

THE MISSION

DANBURY MISSION EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Child Protection Policy

Sept 2010

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1. Introduction

Legislation covering organisations caring for or teaching children is in force (Children's Act 1989 which defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years) although this is not, as yet, a requirement on our church. These standards and expectations clearly need to be acknowledged in the way the church works with children in its care. This apart, we should take note of the many references of care and love for children expressed in Scripture and in particular by our Lord Jesus.

2. Objective

- This policy is intended to provide a workable framework which will:
- Ensure a safe and secure environment for the children in our care
- Foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness
- Provide a record of the children and all involved in Children's work
- Give guidelines and standards for those working with children

3. Definitions, Signs and Symptoms

Abuse is most commonly perpetrated by someone known to or trusted by the child, most usually a family member. ***Please note the signs and symptoms MAY indicate abuse, but please be careful of jumping to the wrong conclusions. There may be a perfectly innocent explanation!***

Abuse of children is defined as:

PHYSICAL ABUSE may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'factitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen Syndrome by proxy'.

Physical signs of abuse:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, games, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures, etc. Which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts, scratches, substance abuse*

**These signs may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning, self-poisoning. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.*

SEXUAL ABUSE involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware or what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Signs of Sexual abuse:

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- A pre-occupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour or who regularly engages in age sexual play
- Age inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawings
- A child who is being sexually proactive with adults
- Inappropriate bed sharing at home
- Severe sleep disturbances, nightmares, bedwetting
- Secretive relationships with adults or children
- Tummy pains with no apparent cause

NEGLECT is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect or, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs of Abuse by Neglect:

- Looking ill-cared for and unhappy
- Undernourished
- Failure to grow
- Constant hunger
- Stealing or gorging food

- Having lingering injuries of health problems

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and continuous adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs of Emotional Abuse:

- Changes in mood and behaviour, withdrawing, becoming 'clingy', aggressive, depressed, anxious
- Nervousness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden underachievement
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away, stealing, lying

4. Policy Outline

4.1 Selection and Screening Process

Selection of teachers, helpers and other workers with the children will be identified by the Pastor and/or and Elder of the Church. This will be by way of invitation to considering this aspect of work in the church.

- To evidence the genuineness of their faith and suitability to the satisfaction of the Youth Pastor and Elders.
- Complete a screening application as shown at the *Appendix 1*.
- Agree to and complete the appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) validation documentation.
- Appointment will be conditional on this application having provided the necessary assurances. The CRB documentation will be reviewed and resubmitted for validation after 5 years.

4.2 Training

- A process of regular teacher training will be maintained to help the teachers and helpers in this work. This training will include a summary of the Child Protection Act, its expectations and the church's policy relating to those requirements.

4.3 Supervision

- Supervision of the children will comply with the following standard requirements –
- No person under the age of 18 years may be helpers with younger children (the Youth leader will ensure suitability of these helpers).
- Persons under the age of 18 years may be helpers with younger children (the Youth leaders will ensure the suitability of these helpers).
- All groups will have a minimum of 2 leaders/helpers. It is recognized that some activities will require the group to be divided into smaller groups with one leader (e.g. small group teaching or transport). During these times all 'small groups' shall be accommodated close to one-another with ready access to extra supervision if required. No leader shall be left alone with any child in any circumstance.
- It is recognised that for teaching and relational needs a mix of male/female leadership is referable.

- Group Leaders shall monitor supervision to ensure that adequate levels are maintained.

4.4 Practical Guidelines

a) Contact / Touching

It is important to minimise the risk of any situation being misunderstood by a child or any other adult. The following guidance will help to assist in making sure of this:

- Keep everything public.
- Actions must be related to the child's needs, not those of the adult.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Physical restraint must be appropriate for the child's safety.
- Physical discipline should be exercised only to remove a problem (ex. Confiscating an object, holding the hand of the naughty child) but not by inflicting physical punishment or pain (ex. Smacking, shaking, gripping tightly, etc.)
- The degree of physical contact should be determined by the child, except in circumstances where medical attention is needed.
- Team Members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

b) Internet and Mobile phone contact with young people.

This is probably the one area of socialization that requires the most wisdom. This is partly due to the fact that what is written is sometimes off-the-cuff and also because what is written can be misconstrued. Text messages, emails and social networking platforms like facebook provide a huge social forum for children and young people and as time goes on this will probably grow. In light of this the principle of accountability is best applied in this area. Simply put, try to let others see what you are sending to the young people, and if possible keep a record of your contact in case it is misunderstood. Let young people initiate contact with yourselves, preferably on an open forum like facebook.

c) Children/Teacher Ratios

The following target ratios of teachers (including adult/youth helpers) to children will be established, maintained or restored as soon as possible if they fall below at any time.

Age:	Ratio (children/teachers):	Min. (teachers/helpers):
Up to 3	3:1	2
3 to 5	5:1	2
5 to 11 years	8:1	2
Over 11 years	10:1	2

Supervision should be suitable for the activities involved (the above ratios are a guide).

5. Register of Information

- Information regarding the children and their ailments, allergies or disabilities will be sought from parents and guardians. This record (see Appendix 2) will also include names, addresses and contact numbers of the parents or guardians and request their consent.
- The information will be retained on a file kept by the leader of the group and readily accessible if needed.
- Each groups will keep a record of all children attending (including visitors)/ The record (attendance register) will also show the teacher(s) and helper(s) present on those occasions (see Appendix 3).
- A record (part of the register) will be kept for each group to record any adverse incident or accident which occurs during groups (see Appendix 4)/ The teacher or helper will ensure an entry is made in the book as soon as possible after the incident and once the necessary (immediate) action to secure or control the situation has been achieved.

6. Ad Hoc Events (including missions, holidays and outings)

6.1 General Guidelines:

- a.) The general policies outlined at 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4 above will apply to all events including activities off church premises.
- b.) A record of information about the children, parents/guardians and contact numbers (as outlined in 5 above) will be maintained. Parents/Guardians will be requested to collect children by specified times.

6.2 Safety

- Appropriate, sensible and legal arrangements will be made to ensure proper safety of the children.
- Transport arrangements should be provided with appropriate supervision.

6.3 Events off Danbury Mission Site

- Approval for all such events must be obtained from the Pastor
- Parents/Guardians must be informed about the event and give their specific approval for their child to attend and participate in activities. The checklist (Appendix 5) must be completed for each non-regular event.
- Transport arrangements must be suitable for the age and numbers of children/youths travelling and be within the insurance cover provided for those driving and the vehicles used.
- Parents/Guardians must be informed of the mobile telephone number for contact.
- Information about the child/youth attending and parent/guardian contact number must be obtained before the start of the event (as outlined in section 5 above)

7. Suspicion of Allegation of Abuse

It is hoped that the selection and monitoring of this policy together with the Christ-like love and care for the children and young people will mean that concerns or allegations are never made. If there is suspicion or allegation the following process will be implemented:

7.1 What is meant by abuse – Please refer to the aforementioned section on Definitions, Signs and Symptoms in section 3 of this policy.

7.2 What to do if Abuse is Suspected:

- Do not ignore the problem
- Write down everything that you have seen or has been said to you, and make sure you date and sign the document.
- Inform the responsible person (ex. The Youth Pastor or Elder) as soon as possible of the concerns.
- This person will be trained to take the situation from here.
- Do not speak to any others about your concerns.

7.3 What to do is Abuse is Disclosed by a Child:

- Take it seriously but do not push the child/person to say more than they want to.

- Do not promise confidentiality
- Write a record of the conversation, who was there and when it took place, sign and date it.
- Follow the guidance in 7.2

8. Conclusion

The policy is intended to guide and encourage in good and proper actions with the children/young people in our care. Above all else, in this part of the churches work, there must be a prayerful reflection of Gods love for the children's health, spiritual, emotional and academic development and well being.

APPENDIX 1 - Application for those involved in care of children

Personal Details

Name

Address

Telephone No.

Date of Birth

If less than 12 months – former address and church

Christian Experience

How long have you been a Christian?

Involved in which Church/Christian activities?

Involved in what secular children's activities?

References

Name

Address

Telephone No.

Relationship.

Declaration

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence (including spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) ? YES NO
If yes, please state details below: *(please tick)*

Have you ever been cautioned by the Police or bound over to keep the peace? YES NO
If yes, please state details below: *(please tick)*

Have you ever been held liable by a Court or civil wrong? YES NO
If yes, please state details below: *(please tick)*

Have you ever had an order made against you by a Matrimonial or Family Court? YES NO
If yes, please state details below: *(please tick)*

Has your conduct ever caused or been likely to cause harm to a child or put a child at risk? YES NO
If yes, please state details below: *(please tick)*

To your knowledge has it ever been alleged that your conduct has resulted in harm to a child or put a child at risk? YES NO
If yes, please state details below: *(please tick)*

Have you ever had an offer to work with children or young people declined? YES NO
If yes, please state details below: *(please tick)*

SIGNED..... DATE.....

APPENDIX 2 – **Danbury Mission Groups Registration and Consent Form**

Child
Contacts

Surname of Child

First Name of Child

Date of Birth: Current age:.....

Parent/Guardian Name:

Address:.....

.....

..... Post Code:

Home Tel.No: Mobile No.:

Helpful Info

Please state below any medical conditions, helpful information or emotional concerns that we should be aware of. These can include illnesses, allergies, medication, disabilities, phobias, dietary requirements, feeding arrangements, dislikes, or anything else we should be aware of in order to properly care for your child.

Statement

- All children aged 8 or below must be dropped off and collected from the group by an adult. Please ensure that your child is ticked on the register before leaving.
- All Danbury Mission EC child protection procedures will be followed. Copies of our child protection policy are available on request.
- We have qualified first-aiders present in church. If your child should ever need emergency attention, please give consent for our first-aiders to undertake emergency treatment to a level of their first-aid training. Should further emergency treatment be necessary appropriate national health services will be used.
- Occasionally we may take photographs or video footage of the activities and children. These photographs/videos may be electronically stored by our staff or volunteers and reproduced only in presentations for the purposes of Danbury Mission Evangelical Church.

Consent

I have read the above statements and give consent for my child/young person to attend Danbury Mission EC youth and children’s ministry.

Signed _____ Parent / Guardian Name _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 3

Danbury Mission Evangelical Church

Child Protection Policy

Incident Reporting Guidelines

1. Make a record of the incident as soon as possible.
2. Note in the record the date, time and event at which the incident took place.
3. State facts not assumptions or allegations.
4. Record the name of each and every one involved in the incident.
5. Record any other adults present at the time and ask them to countersign this record.
6. Do not make medical diagnosis- stick to the visible injuries if any suffered.
7. Record the place on the child where any injury was suffered.
8. Note the action that was taken to deal with any injuries.
9. Note any property that was damaged as a result of the incident.
10. Note the date and time when this record was made and sign it (and print your name).
11. Obtain the signature and name of another adult witness if any were present.
12. Inform the parent of the child of the incident as soon as possible.
13. Inform the Pastor, assistant Pastor or one of the elders as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 3 Continued

Danbury Mission Evangelical Church

Incident Report

Date and time of Incident:.....

Place and Event:.....

People Involved:.....

.....

Brief Description of the Incident

APPENDIX 4
Danbury Mission Evangelical Church

Checklist for Children's / Youth Outings or External Events

Event : Dates :

Please ensure the following have all been completed before / during the event.

Planning :

- 1. Approval of the Pastor (for the Elders)
- 2. Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out
- 3. Written permission sought and received from parents regarding the trip.
- 4. Parents fully informed regarding any activity involving risk.
- 5. Written agreement received from parents for their child's involvement.
(We must NOT be open to any accusation of neglecting to inform parents.)
- 6. Obtain details of any medical conditions that could give problems on the trip.
- 7. Ensure there are sufficient adult helpers (who will supervise)
- 8. Will there be someone able to deal with predictable medical emergencies.
- 9. Ensure that proper insurance cover has been secured.
- 10. Clear arrangements are understood for delivery and collection of children on the trip.....

On the Day Before Departure :

- 11. Inhalers, essential medication, etc. are available.
- 12. Sufficient adult helper have arrived.
- 13. Responsibilities and timetables are understood by helpers.
- 14. Person responsible for medical issues is present.
- 15. Mobile phone is available (and working) on each vehicle.

16. Confirm arrangements for delivery and collection of children on the trip

During the Event :

17. Ensure the continuous supervision of youngsters.

Checklist completed :

Signed 1 2
(Organisers)