast-paced and if you do decide to enter the arena, then stay present and active – monitor your output, keep it fresh and up-to-date, and regularly review information about your church. It is important that you separate your personal social media account(s) from the 'official' church account(s).
- Double check your privacy settings on social media platforms. Be aware that Facebook is particularly prone (especially during updates) for resetting or creating new options for privacy. There are privacy policies and settings on each platform, including explanations of the different levels of privacy. When you post, bear in mind what effect your levels of privacy will have on who will – or could – see your post.

Some dos and don'ts

- Do appoint at least two people to monitor and manage your church's social media accounts. We recommend that, where possible, these 'account managers' include the minister and an elder. If you have a communications officer they would be a natural choice. Remember that anyone with access to the account(s) becomes the 'public voice' of your church – so take great care to choose trustworthy individuals who understand the power of social media, who can post with authority and who are able to respond quickly and appropriately to any comments. (See the 'Don't' section for more information).
- Do use a code of conduct on your Facebook page; setting out what you feel is appropriate Facebook behaviour. You can see the URC Communications facebook code here: <https://www.facebook.com/URCcommunications/info> – you are welcome to adapt this for your use.
- Do use an organisation Facebook page (as opposed to a personal one) as this will make it very clear that you are an organisation and it will also allow you to better manage your output and interaction.

- Do be respectful of theological viewpoints you do not agree with. Public slanging matches between Christians are never a good thing.
 - Do respond to queries quickly – you might find that newcomers to your area are looking for a place to worship. Be welcoming.
 - Do be credible, fair and honest.
 - Do respect the privacy of your congregation. Discussion of pastoral care in relation to individuals not only contravenes data protection but, for ministers and church employees, could become a disciplinary matter.
 - Do make sure you have the child's agreement and the written permission of parents/guardians when posting photographs of children on to church social media sites. See 'Use of Photographs' section Page 12
 - Do use social media to share good news of church life and congregation members – first checking that the particular person/people involved is/are happy for the news of their engagement/pregnancy/marriage/anniversary/recovery from illness etc to become public. Before posting ask yourself: 'Is this my story to tell?' And if it's not, then ask permission first!
 - Do post or share (on Facebook) and/or retweet (on twitter) appropriate stories, reflections, prayers marking key events in the Christian calendar/ life of the denomination etc. All posts on the URC Communications Facebook page/twitter account can be freely shared and retweeted.
 - Do monitor church community group pages on sites such as Facebook – take care to quickly remove posts by others that are visibly offensive, threatening or indicative of bullying.
 - Do stay within the legal framework and make yourself aware of safeguarding issues; respect copyright, libel and defamation and data protection laws.
 - Do bear in mind that what you post has the potential to be misinterpreted or misread: Emotions and attitudes are hard to convey in print – so be careful how you phrase things.
-
- Don't respond censoriously to every little remark just because you don't like it! Take a judgement call between someone who is expressing a view that you or your church doesn't hold and someone who is writing abusive comments.
 - Never make any comments that could be considered racist, sexist, or homophobic, or engage in any other conduct that would be considered unacceptable in a Christian environment or work place of the United Reformed Church.
 - Never engage with posters who are being deliberately hateful. Remove the post. (It's helpful to have the code of conduct on your Facebook page, which spells out the type of posts that will be removed.)
 - Don't neglect the wider community who may be genuinely interested in your church or new to the area and looking for their next place of worship.
 - Don't gossip or engage in conversations about personal/pastoral matters that directly relate to individuals. Do not disguise gossip as 'prayer points'. If it's not your story to tell, then don't tell it! Remember that there are data protection and safeguarding considerations, and that anything published online is subject to libel laws.
 - Don't engage in verbal aggression via social media; it's ugly and has no place on a social media site run by a church. Would Christ say it? No? Then please don't either. You can correct misinformation but do it with grace. Remember, people are entitled to their opinions – but they are not entitled to share abusive or derogatory opinions and comments on your church's Facebook page!

POLICY DOCUMENT 2: The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults - Safeguarding

Introduction

The purpose of this policy document (Policy Document 2: Safeguarding) is to ensure that all those involved in working for Solihull United Reformed Church paid or unpaid, understand the procedures of recruitment and the standard of behaviour expected of them as and when they are accepted as a worker (either paid or unpaid). Complaints and Whistle-blowing procedures are included should they ever be needed.

Discrimination and Equal Opportunities

Solihull United Reformed Church believes that all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day.

This church affirms its commitment to show the same openness to all people in today's world. It intends, in spirit and in deed, to promote equality of opportunity and diversity in all spheres of its activity and is committed to behaving as an equal opportunity organisation. It acknowledges that people are called to be diverse and lively, inclusive and flexible through the sharing of the gospel.

We will nurture inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

We will value the distinctive contribution of diverse cultures in our society generally, and in our worshipping community in particular.

We are committed to social justice and will resolutely oppose discrimination within our church and in wider society.

Discrimination

We recognise that discrimination can occur on many grounds including, but not limited to, those recognised in law, ie age, gender, gender reassignment, skin colour, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, child or domestic care arrangements, pregnancy and maternity arrangements, marital or civil partnership status.

Equal opportunities in church life

- We will promote respect for other people and we will treat everyone fairly.
- We will encourage the use of inclusive language and images in our conversations, worship, literature and publicity.
- We will challenge any discriminatory attitudes and actions of members of our congregation and take steps to bring them to an end.
- We will seek to address the inequalities of opportunity faced by people in under-represented groups. We will identify and remove barriers to participation in all aspects of church life, including employment (both paid and voluntary roles), training, promotion, leadership and representation on church committees.
- We will challenge all forms of harassment, bullying or victimisation within the church and take steps to bring it to an end. Harassment consists of words or actions which are unwelcome, unwanted and offensive to the person receiving them and which create an atmosphere of intimidation, hostility or humiliation for that person.
- We will ensure that this policy is known by the congregation and that staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities for implementing this policy. Where possible, we will offer education and training in the principles and practice of this equalities policy.

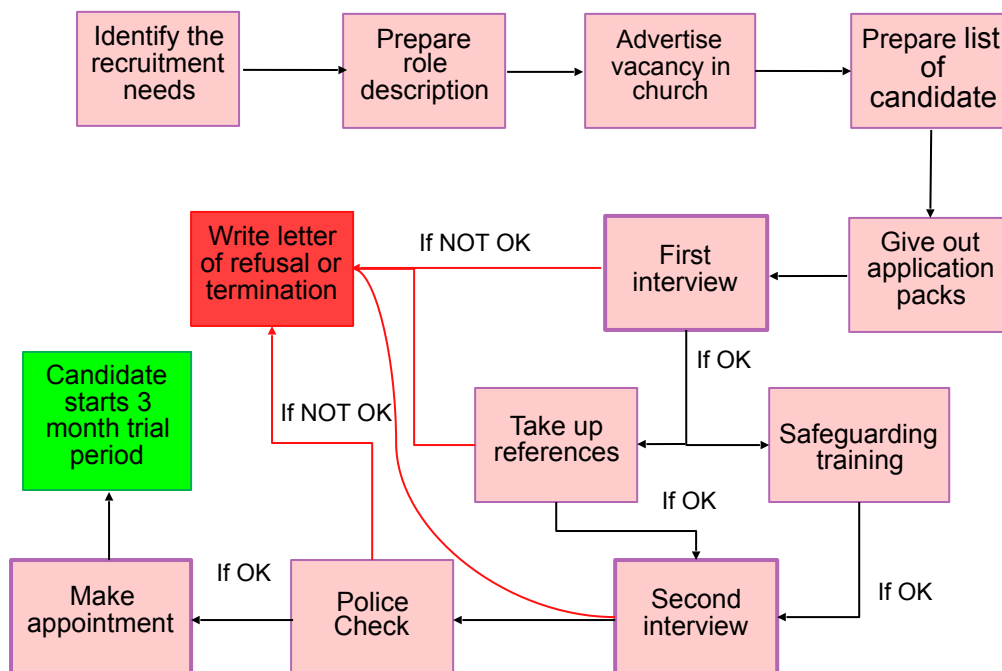
Recruitment of Workers

The recruitment procedures and the appointing of Youth & Children's Workers or workers with Vulnerable Adults is an essential part of protecting the vulnerable, therefore Solihull United Reformed Church has developed a policy to cover the whole selection and appointment process.

Recruitment Procedure

An important part of recruiting Workers is forward planning. Appointing such workers can take up to three months. **For the safety of all concerned, it is important that no steps are taken to short circuit the process.**

The Recruitment Process



Types of workers

Different levels of checks in recruiting workers will apply to different types of workers. The appropriate level of checking, interviewing, etc. will be kept under regular review.

Youth / children's work leaders (includes Sunday morning children's teachers)

These workers (paid or voluntary) are responsible for leading activities, teaching children, and providing an excellent role model for them. Leaders will be members of Solihull United Reformed Church or in regular fellowship with Solihull United Reformed Church or another recognised Christian Church. They will be expected to maintain the highest standards at all times, as they will represent Christ and the truth claims of Christianity to the children in all they do and say. They will also be representing Solihull United Reformed Church and so all aspects of their lifestyle must be of an appropriate standard and be acceptable to the Church Leadership, who must approve the appointment before any public announcement can be made regarding successful appointment. Leaders will always be required to attend two interviews, provide the names of two referees who can provide acceptable written references, and have a satisfactory Enhanced DBS disclosure. One of their referees should be a member of the Clergy or Leadership Team of their church or previous church. All Leaders must be acceptable to the Elders in all respects, because Scripture warns that teachers will be held to higher standards of accountability (James 3:1).

Youth / children's work helpers (Includes Sunday morning helpers)

These workers will be responsible, under their respective leaders, for some of the activities in their group/organisation. They will need to attend two interviews and provide the name of at least two referees, one of whom shall be a member of the Clergy or Leadership Team of their Church or previous church, and hold a satisfactory DBS disclosure. Helpers may not run the group/organisation without at least one approved Leader in attendance, although that Leader may at times be in a neighbouring room. As with Leaders, they will be representing Christ, Christianity, and Solihull United Reformed Church to the children with whom they work, they will therefore be expected to attend a church regularly, and high standards of behaviour and lifestyle will be required. The Elders retain the right to decline appointments for candidates who, in their opinion, do not meet the high standards required.

Temporary Helpers/instructors

These workers may be brought in by the group leaders for a maximum of six weeks within a six month period. They will usually be assisting in teaching a particular skill or topic and should be suitably qualified and/or experienced in that field. They may also be asked to help cover for the absence of other staff. In all cases, they must be supervised at all times by the respective Leader or Helper and never under any circumstance left alone with children. Temporary Helpers will not need to follow the recruitment process described in this policy because of the strict observance of the requirement to be under supervision at all times. The only exception to this supervision rule is in the case of those who have been accepted as Youth or Children's Workers in other areas of Solihull United Reformed Church activities. Even in this case, we expect that a minimum of two adults would be present with a group as part of general good practice in children's work. Temporary Helpers might not be Christians themselves, so Christian teaching and witness will be the responsibility of the group / organisation Leaders and Helpers, who will be expected to challenge or correct (always with due courtesy and respect) any inappropriate or misleading teaching or comments made by Temporary Helpers.

Leaders or Helpers working with Vulnerable Adults

These workers (paid or voluntary) are responsible for leading activities, and providing an excellent role model for those in their care. Leaders or helpers will be members of Solihull United Reformed Church or in regular fellowship with Solihull United Reformed Church or another recognised Christian Church. They will be expected to maintain the highest standards at all times, as they will represent Christ and the truth claims of Christianity in all they do and say. They will also be representing Solihull United Reformed Church and so all aspects of their lifestyle must be of an appropriate standard and be acceptable to the Church Elders, who must approve the appointment before any public announcement can be made regarding successful appointment. Leaders or helpers will always be required to attend two interviews, provide the names of two referees who can provide acceptable written references, and have a satisfactory Enhanced DBS disclosure. One of their referees should be a member of the Clergy or Leadership Team of their church or previous church. All Leaders or Helpers must be acceptable to the Elders in all respects.

Potential Leaders/Helpers

Those exploring the possibility of becoming a Leader or Helper with any group/organisation may attend that group's activities under supervision for a maximum of one month whilst establishing whether they would be suitable candidates to become Leaders or Helpers. At the end of the one month experience, they must withdraw from the group whilst the recruitment process is completed. They may submit an application to become a Leader/Helper at any time during the one month trial if they wish but as with any other application, there is no obligation to provide a place as a Leader/Helper and no guarantee that an offer of service will be accepted.

Job/Role Description

It is important that the recruitment needs are clearly identified and that the approved job/role description is used in the preparation work. (NB The term “role description” is preferred when dealing with voluntary (unpaid) posts to help to distinguish between posts for which a contract of employment is required.) If none of the approved job/role descriptions are suitable or adequately describe the recruitment needs, then it is important that Elders approve a new job/role description that does meet the needs of the position.

Church Notices

All positions will be advertised in the Church Notices, thereby giving people the opportunity to make an application. Any announcements at the beginning of or during worship will be made through the Church Secretary or Worship Leader, with the approval of the Church Eldership.

Application Pack

The Application Pack should be issued to the candidate at least one week before the first interview to enable them to read through all the documents. The Application Pack consists of the following:

- Job or Role Description
- Policy statement on Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults
- Details of the SURC Safeguarding Policies document
- Application Form (page 52)

Interviews

Interviews are an important tool to find the best person for the post described in the job or role description. There should be two interviews, and each should serve a different purpose.

First Interview

The first interview is to go through the person’s application form and to explain the responsibilities of the post. It is important at this interview to ask direct questions to discover any history that would assist the decision-making process.

It is also important to discover any personal information that would be relevant to the decision-making process, including referees etc.

There should be a maximum of two people responsible for the first interview with each interviewer keeping notes that should be collated afterwards.

The relevant method for applying for a DBS check will be communicated at this interview.

Second Interview

The second interview is to go through the collated notes from the first interview, and the returned references. It is important at this interview to seek clarification of any issues or problem areas. There should be a maximum of five people and a minimum of two people responsible for the second interview with each interviewer keeping notes that should be collated afterwards. People eligible to serve on the interview board are the Minister, members of the Elders, the Mission Enabler and current workers in this field.

Making an Appointment

All appointments to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure and are for a three-month (minimum) probationary period. All appointees are subject to at least one appraisal interview before the end of the probationary period.

All appointments of the Church are subject to annual re-appointment at the church's Annual General Meeting, with the exception of paid employees, the Minister and the members of the Eldership.

Where workers (paid or voluntary) are successful during the probationary period, a one-year appointment shall be made, which is open to renewal subject to satisfactory review of performance.

References and Training

It is important that at least two references are obtained for any candidate. These references together with the recommendations from the Child Protection trainer and the collated notes from the first interview will form the basis for the decision whether to invite the candidate to a second interview.

It is important that any decision about a candidate is fair and will be based on the candidate's skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values of the organisation.

Training in Child Protection matters, covering the Church's policy on Child Protection, information on how to recognise the signs of abuse and any other relevant policies must be carried out prior to the second interview, and the person carrying out the training must submit a short statement to the Second Interview Panel to the effect that training has been carried out and that the candidate's attendance and engagement with the training was satisfactory. The Minister, a member of the Eldership, or a suitable person appointed by the Minister will carry out the training.

DBS Disclosures (previously known as CRB checks)

See page 40 of the URC Good Practice Guide 4 for details of eligibility for checks and which types of checks are needed for which type of workers. A DBS check must be made and in place before any appointment may be made. Whilst DBS disclosures have a value, they are no substitute for following the policies set out in the church's Policies document and current best practice. Although a DBS disclosure notice will provide information about previous investigations and convictions, it is by definition a record of the candidate's known history. If previous actions have not come to the attention of the police, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure will show no record. The Disclosure notice must therefore be seen as one of many tools that should be used by any voluntary organisation, such as a church.

It is the policy of Solihull URC that all employees and volunteer workers who are likely to have regular (weekly) and/or unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults shall apply for an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) plus Barred List check. Employees and volunteer workers who are likely to have regular but less frequent (as part of a monthly rota, for example) unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults shall apply for an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check without a Barred List check.

Other workers may also be required to apply for either a Standard or Enhanced DBS check, according to the outcome of a risk assessment which shall be carried out by the church. (See Good Practice 4 page 40 for eligibility guidance.)

It is the policy of Solihull United Reformed Church that no worker (employee or volunteer) shall have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults until a satisfactory Disclosure has been obtained and satisfactory references have been received and reviewed.

Appointments

All appointments made by Solihull United Reformed Church for positions working with children and young people or vulnerable adults will in the first instance be for a probationary period of three months and thereafter for fixed terms of one year.

“Grandfather rights”

Where someone has been accepted as a Children’s Worker or someone working with vulnerable Adults for Solihull United Reformed Church before the adoption of this policy and they have been in continuous fellowship within the church, then there will be no requirement to follow the full recruitment process. Enhanced DBS Disclosures will be required, and all such Workers will be offered and expected to attend regular training in Safeguarding matters.

Storage, handling, use, retention & disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information

General principles

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, Solihull United Reformed Church complies fully with the Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information. (See Appendix 3 page 59)

Handling

In accordance with section 1245 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a **criminal offence** to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant’s full consent has been given.

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six-months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual subject before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Storage & Access

DBS Disclosures are never kept on an applicant’s personnel file. Instead a record will be kept of the date of issue, the applicant’s name, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the reference number and details of the recruitment decision made.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is suitably destroyed whilst keeping the reference information stated in Storage and Access above

The employment of those with a criminal record

Background

As a local church using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Solihull United Reformed Church complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the bases of conviction or other information revealed.

This policy applies equally to paid and voluntary (unpaid) workers.

Equality of treatment

We are committed to the fair treatment of our staff, potential staff, volunteers or users of our services, regardless of race, gender, religion, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. (See Discrimination and Equal opportunities on page 18) We actively promote equality of opportunity for all; with the right mix of talents, skills and potential, and we welcome applications from a wide range of candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

Using DBS disclosures

A disclosure is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned

Unless the nature of the position allows this church to ask questions about your entire criminal record we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Working with children under the age of 18 and in most circumstances working with vulnerable adults are exempt posts within the meaning of that legislation, and applicants will be required to disclose all convictions, even those that would normally be considered as 'spent'.

The people responsible for the recruitment and selection of workers with children, youth or vulnerable adults are:

- The Minister, Mission Enabler and other members of the Elders,
- The Church Meeting, and
- The Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers

These people will assist the prospective worker in obtaining the Disclosure. All recruitment decisions involving the disclosure process will be made sensitively and fairly. In the event of a problem / query / complaint, these will in the first instance be dealt with by the Church Elders but may also be referred to the registered body for advice.

We ensure that all those in Solihull URC who are involved in the recruitment process received appropriate guidance and in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary service.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment or voluntary service.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

Code of behaviour for workers with children and vulnerable adults

In any organisation there are boundaries for appropriate behaviour. **Those who work in any paid or voluntary capacity for Solihull United Reformed Church are expected and required to operate with the highest degree of integrity and honesty at all times. Offensive, violent, unethical or otherwise illegal behaviour is unacceptable at all times, and workers may not discriminate against any person on the grounds of age, race, sex, ability or sexual orientation.**

Workers with children and vulnerable adults are also forbidden from engaging in the following behaviours:

- Sexual conduct;
- Lending or borrowing of money or property;
- Giving or receiving gifts*;
- Exclusive or secretive relationships;
- Taking people who use your services into your home;
- Physical restraint except when in accordance with the terms given in the policy on the use of force to control or restrain children or vulnerable adults (see page 2845 of this document).

* An exception to this rule is made where a group leader gives a gift of small monetary value to every member of the group at times such as at Christmas, but it is greatly preferable if the gift is clearly understood to be from the group itself, rather than from an individual worker. Similarly, if an individual child/vulnerable adult presents a worker with a gift of small monetary value on similar occasions it may be accepted, provided other workers or the worker's line manager/supervisor are immediately informed that the gift has been made. If the nature of the gift to a worker is outside these parameters it must be politely declined or returned, in the presence of another worker.

Relationships between workers must be based on mutual respect. All workers are expected to contribute and take responsibility to ensure a positive working environment and to conduct themselves accordingly. Helpful measures for this are found in Matthew 22:39: "Love your neighbour as yourself" and in Ephesians 4:29: "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Therefore, workers (paid and unpaid) are expected to:

- Treat all children and vulnerable adults with respect;
- Provide a positive example of the good conduct you wish others to follow;
- Respect the right of a child/vulnerable adult to personal privacy;
- Encourage children/vulnerable adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour that they do not like;
- Remember that other people might misinterpret their actions, not matter how well intentioned;
- Be aware that any physical contact with children or vulnerable adults might be misinterpreted;
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children and vulnerable adults;
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all suspicions/allegations of abuse.

Furthermore, all workers must not:

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or vulnerable adults;
- Allow themselves to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour;
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or vulnerable adults;
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts;
- Either exaggerate or trivialise issues of abuse;
- Show favouritism to any individual;
- Rely on the good name of Solihull United Reformed Church to protect themselves;
- Believe that, "It could never happen to me";

- Take a chance when common sense, policy or good practice suggests a more prudent or cautious approach.

Discipline in youth and children's work

It is the policy of Solihull United Reformed Church to promote positive behaviour and prevent challenging behaviour from children.

- We will we will make use of prayer, planning and preparation to provide an environment where children will want to engage during their time with the church.
- We will engage positively with the children building relationships and setting a good example.
- Where appropriate we will develop, with the children, a written code of conduct which will provide boundaries for behaviour within a group.
- Session leaders will respond to any challenging behaviour whilst maintaining respect for the child concerned and treating them with dignity.

Challenging behaviour is partly a matter of interpretation. It can be helpful therefore to distinguish between:

- Dangerous and damaging behaviour, which causes harm to people or property. This can be deliberate or unintentional
- Disruptive behaviour, which prevents others in the group from engaging with and enjoying the activities
- Difficult behaviour, which is hard to deal with but is not dangerous or deliberately disruptive (e.g. annoying habits, etc.)
- Different behaviour, which we may find hard to accept because of cultural differences but is not necessarily dangerous or disruptive

What is discipline?

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

Why discipline?

It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart. See Hebrews 12:6 and Proverbs 22:6.

Do's and don'ts of discipline in children's work

- We need to be insistent, consistent and persistent.
- NEVER smack or hit a child.
- Discipline out of love NEVER anger. (It is better to let a matter pass than discipline in anger - you may say something you regret, and that damage cannot be repaired).
- Do not shout in anger or put down a child.
- Lay down ground rules, eg. no swearing, racism, or calling each other names, a respect for property.
- Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what procedures will be followed if they are not kept.
- Talk to a child away from the 'group', not publicly. (Explain what they have done wrong, encourage remorse and leave them on a positive note).
- Never reject a child, just the behaviour. (Encourage the child to understand that you want them, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour).
- Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We therefore need to ask ourselves:-
 - Why is the child behaving like that?
 - What is the best method for disciplining and encouraging that child?

- What encourages and builds children up?
- Some other important things to do:
 - Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them to each other.
 - Work on relationships.
 - Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding.
 - Be a good role model and set a good example. (Don't expect children to do what you don't do and vice-versa).
 - Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and don't allow some children to take all your time and energy.
 - Don't say something you don't mean, and do stick to what you say. Be careful to think before you speak.
 - Pray for the children and with the children.

Some practical ideas for managing and avoiding bad-behaviour

- Change the tone of your voice.
- Separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. (These children are often friends, don't separate them straight away, give them a chance, perhaps warn them and only separate if they continue to be disruptive).
- Have the child sit right in front of you.
- Get a helper to sit next to the child.
- Pay no attention to them. (Their behaviour is often attention-seeking, so do not reward bad behaviour with that attention. Find an early opportunity to praise good behaviour to reinforce the message that this deserves your attention.)
- Be proactive and encourage helpers to be proactive and not wait to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take the child aside and talk to them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging them on their strengths.
- Warn a child that you will speak to their parents and do so if necessary. (With some non-churched children we need to be wise in this, as speaking to parents may incur parent's wrath on the child and a ban from attending.)
- If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, seek advice and guidance from your line manager.
- Don't be afraid of discipline but do not make empty threats. If you promise a disciplinary measure or consequence and do not follow through, you will lose all respect and control. Equally, be careful not to make threats of discipline without thinking through and understanding the consequences.
- Warn them, send them away from the rest of the group (but take care to ensure that they are supervised and remain safe), back into the worship service or ban them for a week. (Never give a total ban without reference to your line manager and ensure parents are advised in case of banning).
- Encourage good behaviour.
- Remember each child is individual and unique. We need God's wisdom and love to encourage each one to reach their potential and to recognise their needs.
- Pray for peace and good behaviour before you meet – do not underestimate the importance of this.

Use of force to control or restrain children or vulnerable adults

Occasionally and exceptionally it will be appropriate for employees and volunteers ("Staff") working for Solihull United Reformed Church ("the Church") to use physical means to control or restrain children or vulnerable adults.

The key objective in using these physical means is to maintain the safety of other children or adults present. The reasons when these measures may be taken are to prevent serious injury, serious breaches of discipline or serious damage to property. "Serious injury" would include, for example, actual or grievous bodily harm, physical or

sexual abuse, risking the lives of others, injury to self or another by any wilful or reckless act or behaviour and includes self-poisoning.

It is **expressly forbidden** to use any physical force as a means of punishing children or vulnerable adults. It is also forbidden to use any physical means purely to force compliance with a member of staff's wishes or instructions.

It cannot be stressed too strongly that any person using these means must have good grounds to believe that the immediate use of physical means is necessary.

Minimising the need to use force

All Staff are expected to continually work towards creating a calm environment that will minimise the risk of incidents that might require the use of physical means to control or restrain children or vulnerable adults.

Using non-physical methods to de-escalate incidents are always to be preferred, but sometimes the need to act immediately will mean this is not possible. Taking a planned, programmed, approach to teach children and vulnerable adults how to manage conflict and strong feelings is encouraged in all work carried out by church staff.

It is only acceptable to use any physical means to control or restrain children or vulnerable adults when the risks involved in doing so are outweighed by the risks involved in not using force. Staff are not expected to put themselves in personal danger, and are always encouraged to call for help from other leaders or the police if necessary. If staff members do not feel confident in their ability to control the situation with the help available, they should consider whether it is necessary to withdraw, evacuating other children/vulnerable adults as appropriate and where possible, and await further support.

Some children and vulnerable adults have particular behavioural tendencies through either emotional limitations or specific learning difficulties. In these circumstances, Staff members are encouraged to carry out risk assessments to plan appropriate behaviour management and intervention strategies.

Using physical force

Physical restraint is the positive application of force with the intention of overpowering a child or vulnerable adult in order to protect the child from harming themselves or others or causing serious damage to property. Solihull United Reformed Church Staff are not trained in methods of restraint and both great care and sound judgement must be exercised in attempting to restrain a child/vulnerable adult. In all cases, the onus is on Staff members to determine the degree of force or restraint needed and Staff must be careful not to over-react.

Where the use of physical means to restrain or control a child/vulnerable adult is necessary, only the minimum amount of force required may be applied to prevent injury or damage. If at all possible within the bounds of safety and the need to act immediately, staff members should act in the presence of other adults who may be called upon as witnesses that the act was both necessary and reasonable, and who may also assist the staff member if needed.

The actions taken by a staff member will normally be to avert danger by preventing or deflecting the actions of a child/vulnerable adult, or by removing a physical object that could be used to harm to the child/vulnerable adult or others or create serious damage to property. If any form of physical restraint is necessary it must be applied for the minimum time necessary to control the situation and should be eased by degree as the child/vulnerable calms down. If in doubt as to their own ability or safety, staff members should retreat from the situation and call for urgent assistance.

It may be appropriate for a staff member to use their physical presence to obstruct an exit to a building and thereby create an opportunity to express concern and remonstrate with a child/vulnerable adult who indicates their intention to leave without permission or where the staff member has grounds for concern for the safety of the child/vulnerable adult.

In all cases, staff members are required to evaluate whether the need to act immediately and the potential consequences of not acting are sufficiently serious to warrant the use of physical means of control. **If the chances of achieving the desired outcome by other means are sufficient, those means should be explored first.**

Staff members are expected to give a verbal warning to the child/vulnerable adult that physical force could be used if they do not desist in their behaviour. It is accepted that on some occasions it will not be possible to give advance warning.

Staff members must never use any form of restraint which is likely to injure a child/vulnerable adult, particularly any means which might constrict breathing, except in the most extreme of emergencies and then only when there is no viable alternative.

Recording and reporting incidents

In all cases where physical force is used to control or restrain a child/vulnerable adult's behaviour, an Incident Report Form **must** be completed as soon as possible after the event and in any case no later than 24 hours after the incident. A sample Incident Report Form is attached to this policy (see page 57).

The report form must be forwarded to the staff member's line manager immediately upon completion. The line manager, in consultation with the designated Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officer, will review whether the incident should be reported to external agencies (such as the local authority's Children's Services department, the police, etc.)

Post-incident support

After every incident where physical force has become necessary, the staff member(s) involved will be debriefed by their line manager or a Minister of the church or member of the Elders ("the Reviewing Officer") to see if any lessons can be learnt to avoid similar incidents in the future. Those lessons might be applicable to the particular staff member, but also to other Staff members working for Solihull United Reformed Church. A record of any actions to be taken as a result of the incident are to be recorded on the Incident Report Form.

It might be necessary to meet physical needs (such as providing treatment for any injury sustained, help in replacing damaged personal equipment or clothing), and support may be needed to repair broken relationships. It is the policy of the Church that this support will be offered to staff members involved in these incidents wherever possible and practical and subject to any legal advice received or instruction from the Church's insurers.

The Reviewing Officer is responsible for referring any case where this policy or the Church's full policy on The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults may have been breached to the Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officer, who will then follow the procedures outlined in the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

The Reviewing Officer is also responsible for ensuring that the parents, guardians or other principal carers of the child(ren)/vulnerable adult(s) involved in the incident have been notified of the incident and the circumstances that led to it, and noting any comments they make concerning the incident.

Complaints and allegations

Any child, vulnerable adult or other staff member who wishes to make a complaint or allegation of misconduct arising from incidents covered by this policy may do so freely and

without fear of recrimination. Such complaints and allegations should be made either to the staff member's line manager or to either of the Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers. If the complaint is not made in writing, the person receiving the complaint must put it into writing, and take action in accordance with the policy Document The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults – Safeguarding – Procedures for dealing with allegations against workers (below).

Procedures for dealing with allegations against workers

If an allegation is made against any Solihull United Reformed Church worker (whether employed or operating in a voluntary capacity at any of our sites or off site) that causes concern that they have:

- **Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/vulnerable adult, or**
- **Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/vulnerable adult, or**
- **Behaved towards a child/vulnerable adult in a way that indicated that s/he is unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults,**

then the Designated Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers will ensure an Incident Report Form is completed, and if there are reasonable grounds for the allegation to be investigated further, they will contact Social Services and/or the Police for investigation to take place.

If referral to the authorities is judged to be appropriate, they shall also notify the Minister of the Church, and, if a Minister of the United Reformed Church is the subject of the allegation, they shall also notify the Moderator of the West Midlands Synod of the URC.

Suspension from duty is not an automatic response to an allegation, but the designated Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers shall consider the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation, the risk of harm to the child/vulnerable adult, and the possibility of tampering with evidence or seeking to influence the complainant or witnesses, as well as the interests of the subject of the allegation and the church. **The leader of any activity shall have the authority to require a worker to immediately stop work and leave the premises/activity, pending investigation. This does not constitute suspension from duty. Only the Minister of the church shall have the authority to suspend a worker from duty, always taking the advice of the Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers. Where the minister is the subject of the allegation/cause for concern, the matter shall immediately be referred to the Synod Moderator.** Where suspension from duty is judged to be appropriate, it is understood that suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt. Suspension from duty must be for the minimum period necessary to enable a proper investigation of the facts to take place, and any follow-up action (which might include a return to duties, a period of further training, permanent removal from those duties, a report being made to the statutory authorities, or some other measure) must also take place without any undue delay. **In cases where a prosecution is to take place, suspension may be continued until the completion of the case, and a subsequent DBS certificate obtained. Liaison with the Statutory Authorities, the church's Insurer and other agencies will be required to manage the situation appropriately.**

Complaints procedure

This procedure provides people with a "safe" way of voicing complaints or concerns, and includes the area of "whistle-blowing" by other workers to highlight unacceptable, abusive or unethical practices by other workers or to highlight institutional weaknesses.

Introduction to the complaints procedure

A complaint is any clear dissatisfaction with Solihull United Reformed Church, its organisations and activities, people working for Solihull United Reformed Church (paid or unpaid), or the services provided by Solihull United Reformed Church which calls for a response.

This procedure deals with specific concerns including: a risk to the health or safety of any individual and improper conduct or unethical or inappropriate behaviour in relation to children or vulnerable adults.

Anyone can make a complaint, including children, parents/carers, volunteers, employees, members of the Church or its organisation, and users of the services provided by the Church.

Complaints are treated seriously whether it is made in person, by telephone, by letter, by fax or by e-mail. Complaints will be dealt with promptly, politely, and with respect. We aim to deal with complaints within 14 days of receiving them.

The aim of dealing with complaints is that the Church can learn from them and use them to improve our services.

At Solihull United Reformed Church people are encouraged to deal with their complaints and disputes on a one-to-one basis in the first instance wherever possible, and then to go to the subject of the complaint with a witness to try to resolve their differences before making it a matter of formal complaint before the Church. (See Matthew 18:15-17). The Church also encourages matters of complaint and dispute to be settled at the lowest possible level within the Church and/or its organisations.

However, we recognise that there are some situations where this will be either impossible or unreasonable to the person making the complaint. It is not a requirement that the matter is dealt with informally between the two parties before the formal complaints procedure is followed.

How to make a complaint

Complaints may be made in any way, as noted above. It may be possible to resolve the complaint immediately in a face-to-face discussion with the person who is the subject of the complaint or their line manager/supervisor. If the person making the complaint is unable or does not wish to discuss the matter in person, they may take up their complaint with the Minister of Solihull United Reformed Church or with the Church Secretary, who will take the matter to the Elders.

It must be understood, however, that all workers at Solihull United Reformed Church have the right to work without facing personal abuse. Any face-to-face meeting or discussion that becomes abusive will be terminated, although we will continue to work to resolve the complaint.

Contents of a formal complaint

Formal complaints should include:

- The name and contact details of the complainant;
- Copies of any relevant correspondence;
- Name(s) of any people that the complainant has written or spoken to up to the point of making a formal complaint;
- Details of what has gone wrong or has been handled improperly;
- A statement of how the complainant would like the complaint to be resolved.

How Solihull United Reformed Church will respond to complaints

On receipt of a formal complaint, the line manager/supervisor of the person who is the subject of the complaint will contact the complainant to acknowledge that the complaint is being considered. This will normally be done within 48 hours of receipt, but in any case should be done within one week. If the complaint is about the Minister of the Church, the Church Secretary will be responsible for dealing with the complaint, and making the Elders aware of the complaint and seeking their counsel at all stages whilst trying to resolve the matter.

Within no more than fourteen days of receiving the complaint, the person dealing with it will speak to the person who is the subject of the complaint and put the matter to them with a view to identifying a resolution. A response will be communicated without delay to the complainant.

If the complainant feels that their complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, they may provide their written reasons for dissatisfaction to the Minister of the Church, or the Church Secretary where the Minister was the subject of the original complaint. The person receiving such notice of dissatisfaction will re-examine the original complaint in the light of the statement of continuing dissatisfaction. In such a case, the Church Secretary shall raise the matter at a full meeting of the Elders. In either case, the person(s) considering the ongoing dissatisfaction may call in an independent mediator to try to help the parties resolve their dispute.

As a result of receiving and considering a complaint, the person dealing with it may consider it necessary to invoke the Staff Disciplinary Procedure for employees. It is explicitly understood that any investigation, discussion, or attempted resolution up to that point will not be prejudicial to the outcome of that disciplinary process. At the point of invoking the Staff Disciplinary Procedure the complaints procedure will immediately cease, and the matter will be dealt with on its own merits solely under the scope of the Staff Disciplinary Procedure. The person who had been dealing with the complaint will inform the complainant that this procedure is taking precedence but state that it is without prejudice to any eventual outcome to either the Staff Disciplinary or this complaints procedure. At the conclusion of the Staff Disciplinary Procedure, including the consideration of any appeal by the employee, the Minister of the Church will review the complaint and see if any further action is necessary to conclude this Complaints Procedure, and communicate accordingly with the complainant. The Minister shall give due weight to the decision of the panel that dealt with the Staff Disciplinary Procedure, especially, but not only, if the panel exonerated the employee from any wrong-doing.

In all cases, once the complaint has been dealt with to the satisfaction of all parties, the Elders will review the complaint with a view to seeing what can be learnt for future delivery of services and activities.

“Whistle-blowing” at Solihull United Reformed Church

Whistle-blowing, known in law as Public Interest Disclosure, is when any worker (paid or unpaid) wishes to raise a complaint against either Solihull United Reformed Church or other workers. All workers have the right and individual responsibility to disclose matters of concern regarding poor practice at work, and employees have a great deal of protection in law if they engage in whistle-blowing activities. Volunteers are not covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act, but the Elders of Solihull United Reformed Church undertake to give the same serious consideration to whistle-blowers who are volunteers as they would to employees. **Any whistle-blower who acts “in good faith” for the benefit of the Church and its service users will not be subject to discrimination or unfavourable treatment and will be both protected and supported by the Elders of the Church.** This does not apply where the worker is seeking to make personal gain by their disclosure, or where they act out of ulterior motives. It is a disciplinary offence to victimise any worker who engages in whistle-blowing activities, as it knowingly raising malicious and untrue allegations.

It is natural that workers will feel a sense of loyalty to their fellow workers, but where there is a serious failing in conduct or operation, addressing that failure must take higher priority than any sense of loyalty to colleagues. A whistle-blower is not a complainant, but a witness to the wrong-doing when there is a reasonable suspicion of serious poor practice at work, or where they have been told of serious poor practice by a service user.

If any worker is unhappy with any aspect of the working environment they should raise this initially with their own line manager/supervisor. If they are unhappy with the performance or actions of another worker, they should raise this with that other worker’s line manager/

supervisor. However, if the worker feels unable or unwilling to raise it with the appropriate line manager/supervisor, they should take the matter directly to the Minister.

If the whistle-blower fears they may be victimised, or that a cover-up is taking place, or if the matter has already been raised, wider disclosures can be made and still be protected. Wider disclosures might be to the police, an MP, the media etc. The disclosure should still be reasonable in all circumstances, taking into account the seriousness of the matter and likelihood of reoccurrence. Reasonableness would also include consideration of whether the worker first followed an internal whistle-blowing procedure. However if the wrongdoing is of an 'exceptionally serious nature', (such as involving a major theft) the whistle-blower need not fear victimisation or cover up to make a protected disclosure to an external body, although it should still be reasonable particularly with regard to whom the disclosure is made.

Any person who makes a whistle-blowing disclosure may remain anonymous on request, unless a court orders that their identity is revealed.

Workers will be informed about the progress and outcome of enquiries following a disclosure and the outcome of that enquiry, and policies and procedures will be adjusted as needed and communicated to all workers.

POLICY DOCUMENT 3: The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults - Responding to Concerns

Introduction

The purpose of this policy document (The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults – Responding to concerns) is to ensure that parents, carers, volunteers, employed staff children and vulnerable adults can understand what will happen if an area of concern comes to light at Solihull United Reformed Church.

Specific concerns

Concerns about children and vulnerable adults may arise on a day-to-day basis, and in most cases these can be dealt with quickly and easily through discussions between staff and parents/carers. These discussions about specific concerns must be recorded using an incident report form. The form to be used (Incident Report Form) is given in the Appendices (page 51).

It is the role of Social Services and/or the Police to investigate allegations or concerns about abuse. **The role of Solihull URC workers (which includes both employees and unpaid volunteers) is to help to identify concerns and pass them on to the relevant agency for action to be taken.**

Summary of Action

If a worker has a concern about a child or vulnerable adult, they should:

- Take appropriate action if the child/vulnerable adult is in need of urgent attention;
- Collect as much information as possible about the situation – this may be from the child/vulnerable adult in question, a parent or carer, or other workers, and should include the date and time of the incident or disclosure/allegation of abuse, parties who were involved, what was said or done and by whom, and any further actions. It may also be helpful to record the worker's perception of emotional and physical presentation;
- Be open about the concern and make it clear that the worker WILL have to tell others;
- Take their concern to their line manager/supervisor as soon as possible, and in any case within 24 hours;
- Complete an Incident Report Form, and date and sign it.

It is the responsibility of the line manager/supervisor to consider the information given on the Incident Report Form and to decide on what action needs to be taken.

This must be recorded clearly on the Incident Report Form, and if the line manager/supervisor needs help in making a decision they must contact either of the church's designated Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers, the church's Minister, or either of the Umbrella Organisations – contact details are given on page 45 of the "Solihull URC Safeguarding Policies" document. If no further action is considered necessary, the reasons why must be documented on the Incident Report Form, and the form placed on file. The Church Secretary is responsible for secure storage of these records. Whether or not those responsible decide to report the allegation or suspicion to the authorities, the parents/carers of the child/vulnerable adult should normally be made aware of this record, unless they are the subject of the allegation or suspicion and sharing the details might place the child/vulnerable adult at risk of further harm.

Information and advice

First and most important - whether it is your first contact with suspected child or vulnerable adult abuse or not:-

- a) Ensure the welfare of the person concerned.
- b) Talk to someone – don't ignore it, don't cover it up.

Should you encounter any situation involving a child or vulnerable adult which gives you cause for concern; make a written note of the conversation, observation, dates, times, names, etc. An Incident Report Form is included on page 51, and copies are available in the Church Office. Pass on this information immediately to your line manager. (In the case of Solihull United Reformed Church this is the Minister or one of the Elders; in the case of one of the church organisations this will be your, co-ordinator or leader.)

Do not be afraid to be wrong.

What is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

What is a vulnerable adult?

Any person aged 18 years or over who is vulnerable to abuse by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, who is or may be in need of community care services and who is or may be unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

What is abuse?

- Physical abuse - includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, administering poisonous substances, suffocating/drowning, excessive force, restraint, misuse of medication. Denying someone food or water, or failing to keep them warm, use the toilet or conduct their physical care are all physical abuse. This also includes Domestic Abuse, forced marriage and so called 'Honour Based' violence; self-harm and hoarding.
- Neglect - a failure to meet basic essential needs of a person, or if a child of young age or vulnerable adult unable to care for him/herself is left unsupervised. "Neglect" therefore includes acts of omission in providing appropriate care as well as acts of commission. Institutional Abuse often manifests itself as neglect where the wellbeing of the cared for is not the highest concern of the institution.
- Psychological (or sometimes called Emotional) abuse - people harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.
- Sexual abuse - involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents or vulnerable adults, in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles. This includes being subjected to pornography or witnessing sexual acts that the person did not agree to or felt pressurised into consenting to.
- Financial or material abuse – the illegal or improper use of a person's money or property where that person has not given or cannot give informed consent, which may include forcing or improperly influencing changes to a will and testament, or preventing access to money, property or possessions.
- Trafficking/ Modern Slavery – this is an increasing form of abuse which is prevalent in all areas of the UK. It involves purposeful movement of an adult for economic benefit to a third party, often involving forced labour, unpaid labour, sexual exploitation, rape or prostitution.
- Online abuse – Cyber bullying, internet fraud and stalking through social media, are all forms of abuse.
- Spiritual abuse – You will not find references to spiritual abuse in the Care Act 2014, however, spiritual abuse is a recognised form of abuse which misuses power and is very relevant to church and faith settings. The term 'spiritual abuse' covers a wide variety of behaviours and can be summarised as the use of spiritual authority or spiritual means in order to demean, manipulate control or exploit someone.

A person may suffer more than one category of abuse.

Who abuses children and vulnerable adults?

- Very rarely a stranger.
- Often someone close to a child/vulnerable adult, e.g. parent/child, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative or friend of the family – somebody known and trusted.
- Sometimes, someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker, or, very sadly, a church worker/leader.
- Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children or vulnerable adults.

How might we recognise abuse?

Children and vulnerable adults who are being or have been abused can be very good at hiding their unhappiness and distress.

Warning signs in Children

The following signs are only a guide, and are not necessarily proof of abuse, but may be an indication of it.

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child or vulnerable adult withdraws or becomes clingy.
- Nervousness/watchfulness.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Changed or inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

Warning signs in Adults

The following signs are only a guide, and are not necessarily proof of abuse, but may be an indication of it.

- History of unexplained injuries
- Signs of medical needs unattended
- Alteration in psychological state
- Behaving abnormally in the presence of a particular person eg carer
- Self-harming
- Indications of inappropriate sexual activity
- Disclosure
- Poor physical condition
- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained financial activity
- Missing documents

Other areas where leaders should be vigilant

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them, or where differing explanations have been received.
- Injuries, which occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries and illnesses, which have not received medical attention.
- Instances where children or vulnerable adults are kept away from the group or school inappropriately.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Any signs of neglect, under nourishment or inadequate care.
- Any allegations made by a child or vulnerable adult concerning sexual abuse.
- A child or vulnerable adult with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, a child with detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play.

- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotation.

One or more warning signs may be evident.

Many symptoms of distress in a child or vulnerable adult can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This (together with conflicting medical opinion) has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents and others of sexual abuse. **It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be considered. They should make us stop and think - not jump to conclusions inappropriately.**

What to do if abuse is suspected.

This general advice must also be read in conjunction with the section in **Policy Document 1: "The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults – Health, Safety and Good working practice"** (see page 8).

- We have a responsibility: the Children's Act 1989 was enacted as a means to promote and protect the welfare of all children. The community as a whole has a responsibility for the well-being of children. This means that everyone should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed.
- Social Services note the following in their preamble when dealing with voluntary social work agencies involved in childcare.
 - Voluntary agency staff involved with families and children are likely to receive referrals/information/allegations or witness concerns suggestive of the need for a child protection investigation under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. **It is the responsibility of the voluntary agency to refer concerns to the Social Services department.**
 - The role of the voluntary agency in these circumstances, except in the case of medical emergency, is essentially to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation, and provide information to the Social Services department, whose task it is to investigate under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. **The role of the voluntary agency is not an investigative one.**

Responding to abuse

If a child or vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of neglect

- Contact your line manager/church leader immediately (at Solihull United Reformed Church this will be the Minister, or a member of the Elders), or either of the Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers.
- Speak with the parent or carer and suggest medical help/attention is sought for the child/vulnerable adult. The doctor will then initiate further action, if necessary. Alternatively, encourage the parent/carer to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- If a parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, then offer to go with them. If they still fail to act you may need to seek help yourself, via Social Services.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctor of any suspicions you may have.

If there are allegations of sexual abuse:

- Contact your line manager/church leader immediately or contact Social Services or the Police direct for advice. Do not speak to the parent/carer (or anyone else) if there is a possibility that they could be involved. The fact that you may feel the child/vulnerable

adult's story is unlikely must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that he/she has been abused by an older young person when in reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

- It is the responsibility of the church worker to pass on the possibility of abuse to the Social Services Department. The role of the church is essentially collecting and clarifying the precise details of the allegation and providing the information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the allegation.

Further guidance in responding to abuse

Whilst the church worker will normally consult with their line manager/church leader before reporting incidents/suspicions of child abuse to the Social Services Department, the absence of the line managers should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.

Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the worker and line manager as to the appropriateness of such a referral, the church worker nevertheless retains the right as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department.

All church workers, whether in paid employment or acting as volunteers, should be aware that any allegations or suspicions are covered by pastoral confidentiality, and therefore church members have no rights to this information. The sharing of information is therefore limited to a "Need to Know" basis. This will protect the interests of all the parties concerned.

N.B. - Church leaders will often experience difficulty in making appropriate judgments. Professionals such as family doctors are advised that they should discuss their suspicions with a specialist colleague first, with a view to then informing the statutory agencies. Similarly, Solihull United Reformed Church leaders will seek the advice of an umbrella organisation.

Third party /anonymous referrals / allegations

Families not known to the church:

- In cases where allegations are made by a third party, the role of the church worker is to elicit as much information as possible from the referrer. Unless the person wishes to remain anonymous this should include the referrer's details (name, address, telephone number) and as much factual detail as possible about the child/vulnerable and family concerned (names of family members, address, name, date of birth of subject child/adult, ethnic origin, etc). Information as to the cause of concern/nature of injuries/observations should be included.
- The church worker must inform the referrer that information relating to any child/vulnerable adult at risk, will be shared with their church leader and may result in referral to the Social Services Department, and in this event the Social Services Department may wish to interview the referrer (if known) as part of the child/vulnerable adult protection investigation.
- The church worker will then report the above information to the church leader and the latter will then seek the advice from the umbrella organisation and then if there are sufficient concerns to make a referral to the Social Service Department.

Families known to the church:

- In cases known to the church where the church suspects from either direct observation, third party, from the child/vulnerable adult, or from a parent/carer, that the child or vulnerable adult is suffering or has in the past suffered sexual abuse, the matter must be reported immediately to the line manager/church leaders (in the case of Solihull United Reformed Church, the Minister or a member of the Elders, or either of the Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers) with a view to referral to Social Services Department or directly to the authorities if the church leaders are implicated.

- Should a child or vulnerable adult allege sexual abuse, the parents/carers should not under any circumstances be informed. Where a parent/carer alleges sexual abuse by another person of their child, the parent/carer should be advised not to inform the alleged perpetrator. Should the church worker by direct observation suspect sexual abuse, they should discuss this immediately with the Minister, a membership of the Elders or either of the Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers, with a view to discussion with Social Services as to how the matter will be dealt with.
- In cases of physical, emotional abuse or neglect where the church worker, by observation considers that such concerns exist, the church worker should suggest to a parent/carer that they should seek medical help. Approaching the doctor is less threatening and it is then up to the medical practitioner to decide whether there is a question of abuse, which needs to be referred to Social Services. If a parent/carer is reluctant, then the worker could consider going with them or, if they fail to co-operate, then the matter should be immediately discussed with the line manager/church leader, who will refer to Social Services Department if appropriate. Of course, in cases of serious injury the church worker should summon medical help immediately.

How should we react if a person tells us he/she has been abused?

Church workers are in a unique position and your relationship with children and vulnerable adults cannot be underestimated. Your group may be providing a safe haven, and perhaps the only place where a child/adult feels comfortable and able to talk. It is therefore possible that a child or vulnerable adult may approach you to talk about abuse. The following guidance may be of help.

a) General points:-

- Accept what the child/vulnerable adult says.
- Keep calm, do not appear to be shocked.
- Look at the child/adult directly.
- Be honest.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality.
- Even when a child or vulnerable adult has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware the child/adult may have been threatened.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the child/adult said, including their name, age, address, relevant family information, and details of the situation and the activity that preceded disclosure.
- Never push for information or question the child/vulnerable adult.

b) Helpful things to say:-

- "I believe you."
- "I am glad you have told me."
- "It's not your fault."
- "I will try to help you."

c) Avoid saying:-

- "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
- "I can't believe it."
- "Are you sure this is true."
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises.
- Never make statements such as "I'm shocked, don't tell anyone else"

d) Concluding:-

- Again reassure the child they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens.
- Immediately refer to your line manager.

Even if abuse is no longer happening it is still important to report the matter, as the adult may be abusing other children. Also it may be that the child will need guidance and help in overcoming the effects of the abuse, plus the police may wish to prosecute.

Practicalities for mutual protection of leaders and children involved in children's work

a) Guidance

- Avoid being on your own with any child. This may mean groups working in one large room, or adjoining rooms.
- Never take a child home on your own - preferably have another helper with you, or else ensure that the last two children are dropped off together.
- (Remember an allegation could also be made against you!)
- Be wise in your physical contact with children.
- Be wise with your relationship with the children - do not be over friendly with some at the expense of others. No favourites.
- Male helpers need to be particularly careful in what they say, and in being around forward young females. Female helpers similarly need to be careful with forward young male children.
- Never smack, hit or physically discipline a child except by "holding" which may be used if there is an immediate danger of personal injury to the child or another person.
- If you feel that a child may have a "crush" on you, pray about it and talk to your line manager for advice and guidance.
- In order to help children, we need to develop healthy relationships by listening to them and respecting them.
- We must be mindful of the safety of the children at all times, and in all circumstances.
- Whenever possible have two or more adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the church premises. A parent may want to accompany their child, however, because of our policy they should either act as observers or only help their own child.
- Children should not be taken on trips or away from the premises without permission of parents and church leadership.
- Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling a young person) ensure that others know that the interview is taking place and that someone else is around in the building.
- Prayer works and helps in each and every circumstance.

b) Boundaries

- The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) appropriate and related to the age of the child - accepting that some children have special needs.
- Guidance on touch. For example, physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy and to be encouraged in public places, but should be discouraged in circumstances where an adult/child are on their own.
- Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.
- Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activity (e.g. rough/sexually provocative games or comments).
- If you invite a child to your home, ensure another adult is present and the parent is aware.
- If transporting a child on their own, then it is better that the young person is seated in the back seat.

c) Feedback

- It should be accepted that anyone seeing another worker acting in a way which could be misinterpreted should be able to speak to the individual or the line manager about the concern.

- Regular worker's to review procedures to ensure common approach, sharing concerns and identifying other matters which may need clarification and guidance.
 - Encourage report back to such a meeting when departure from guidelines becomes necessary - this provides protection to the individual and draws the leadership's attention to shortcomings and problem areas.
 - Keep brief records of issues/decisions discussed at workers meetings.
- d) Helping children to protect themselves by:
- Teaching safety generally/strangers/good and bad secrets and touches, etc.
 - Help children develop common sense rules.
 - Talk about suspicions or situations where they feel uncomfortable.
 - Examine the way in which we present Christian truths, e.g. children obeying parents. This can be a real problem for a child who is being abused - are we telling the child to accept the abuse? Tell children that if they feel uncomfortable or that something may be wrong, they can always check things out with another adult.

Confidentiality

No church worker is permitted to divulge any information concerning a child or vulnerable adult, or his/her family/carers or anything the child/vulnerable adult may tell them to anyone other than the designated people previously mentioned. This is in order to protect the interests of the child/adult. This confidentiality is a continuing requirement at all times and is required when workers are "off duty" or no longer involved in the work.

Proverbs 11:13 -"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. "

The definition of confidentiality is, "the act of keeping private or secret, information or material entrusted", whether this is spoken or written. Information entrusted does not become the property of the confidant, but remains the property of the one who confides. However, the practice of confidentiality in a truly caring community is more complicated and requires explanation.

The Leadership of Solihull United Reformed Church will seek to provide a private, warm and caring environment for people who may need to speak about things that are sensitive and/or personal. Solihull United Reformed Church believes that those in ministry and leadership of the church have a duty of confidentiality to the confider. The confider who seeks advice or counsel has, in the act of asking, given their implicit consent for any information to be shared within the leadership structures of the church.

The different leadership and ministry teams working in Solihull United Reformed Church will only share confidential information on a "need to know" basis. On receiving confidential information that will or may affect pastoral care, team members are required to "debrief" with the Minister or one of the Elders. Any information shared with a leader will be discussed with other leaders on a need to know basis. The Eldership will act as one for the well-being of the church and to promote effective prayer.

If any written information is kept it must be stored in a locked file in a secure place, and the confider shall be allowed access to any such information about themselves, upon request to the Minister or Church Secretary. The person allowing access to this written material must take due care to ensure that the confidentiality of other people is not breached.

The duty of the church to preserve a confidence is a prima facie duty but one that can be overridden by other more compelling duties which the confidant should recognise within the principle of "paramourcy". In these cases a confidence may be shared with others, including outside agencies.

Grounds for overriding the duty of confidentiality:

1. The protection of the confider from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
2. The protection of an identified second party from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
3. The protection of non-identified individuals or society at large from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
4. The protection of the church community from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.

The confidant should believe that there are reasonable grounds to override the duty of confidentiality but he or she is not required to be certain, or provide proof or evidence that the belief is justified. Before such a sharing of information takes place, it may be appropriate to discuss the matter with the Minister or the Elders of the church meeting in council. This would apply only where the information is shared outside of the normal debriefing policy operated by the church.

It is important to clearly state how this policy statement will work within the church. Two of the pillars of the policy are "paramourncy" and "need to know", and these are explained below, together with the necessity of "debriefing".

Paramourncy

This is the basis by which it may be decided whose interest is of paramount importance. For instance, a person in pastoral counselling may, in confidence, share that they are abusing a child or vulnerable adult. By the simple application of the rules for overriding the duty of confidentiality, one can see that the duty to the child/vulnerable adult is paramount to the duty of confidentiality.

Need to know

This is the basis for deciding the detail of the information that is being shared, either through the usual debriefing requirements or where it is believed that there are reasonable grounds to override the duty of confidentiality ("paramourncy"). The question one should ask is: "does this person need to know this detail of the situation?"

When dealing with statutory agencies, every assistance should be given.

Debriefing

The confider should be aware that debriefing to the Minister and/or Elders of the church is in their best interest. It means that the church leadership is able to offer their experience, and provide the ministry team members with the means of discharging their responsibility to provide appropriate pastoral care, within the jurisdiction of the church.

This policy is in place for the protection of everyone in the church environment. If the policy guidelines are not followed in a given situation, it should be understood that this falls outside the covering and responsibility of the church.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be addressed to the Minister of the Church first, or to a meeting of the Elders.

Contact Names for advice or when abuse is suspected/disclosed

Minister

The Revd Mark Fisher
Tel: 0121 291 4726
mjf.urc@me.com

Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Link Officers

Gordon Justham
Tel: 01564 776229
gordonjustham@talktalk.net

Angela Whitford
Tel: 0121 686 8682
whitford52@live.co.uk

Moderator for the West Midlands Synod of the URC

The Revd Steve Faber
Synod Office Tel: 0121 783 1177

Social Services

Child protection team

Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.20pm, Friday 8.45am - 4.30pm 0121 788 4333
out of working hours (Evenings, weekends or bank holidays) 0121 605 6060
<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/childrenfamilies>

Adult protection team

0121 704 8007
<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/adultsocialcare>

Police

In an emergency ring 999.
For non-emergency calls ring 101 and ask for the Child Protection Team

Umbrella Organisations

Due Diligence Checking Ltd
<https://www.ddc.uk.net/urc/>

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service
24-Hour helpline
0845 120 4550

Parental Consent and Medical Form

To be completed by a person with parental responsibility for all under-18's. Over 18s and leaders also fill in as appropriate.

Group:

Event/Activity*:

Venue*: Date(s):

(* specify "All" for annual consent)

To the child/young person handed this form: You cannot take part in the above event or activity unless this form has been signed by your parent/guardian and returned by (date). This is for your own health and safety, concern to see that the event is properly organised and that we have a good time.

If you are 18 years or over, you may complete the form yourself, but it must still be returned. Leaders/workers should also complete the record of information for use if needed.

To the parent/guardian: We want young people under the age of 18 years to enjoy activities to the full and to feel secure and protected during their participation in them. Please understand that children and young people can not participate in events unless this parental consent form has been completed and returned.

This form must be completed and returned to:

Name:

Please keep a note of the contact telephone number:

Address:

Full name of participant:

Address:

Date of birth (if under 18):

1. **I, the undersigned** (name of parent/guardian/participant over 18) **give permission for him/her to take part in the event/activity named above.**
2. I have read the programme/information leaflet about the event/activity/group and understand what is involved. I acknowledge the need for obedience and responsible behaviour on his/her part throughout the period and the need for him/her to take special note of any safety instruction. I am satisfied that all reasonable care will be taken for the safety of those participating and that adequate staffing and other insurance and safety measures have been taken. I understand the extent and limitation of the insurance cover provided. I understand that my son/daughter will not be able to participate unless this form has been returned, completed and signed by me. I understand that during periods of free time, close supervision by leaders may not be possible at all times. I consider my son/daughter to be medically fit to participate in the activities outlined above.
3. I require my son/daughter to be excluded from the following:
4. I would like you to be aware of the following special needs, not mentioned elsewhere on this form:
5. Other persons authorised to collect my child are:

DECLARATION

- a) I agree to(name)
receiving emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment, including anaesthetic or
blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present.
- b) The person to contact in case of emergency during this event is:
Name: Relationship:

Address:
.....

Tel: Day Eve Mob
- c) Should the above not be available, please contact:
Name: Relationship:

Address:
.....

Tel: Day Eve Mob
- d) The participant's doctor is:
Name:

Address:

Tel:
- e) The participant's NHS No is:
- f) The participant has the following allergies:
- g) The participant has the following medical conditions that you should be aware of (e.g.
asthma, fits, migraine, etc.)
- h) The participant has the following disability that you should be aware of:
- i) The participant is taking the following medication at present* :
- * If the participant will or might need to take this medication during the event/activity named overleaf, please ask for
and complete either the form "Request to administer medication" or "Request for Young Person to carry his/her own
medication."
- j) The participant was last immunised against tetanus on:
.....

Please note that all information given on this form is treated in the strictest confidence and only used if necessary.

Signed Date:

Request to administer medication

There is no obligation in law for the leaders to administer medication. The leaders will not do so unless you complete and sign this form.

Group:

Event/Activity*:

Venue*: Date(s):

(specify "All" for annual consent)

Full name of participant:

Address:

.....

Male/female: Date of birth:

Condition or illness:

.....

Name/type of medication (as described on the label):

Full directions for use:

Dosage and method:

Timing:

Special precautions:

Known side-effects:

Is the participant capable of self-medication and permitted to do so? Yes / No

Contact details:

Name: Relationship:

Address:

Tel: Day Eve Mob

I understand that I must deliver the medicine personally to my son/daughter's group leader. Procedures for emergency action are noted overleaf and will be discussed with the leaders beforehand.

Signature: Name:

Relationship to young person:

Request for young person to carry his/her own medication

Group:

Event/Activity*:

Venue*: Date(s):

(specify "All" for annual consent)

Full name of participant:

Address:

.....

Male/female: Date of birth:

Condition or illness:

.....

Name/type of medication (as described on the label):

Contact details:

Name: Relationship:

Address:

Tel: Day Eve Mob

I would like my son/daughter to keep his/her own medication with him/her for use as necessary. Procedures for emergency action are noted overleaf and will be discussed with the leaders beforehand.

Signature: Name:

Relationship to young person:

Permission to Use Photographs

Photographs taken during Solihull United Reformed Church activities may be used for display on the church premises, used in the press, or published on our own website. Any such photograph may be used only if, under the Data Protection Act 1998, permission has been received from the subject of those pictures or in the case of children under 16, a parent/carer of those children.

Photographs used publicly will not:

- Show the outside of the building identifiably;
- Use the surname of children or any identification of home address or other contact details;
- Be used to embarrass or humiliate any individual;
- Be of any person who is dressed unsuitably or in a sexually provocative pose.

Where children appear in the photograph, they will only be used if the activity or group has obvious adult supervision. Subject to having met the other conditions above, children may be identified by giving their Christian name and age.

Permission to Photograph form (for use by adults and young people aged 16 or over)

I do / do not give my permission for my photograph to be used, following the guidelines above, for use (delete as appropriate):

In the building YES / NO

In the press YES / NO

On our web site YES / NO

Signed:

Date: Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Permission to Photograph form (for use by parents/guardians of those under 16)

I do / do not give my permission for photographs of
to be used, following the guidelines above, for use (delete as appropriate):

In the building YES / NO

In the press YES / NO

On our web site YES / NO

Signed:(Parent/guardian)

Relationship to child/young person:

Date: Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

Incident Report Form

NAME OF CHILD/VULNERABLE ADULT

NAME OF WORKER

POSITION OF WORKER

DATE & TIME OF REPORT

NATURE OF INCIDENT OR CONCERN

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

[If you have not already done so make a factual written record of your observations and any conversations. Sign and date it.]

WHO HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO ABOUT YOUR CONCERNS?

Child Yes/No

Carer Yes/No

Senior Staff / 'link' person Yes/No Name

Social Services Yes/No Name

Feedback

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Signature of Worker:: Date & time

Signature of 'Link' person/Line Manager:

Date & Time:

.....

[Use the reverse of this sheet for further comments if necessary.]

Do you have any criminal convictions, cautions or bindovers : Yes No
If you have answered yes please enclose details with your application form.

Is there any other information you should declare that might affect your suitability for working with children and young people? (e.g. Allegations which have been the subject of investigation; any current criminal investigations)
No Yes If you have answered yes please enclose details with your application form

DBS DISCLOSURE *(all posts)*

Do you agree to undergo the relevant vetting processes, including 'Enhanced Disclosure' through the Disclosure and Barring Service, that shall be in place from time to time to establish your identity and your suitability for work with children and young people. The processes are in accordance with legal requirements and Good Practice guidelines of the United Reformed Church.

No Yes A separate form will be issued for the implementation of this procedure

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995 *(all posts)*

This information will not be used in the short-listing process.

If you have a disability according to the DDA, please give details. If you fulfil the criteria for the post you will be given an interview. It will only be used in the interview process to assess whether any adjustment would be needed for you to carry out the work of the post.

ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION ACT 1996 *(For paid posts only)*

National Insurance Number:

If you have no NI number available do you have evidence of your entitlement to live and work in the UK?

DECLARATION *(all posts)*

I declare that the information in this application is true and complete. I agree to references being taken up. If I am successful in obtaining this post and the information is later discovered to be incorrect I understand that the appointment can be cancelled.

Signed Date

Monitoring Form

ALL INFORMATION IN THIS FORM IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL ONLY BE USED FOR MONITORING PURPOSES TO ENSURE THAT ALL APPLICANTS ARE TREATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

AGE

- Under 16 16 – 17 18 – 20 21 – 25 26 – 34 35 - 54
 55-60 61 – 65 66 +

GENDER FEMALE MALE

ETHNICITY

The categories for ethnic origin reflect those chosen by the Office for National statistics for the 2001 UK Population Census. Please tick one box only.

White British Irish Any other white (please state) _____

Black or Black British African Caribbean Other black(please state) _____

Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi Indian Pakistani

Other Asian(please state) _____

Mixed White & Black Caribbean White & Black African

White & Asian Other mixed (please state) _____

Chinese or other ethnic group Chinese Any other ethnic group _____

DISABILITY

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Please note that under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 you are considered to be disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term adverse effect upon your ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Yes No

Please give details:

Date: _____ Signed _____

ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Under Home Office Guidelines this form should be completed for all workers with children and young people. If the role changes substantially a new form should be completed. Copies should be retained by the worker, and the Church Secretary.

TO BE COMPLETED ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH MEETING

Name of worker

Name of Group (e.g. Junior Church)

Where/when they meet

Age range

Name & position of person to whom immediately responsible (Line Manager)

.....

Main Duties and Work to be undertaken:

1. To encourage emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical growth and well being, in accordance with meaningful membership of Solihull URC.
2. To undertake such duties that advance the work and vision of Solihull URC, as decided by your Line Manager.
3. To provide pastoral support for group members, and their parents/carers where appropriate, within the church's child protection policy and the United Reformed Church Good Practice Guidelines.
4. To keep within the guidelines laid down in the child protection policy and Good Practice Guidelines.
5. To maintain confidences, on and off duty, within the terms of the church Confidentiality Policy.
6. To ensure that you are regular in worship at Solihull URC or another Christian Church and continue to seek your own spiritual growth.
7. To ensure that NO unauthorised person, except a parent, is allowed to remain in any children's group.
8. To ensure that prior permission is granted by your Line Manager and/or Church Meeting for any activities outside the group's normal meeting time and place.
9. To act always in a manner that will protect the health and safety of yourself, your co-workers and group members.

Group to whom responsible (e.g. Church Meeting)

Signed on behalf of the Church Meeting

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE WORKER WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

I have understood the nature of the work I am to do with children / young people. I have read the guidelines produced by the church for the protection of children & young people and vulnerable adults called Solihull URC Safeguarding Policies. I understand that it is my duty to protect children and young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or suspected.

Signed: Date:

USE OF FORCE TO CONTROL OR RESTRAIN CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS: INCIDENT RECORD

Details of child(ren)/vulnerable adult(s) on whom force was used by a member of staff (name, address if known)	
Date, time and location of incident	
Names of staff involved (directly or as witnesses)	
Details of other people involved (directly or as witnesses), including whether any of those involved were vulnerable for SEN, disability, medical or social reasons.	
Description of incident by the staff involved, including any attempts to de-escalate and warnings given that force might be used.	
Reason for using force and description of force used.	
Any injury suffered by staff or children/vulnerable adults and any first aid and/or medical attention required	
Reasons for making a record of the incident	
Follow up, including post-incident support and any disciplinary action against children/vulnerable adults involved	
Any information about the incident shared with staff not involved in it and external agencies	
When and how those with parental or other caring responsibility were informed about the incident and any views they have expressed	
Has any complaint been lodged (details should not be recorded here)? Yes / No	
<u>Report compiled by:</u> Name and role:	<u>Reviewing Officer:</u> Name and role:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Appendix 2: Glossary of terms

Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy	All organisations working with children and/or vulnerable adults should formally adopt a child and vulnerable adult protection policy. Such policies are recommended in government guidance such as "Safe from Harm" and "Working Together to Safeguard Children". The Charity Commission require organisations (including churches) to have a child protection policy in place before granting new registrations. Policies are also an expectation of many insurance companies.
Code of Practice	This Code sets out the requirements that employers and other bodies must comply with in order to use standard and enhanced disclosures.
Criminal Conviction	Criminal conviction is a finding of guilt by a criminal court. Criminal convictions form part of the criminal record.
Criminal Record	A criminal record relates to a person's convictions, whether spent or unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; cautions; reprimands; final warnings and other non-conviction information such as acquittals.
Counter-signatory	An individual within a registered body or umbrella organisation (authorised to support applications for a criminal records disclosure).
Disclosures	The criminal records certificates. There are three types of disclosure: basic, standard and enhanced.
Employment	Employment in DBS terms is interpreted widely and covers volunteer and paid work.
Lead signatory	The person in the registered body (or umbrella organisation) heading up the service and authorised to support applications for criminal record checks.
Police National Computer	The police national database against which all checks will be made. This is the only source of information, which will be used for basic and standard disclosures. For enhanced disclosures, checks against local police records will also be made.
Recruiter	The description given to the individual within the church or organisation responsible for recruitment of workers. The recruiter/verifier is required to see and check evidence of identity of each applicant and will be the person in direct contact with Due Diligence Checking Ltd. in the checking process. The disclosure unit will only be able to deal with the named recruiter in any matters concerning an individual application. Recruiters are required to handle all disclosure information in a sensitive and confidential manner.
Registered body	The registered body is an employer or other agency registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service to administer standards and enhance disclosures.
Safe from Harm	Issued by the Home Office in 1993, "Safe from Harm" contains various recommendations to be adopted by voluntary organisations working with children.
Umbrella body/organisation	Umbrella organisations are registered bodies (see above) providing access to DBS information to other organisations not registered in their own right.
Verifier	See Recruiter above.
Working Together to Safeguard Children	A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Appendix 3 Home Office Revised Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service Registered Persons 2015

Data Handling

Failure to comply with DPA requirements could result in enforcement action from the ICO. In line with the Data Protection Act 1998 Registered Bodies and those in receipt of Update Service information must:

1. Have a written policy on the secure handling of information provided by DBS, electronically or otherwise, and make it available to individuals at the point of requesting them to complete a DBS application form or asking consent to use their information to access any service DBS provides.
2. Handle all information provided to them by DBS, as a consequence of applying for a DBS product, in line with the obligations under Data protection Act 1998.
3. Handle all DBS related information provided to them by their employee or potential employee in line with the obligations under Data Protection Act 1998.
4. Ensure that a result received as part of an application submitted electronically is not reproduced in such a way that it infers that it is a certificate issued by DBS.
5. Ensure any third parties are aware of the Data Protection Principles and provide them with guidance on secure handling and storage of information. For Data Protection purposes, information passed to a Registered Body by DBS remains the responsibility of the Registered Body even if passed to a third party.
6. Ensure business continuity and disaster recovery measures are in place and comply with Data Protection requirements.
7. Must comply with security requirements under principle 7 of the Data Protection Act.

Appendix 4 HM Government: Working Together to Safeguard Children

A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children March 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

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“Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Various other statutory duties apply to other specific organisations working with children and families and are set out in this chapter.”

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Paragraph 44 Faith Organisations

“Churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Like other organisations who work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as described in paragraph 4 of this chapter.” (below)

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Paragraph 4.

These organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:

- a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the organisation’s safeguarding arrangements;
- a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services;
- clear whistleblowing procedures, which reflect the principles in Sir Robert Francis’s Freedom to Speak Up review and are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed;
- arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB);
- a designated professional lead (or, for health provider organisations, named professionals) for safeguarding. Their role is to support other professionals in their agencies to recognise the needs of children, including rescue from possible abuse or neglect. Designated professional roles should always be explicitly defined in job descriptions. Professionals should be given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively;
- safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check;
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training;
- employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role; 23 Sir Robert Francis’s Freedom to Speak Up review report can be found at https://freedomtospeakup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/F2SU_web.pdf.

- staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare; and
- all professionals should have regular reviews of their own practice to ensure they improve over time.
- clear policies in line with those from the LSCB for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Such policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.