

**Updated September 2019**

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH**

# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**



bishops stortford baptist church

C.I.O. No: 1159484

*This Church aims to be a community of believers living according to the Bible's teaching, where people become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.*

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## **APPENDICES**

All Appendices are available from the Church Office and Appendices F and H are on the Member's Area of the BSBC website.

<b>Volunteer agreement for Children's Volunteer Leader</b>	<b>Appendix A</b>
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<b>Risk Assessment Form and Guidelines</b>	<b>Appendix D</b>
<b>Responding To Abuse – Workers Action Sheet</b>	<b>Appendix E</b>
<b>Equal Opportunities Policy</b>	<b>Appendix F</b>
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## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

*Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church  
Policy statement on children, young people and the church*

*This statement was first agreed at the church meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2003*

*The Child Protection Policy Statement will be read annually at the church meeting in September where progress in carrying the policy out will be reported; and any changes to the Policy will be agreed.*

*Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church aims to be a community of believers living according to the Bible's teaching, so that Christ's redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world. Our mission is to enable people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We therefore highly value our children and young people and commit ourselves to their care, support and growth.*

- We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole Church.*
- As members of this Church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people.*
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or volunteer.*
- The Church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision.*
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.*
- The Church is committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice "Safe from Harm" and adopts the guidelines and procedures published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain in its booklet "Safe to Grow".*
- Each leader with children and young people must know the recommendations, and undertake to observe them. Each shall be given a copy of the Church's agreed procedures and good practice guidelines.*
- As part of our commitment to children and young people, the Church has appointed Mandy Talbot to be its Child Protection Officer. Her role will be regularly explained to the children and the Church community, and her name, address, phone number and email be publicly displayed.*

Mandy Talbot  
5 Lincoln Close  
Bishops Stortford  
Hertfordshire CM23 1DQ  
Tel. 01279 505117 / 07717 841236  
Email: [childsafety@stortfordbaptist.org](mailto:childsafety@stortfordbaptist.org)

## **Familiarisation with this policy**

The policy will be available to any member of the congregation and the Policy Statement will be read at least annually at a church meeting. It will also be available in the members area of the website.

## **Publication of this Policy and Procedures**

It is the responsibility of the Diaconate to ensure that all members of the Church are aware of the policy. After agreement, each member of the Diaconate and Eldership will be issued with a copy of the policy and procedures. All the children's and young people's leaders will be issued with a copy of the Policy and Procedures. This will include those who work with the children and young people on an occasional basis. Copies will be made available to anyone wishing to view our policy and procedures.

## **Child Protection Officer and Youth Worker**

The Child Protection Officer and Youth Worker will be the central points of contact for any child protection concerns that are raised within the Church. They will be the people that leaders turn to with concerns about a child or young person in their care, or about the behaviour of one of their fellow leaders. They will, after discussion with the leader, determine the best response and may turn to other sources of advice before taking action. Any referrals to Social Services will normally be through either the Child Protection Officer or the Youth Worker.

## **Confidential Information**

All personal information will be held at the Church Office in a secure location. Nominated individuals only can access this information when needed. These individuals are, the Youth Worker, the Eldership, the Church Secretary, Child Protection Officer, members of an interview panel and the Ministers' P.A. The information held will include paperwork relating to:

- The appointment of leaders
- Personal details of children and young people
- Consent forms and medical forms relating to children and young people

Other leaders will be permitted access to personal details of children and Young People for mailing purposes.

## Health and Safety

A desire to safeguard children and young people from harm will mean that we need to be safety conscious. Our Church is responsible for the health and safety of those using our premises or sites where activities are taking place on behalf of the church. We need to ensure that the premises where the activities take place are safe and individual leaders need to be responsible for their area for the duration of their activity. The Church has a Health and Safety Policy which can be found in Appendix H.

As an exercise, you may find it helpful to try going around your area using 'the eyes of a child', from their height and see what you notice. Use the questions below to assess your working area and give areas for consideration.

- ◆ **Furniture** – Is it in a safe condition and appropriate for the ages using it, child sized etc.? Is any furniture stacked dangerously or positioned where injury could occur?
- ◆ **Equipment** – Are potentially hazardous tools, cleaning fluids etc. stored in a safe, locked place?
- ◆ **Electrical** – Ensure that equipment being used has been appropriately checked and sockets are covered when they are not in use.
- ◆ **Fire Equipment** – Do you know where the fire-fighting equipment is situated for your area and the most direct route out of the building? Do you carry out fire drills?
- ◆ **Lighting** – Is the building well-lit internally and externally– especially around entrance points?
- ◆ **Accident and emergency** – Do you have details of contact addresses and telephone numbers for parents/carers of all the children on site? Have they consented to you getting emergency treatment for their children if necessary?
- ◆ **Security** – How easy would it be for a child to get out of the building during an activity without being noticed? How easy would it be for a stranger to get into the building during a children's activity without being noticed?
- ◆ **Heating** – Is the area at an appropriate temperature for the activities and are radiators/ heaters that are switched on, out of reach for small children?
- ◆ **Insurance** - Is the Church insurance adequate for activities with the children and young people on and off site?
- ◆ **First Aid** – Do you know where the first aid box is? Who is responsible for first aid?  
N.B. The first aid box is normally stored under the welcome table in the gathering area.

## **Recruitment and training procedure for those working with children and young people.**

All people who wish to work with children or young people in our Church will be recruited using the procedure set out below.

### **Appointment Process**

1. Any enquiries to join the children's or young people's work will be passed to the Children's Deacon (under 10's) or the Youth Worker (10+)
2. The Children's Deacon or Youth Worker will meet with the applicant to discuss their interest or calling. They will look over the volunteer agreement together and this should be signed by both parties.
3. Applicants will have been regularly involved in the Church fellowship for at least 3 months before being considered for a role in the children's and youth work.
4. Applicants will be asked for 2 referees who can testify to their faith in Christ, their skills and character.
5. The applicant should then contact Robin Baker to complete a DBS check. An applicant will only take up their role once the disclosure has been returned.
6. It is the responsibility of the church to notify a leader that they need to renew their DBS check before the expiry date. It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that a new certificate is applied for and received prior to the expiry date mentioned.
7. The agreement should be reviewed on a yearly basis.

### **Teenage Helpers**

Those who are over 13 (Year 9) and under 18 can be authorised to work with children in a supervised capacity. They will be able to work as helpers, although special attention will be made to avoid them being overworked, placed in vulnerable situations or given inappropriate tasks. At all times young helpers will still come within the boundaries of our Child Protection Policy. Those aged 16 and above will complete a DBS check.

### **Training**

We will ensure that training and support is offered to all those working with children and young people in our Church. New leaders will spend time working alongside existing leaders until such time as they and the leader with supervision responsibility for them feels they are able to lead a group.

We will have regular leader's meetings for mutual support and we will make all leaders aware of any training courses available, which will better equip them in their work with the children or young people. We will also make leaders aware of any funding available to assist with training and/or provide local training.

Any changes to this policy and procedures will be the subject of discussion at one of the regular meetings, unless they have wider implications.

### **Support of leaders**

We recognise the importance of supporting leaders through open communication and regular leader's meetings (approximately termly). Leading activities for children or Young People can involve giving out substantially; therefore it is important to strike the right balance between giving out and taking in. Wherever possible we encourage all leaders to participate regularly in worship through Sunday morning or evening service and/or a midweek small group.

Once a year (at the renewal of your agreement) you will have opportunity to talk about your work with your group leader, and if you wish to continue. All leaders will be encouraged to seek advice and guidance from their team leader or the Youth Worker, should they have any difficulties or queries regarding their work.

## **Guidelines relating to working with children and young people**

Children's and young people's leaders need to understand the issues surrounding this work. We will endeavour to operate the best practise at all times. This means :

- Teaching the children and young people about God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and giving an example by their own lives.
- Treating all children and young people with respect and dignity. Using age appropriate language and tone of voice. Being aware of your own body language and the effect you are having on the individual child/young person.
- Not engaging in any of the following:
  - Invading the privacy of children or young people when they are showering or toileting
  - Rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child or young person, whether this is initiated by the leader or young person.
  - Sexually provocative games
  - Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in 'fun'. This includes flirting.
  - Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
  - Any scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting of a child or young person.
- Listening well. Being careful not to assume you know what a child is thinking or feeling. Listening to what is being spoken and how it is said. At the same time, looking at the child's body language to better understand what the child is saying.
- Setting a clear example to the children and young people and modeling how we expect them to behave. All leaders will control and discipline children without using physical punishment. (A situation may however arise where a child/young person needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.)
- Making sure other leaders are aware of each other's actions, e.g. taking children to the toilet, changing nappies, washing a child who has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed (wherever possible it would be preferable to ask the parent/carer to do this task).
- Not responding to excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature. This should also be reported.
- Familiarising yourself with the guidelines given within the volunteer agreement including those relating to personal information and images. Images or videos of young people should never be stored on a leader's mobile phone.

## **Ratios**

In planning for activities, please make sure that a minimum of 2 leaders are present and a contingency plan is in place, should one of the leaders be unable to attend.

It may be suitable to use the outdoor ratios for indoor activities if it is assessed that the risk is medium – high.

### **Indoor activities**

Age	0-2 years	1:3
	2-3 years	1:4
	3-8 years	1:8
	8 and over	1:10

### **Outdoor activities**

Age	0-2 years	1:3
	2-3 years	1:4
	3-8 years	1:6
	8-13 years	1:8
	13 and over	1:10

### **Swimming**

Age	0-5years	1:1
	5-8 years	1:2
	8 and over	as above depending on ability of group

## **Transporting children and young people:**

When transporting children and young people either in your own vehicle, or a vehicle hired for a particular journey, use the following guidelines to ensure maximum safety at all times. Please refer to Appendix C “Trip Planning form”

## **Risk assessments**

Risk assessments should be completed for all children’s and youth activities and a record of these should be kept in the church office.

Where activities take place on a regular basis only one assessment form need be filled in. This should then be reviewed and amended on a regular basis or as circumstances change. Please see Appendix D for a blank copy of the risk assessment form and the accompanying guidelines.

For overnight trips, further guidance is available from the office.

All proposed events will, in the first instance, be approved by the Children’s Deacon or Youth Worker.

### **Can I touch a child?**

We want to provide a nurturing and caring environment for our work with children and young people and this will involve some physical contact happening at least occasionally. We need to be aware that, when working with children and young people, their understanding and experiences of touch will all be different and we need to assess what level of touch is appropriate. For some children even an innocent touch can have a more sinister meaning. If a child is cringing or responding in a negative way to being touched, then stop immediately and find another non-tactile way to convey your concern.

We also need to be aware of our own actions and how someone else looking on might view it, either through observing the situation or through events being reported to them verbally.

### **Abuse of Trust**

Relationships between children or young people and their leaders take many different forms, but all of them can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in whom the child or young person has placed a degree of trust. The trust may be because the leader has an educational role, is a provider of leisure activities, or even is a significant adult friend. In every case, however, that relationship is not one of equal partners and there is the potential for the trust to be abused by the leader, who is in a position of power over the child or young person.

It is acknowledged that the imbalance of power means that it is wrong for a teacher to develop a romantic relationship with a sixth-former or for a doctor to enter into a romantic relationship with a patient and this imbalance can exist in other non-professional contexts. All voluntary organisations are now expected to have a policy which sets out the boundaries of such relationships.

- ◆ It is not acceptable for a leader to form a romantic relationship with a child or young person with whom they have a relationship of trust. Such a romantic relationship (even if consensual) would not be a relationship of equal partners – the leader is always in a position of power over the young person and exploitation is almost inevitable, even if unintentional.
- ◆ The inappropriate nature of romantic relationships is obvious where the leader is an adult, but less so when the leader is also a young person. However, if such a romantic relationship did occur, there would still be a confusion of the roles of leader and romantic partner. Normally in these circumstances the leader should cease either the relationship of trust or the romantic relationship with the young person.

### **Parental Consent**

All children and young people will be registered on arrival and parents/carers asked for details of full name, date of birth, address and contact telephone number(s). Consent forms for emergency medical treatment and for travel arrangements should be completed if children are being cared for in the absence of their prime carer, whether on or off church premises. This information should be readily available to leaders. Be aware that in some families, there are legal constraints on contact with children by absent parents. A sample of a consent form can be found in Appendix G. Where young children are collected from activities, care should be taken to ensure that the child is collected by a parent or someone appointed by the parent.

Personal information given will be held on a database which can be accessed by the Youth Worker and Church Office.

## **Responding to Child Abuse Concerns**

Most children and young people, within both their home environment and other settings, will be free from harm, abuse or neglect. However, there are some children and young people who suffer abuse or neglect, either within their own homes or through contact they have in other settings.

Some children may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, either as a result of a deliberate act, or a failure on the part of a parent or carer to act or to provide proper care or both.

Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

There are four main categories of abuse officially defined by the Government.

### **Physical abuse**

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 the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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 frequently 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.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of 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.

### **Neglect**

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 of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Recognising and Responding to Abuse**

Knowing whether a child or young person is being abused or neglected may be difficult to judge. However, all those who have contact with children and young people should be alert to the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and know how to respond to any concerns they may have.

On occasions an incident or an injury will give cause for concern but more often it is a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns which indicate that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm. Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which may be suggestive of abuse.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- A child or young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/herself.
- A disclosure or allegation made by a child or young person.
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child or young person.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour or play.
- Nervousness/ watchfulness.
- Inappropriate relationships with other children and/or adults.
- Signs of neglect, such as under-nourishment, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

Children and young people sometimes share views, worries, anxieties and concerns with adults with whom they have contact. Whenever they express concerns about their safety and protection in relation to physical, sexual and emotional harm, we help to protect them by listening to them and taking seriously what they say. Their views and wishes should be respected and taken into account, in so far as this is consistent with their safety and protection. We cannot promise confidentiality.

## **How to Respond to a Child Wanting to Talk About Abuse**

When a child or young person talks about abuse it is important to create a safe environment in which they can share their concerns. We need to:

- Listen carefully to what the child or young person has to say
- To react calmly so as not to further distress the child or young person
- Allow them time to say what they want, without rushing or interrupting them. Don't ask more questions than you need to in order to establish whether there is a cause for concern or to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Don't ask closed questions (ones which are answered by a single 'yes' or 'no') or leading questions which suggest what may have happened and who was involved such as, '*Did he say/do something to you?*' Instead use open questions such as, '*Is there anything else you want to say?*' or '*Can you tell me more about that?*'

- Look at the child or young person directly.
- Show acceptance of what the child or young person says (however unlikely the story may sound) and reassure the child or young person confirming that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you.
- Even when a child or young person has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse and it is right to tell.
- Be aware that the child or young person may be frightened and have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information. If the child or young person decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- Remember that most children and young people feel loyalty to their parents and other significant people in their lives and often find it difficult to say things to their detriment.
- Help the child or young person to understand what is going to happen next. Tell the child or young person you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality.

### **Procedure for when abuse is disclosed or suspected**

1. Make notes about what the young person has told you straight away. At times it may be appropriate to do this while they are talking. See Appendix E "Worker's Action Sheet" for guidelines.
  - Be legible and state the facts accurately
  - Include the child's name, address and date of birth
  - State the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure
  - Give a description of any visible bruising or other injuries
  - Be an exact record of what the child has said using the child's words. A child's behaviour and demeanour might also give some indication of what a child means to say and these should be noted
  - Detail what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported
  - Include any action as a result of the concerns e.g. who was spoken to and the resulting action
  - Be signed and dated
2. Report your concerns and pass on written details as soon as possible to the Child Protection Officer Mandy Talbot, telephone number 01279 505117 / 07717 841236, email: [childsafety@stortfordbaptist.org](mailto:childsafety@stortfordbaptist.org), or to the Senior Minister, telephone number 07906 301950 who are nominated by the Church to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicion of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

3. If the allegation involves both the Child Protection Officer and Youth Worker then the report should go directly to the Senior Minister, one of the Elders or to the Eastern Baptist Association (EBA)

Eastern Baptist Association (EBA)  
Safeguarding Contact - Nick Lear  
Tel: 07941 071965

**Alternatively contact:**

Hertfordshire Social Services - Call 0300 123 4043  
The police non-emergency number - Call 101

4. Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. Never act alone or take sole responsibility for deciding whether or not abuse is taking place.

If you feel that the designated person has not dealt with the concern appropriately, then please raise this with them directly. If you are still unsatisfied then you reserve the right to contact the EBA directly if needed.

**Helping victims of Abuse**

As a Church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse, and encouraging them in their faith. Where we can we will help provide or contact with pastoral counselling, help with finding appropriate support groups and friendship with caring and listening adults.

**Allegations against staff**

If an allegation is made against anyone working with children or young people, he/she may be required to withdraw immediately from (their) responsibilities while an investigation is carried out.

**Offenders attending our Church**

Where someone attending the Church is known to have abused children, or has a criminal record then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the Church in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. A written contract will be drawn up identifying appropriate behaviour and the person will be asked to sign. As a community, we will welcome them into the life of the Church and encourage them on their spiritual journey towards forgiveness and wholeness. However, responsibility with children or young people will not be appropriate and other ways that they can express their service to God and contribute to the life of the Church may be found. Please read policy statement of Equal Opportunities, Appendix F.

## **Useful Contacts & Resources**

### **Child Protection Officer – Mandy Talbot**

5 Lincoln Close, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 4EX

Tel: 01279 505117 / 07717 841236

Email: [childsafety@stortfordbaptist.org](mailto:childsafety@stortfordbaptist.org)

### **Church Office Address**

Baptist Church Centre, Twyford Road, Bishop's Stortford, Herts. CM23 3LJ

Tel: 01279 836695

### **Due Diligence Checking (DBS Checking organization)**

[www.ddc.uk.net](http://www.ddc.uk.net)

### **Eastern Baptist Association (EBA)**

Safeguarding Contact - Nick Lear

Tel: 07941 071965

[www.easternbaptist.org.uk](http://www.easternbaptist.org.uk)

### **Hertfordshire Police**

Tel: 01707 354000 or 101

<https://www.herts.police.uk/home>

### **Hertfordshire Social Services**

Tel: 0300 123 4043

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/childrens-social-care/child-protection/report-child-protection-concern.aspx>

### **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**

42 Curtain Road, London, EC2A 3NH

Tel: 0808 800 5000

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### **Safe to Grow – Resource published by Baptist Union**

Baptist House PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 8RT

Tel: 01235 517700

[www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)