

Woodgreen Evangelical Church

SAFEGUARDING

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE
AND VULNERABLE ADULTS



'Woodgreen Church is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We expect all members and volunteers to share this commitment.'

GENERAL GUIDANCE - October 2015



**Worcestershire Council for
Voluntary Youth Services**



Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

1. Introduction: Why do we have policies and good practice guidelines concerning safeguarding?

The safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults has never been more important nor had a higher profile. The voluntary and community sector, along with those in the statutory and independent sectors, must ensure that their work with these groups keeps everyone as safe as possible. This is better achieved when statutory, voluntary and community groups and organisations work closely and effectively together. Woodgreen Evangelical Church, as part of the voluntary and community sector in Worcestershire, has drawn on the guidance provided by Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services working in partnership with Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board*. As a God centered Christian church we want to maintain our Bible-based community distinctiveness and we trust that this is evident throughout these guidelines.

It is our desire to bring glory to God in the way in which we work with children, young people and vulnerable adults; that they in turn should bring glory to Him in their lives. We pray that by keeping to the guidance set out on these pages we will go some way towards achieving this aim.

Richard Lacey (Lead Pastor)

Don Beckett (Church Elder - Champion for Safeguarding)

We will review our policy and procedures on an annual basis.

2. We believe:

- Children, young people and vulnerable adults matter, that they should be kept safe, valued, listened to, and their rights and views respected.
- Those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults need to be adequately valued, equipped and supported. They need to know the correct procedure in handling possible cases of child abuse.
- Work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. We must ensure correct, helpful and loving procedures (fully in line with legal requirements) in every area, to the glory of God and for the good of all.
- The church should model best practice as a witness to the community. To this end we are seeking to implement highest quality safeguarding principles in all areas of the life of the church.

* 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' (Edition 2.0 May 2010) prepared by Worcester Voluntary Youth Services in partnership with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

3. Overall Policy Statement:

- All members of this church commit themselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- It is the responsibility of each worker to prevent the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults in whatever form and to report any abuse discovered or suspected in the correct way described in these guidelines.
- The church is committed to supporting and training those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults and to providing supervision. Workers are required to be aged eighteen or more.
- The church will use the Safeguarding Guidelines to ensure safe, wise and high quality practice with children, young people and vulnerable adults, working together as a team to ensure this. Each worker will be required to undergo training/familiarisation as set out in the main policy/guidelines.
- The church will ensure that a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is carried out for each worker.
- Young people under the age of eighteen who help with children or young peoples groups are know as 'helpers'. They must never be left with responsibility for children without the presence of an adult.
- Children, young people and vulnerable adults are part of the church today. They have much to give as well as to receive and will be listened to. In worship, learning and teaching and evangelism we will respect the wishes and feelings of our children, young people and vulnerable adults.

4. Definitions: 'Safeguarding' and 'child protection':

Safeguarding means proactively involving everyone in keeping all children, young people and vulnerable adults safe and promoting their welfare. Having the appropriate policies and procedures in place also safeguards volunteers, workers and trustees or committee members. It also means that we can tell parents and carers the safeguards that are in place to protect their children and young people.

Child Protection is a central part of safeguarding. It is about protecting an individual child or young person who is identified as either suffering harm or at risk of suffering harm as a result of neglect or abuse.

5. Safeguarding:

Safeguarding Policy Statement

Woodgreen Church is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect. This applies to all the children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we work, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality or country of origin.

Workers, including volunteers, group leaders and members of the church leadership will at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults involved with Woodgreen Church. We will ensure that leaders and volunteers know how to recognise and respond to concerns that a child or young person may be abused or neglected.

The Eldership will appoint from within its membership, a Champion for Safeguarding. He will report annually to the Eldership on the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and any allegations over the previous twelve months. We will review our policies and procedures on an annual basis.

Champion for Safeguarding:

A member of the eldership is appointed as the Champion for Safeguarding. This is to ensure that the church accepts responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level.

Role description:

- To ensure that a safeguarding policy is in place and that it is reviewed annually by the Eldership.
- To ensure that safe recruitment procedures are in place.
- To ensure that procedures are in place for handling allegations against paid staff and volunteers.
- To provide an annual report to the committee about the effectiveness of safeguarding and child protection issues and any allegations.

6. Child protection:

Child protection Policy Statement

Woodgreen Church believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people. We will be alert to any indications of neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse in the children and young people with whom we work and will respond to their needs. We value and respect every child and young person and will endeavour always to listen to them and respond appropriately to safeguard them. We will provide staff and volunteers with guidance to follow when they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing or at risk of harm. We will adhere rigorously to our Procedures and Code of Conduct. We will work cooperatively with other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The Designated Person for Child Protection is:

Martyn Walley

The Designated Person for Child Protection

Role description

- To take responsibility for disseminating and implementing Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures within the church
- To be familiar with WSCB procedures for safeguarding and investigating child abuse
- To know the relevant contacts within Children's Services and within the church
- To receive information from workers, volunteers, children, young people, parents and carers about child protection issues including any allegations against staff or volunteers
- To assess information promptly and take appropriate action
- To refer child protection concerns to Children's Social Care
- To ensure that the child/young person and their parents/carers are offered appropriate support
- To maintain records of all information received
- To be familiar with Children's Social Care and Police procedures for investigating child abuse
- To monitor safeguarding concerns and report, on an annual basis, to the church leadership
- To monitor safeguarding procedures in the church including:
 - checking that a parent/carer consent form for every child and young person is completed and stored safely
 - checking that safe recruitment and selection procedures are followed
 - checking that child protection awareness training is undertaken so that staff, including volunteers, know how to recognise and respond to concerns about a child or young person
- To offer advice, guidance and support to staff and volunteers dealing with child protection
- To identify training needs

Please note: It is not the role of the Designated Person for Child Protection to decide whether or not the child or young person has been abused. This is the task of Children's Social Care.

Disclosures and concerns

Child Protection Procedures should be followed when:

i) A child or young person makes a **disclosure**.

A **disclosure** is when a child or young person tells someone else about the behaviour of another person or persons towards him or her which makes the hearer think that the child or young person is experiencing some form of abuse or may be at risk of abuse.

ii) There is a **concern** about a child or young person.

A **concern** is when another child or young person, another parent or carer or a worker raises a question about whether a particular child or young person is experiencing some form of abuse or may be at risk of abuse.

The Designated Person for Child Protection should be contacted DIRECTLY in either of these circumstances. The information should NOT BE SHARED WITH ANYONE ELSE

Remember: In all cases the wellbeing of the children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount.

**CONTACT Martyn Walley on: 01905 357268
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Responding to a disclosure from a child or young person:

- Keep calm. Do not be shocked.
- Listen to the child or young person.
- Accept what you hear without passing judgement.
- Ask questions only for clarification.
- Do not investigate.
- Do not make promises.
- Offer support and understanding explaining that you cannot keep it secret and what may happen. (This gives them the choice to continue telling you or to stop.)
- Reassure the child or young person that they were right to talk to you.
- Write down notes – dates, times, facts, who were involved, observations using actual words used if possible.
- **Report to the Designated Person for Child Protection as soon as possible (or contact immediately if you believe the matter is urgent).**
- Ensure that you have the following information:
 - name(s), address, date(s) of birth of the child/children or young person/people
 - Parent/carer's name and contact details
 - Name of the person said to be involved
 - Names of any witness to the incident (if appropriate)
- Keep notes of your conversation with the Designated Person and any advice offered.
- Sign and date the notes and keep them in a confidential file.
- Act on the advice given.
- Respect confidentiality of everyone involved in the incident keeping the matter restricted only to those who need to know.
- Support should be provided for the child or young person making the disclosure.
The church has a form for recording such a disclosure.

PLEASE REMEMBER: IF IN DOUBT - CONSULT THE DESIGNATED PERSON.
Once the recorded incident has been reported to the Designated Person, it has been taken out of the worker's/volunteer's hands and further decisions and action should only be taken by the Designated Person.

Responding in an emergency situation

There may be a rare occasion when it is necessary to act quickly, for example, to protect a child or young person from a violent or drunken parent. In these circumstances it would be appropriate to call the Police. In the unlikely event that a child or young person arrives with serious injuries then you should telephone for an ambulance.

Always keep a record of the actions taken.

7. Recognising Abuse and neglect:

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. You do, however, have a responsibility to act if you have a concern or if you believe a child or young person is at risk of neglect or abuse.

The following information will help you to be alert to the signs of possible abuse:

i) Recognising physical abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their body, like elbows, knees and shins.

Some children and young people, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury, or when it appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely e.g. on the cheeks or thighs. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Physical signs of abuse may include:

- unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- cigarette burns
- bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

Changes in behaviour which can indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- depression
- withdrawn behaviour
- running away from home

ii) Recognising emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify, and often children and young people who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- a failure to thrive or grow
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour e.g. hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self harm
- fear of parents being approached regarding their behaviour

iii) Recognising sexual abuse

Adults who use children and young people to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse, it is the child or young person's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children and young people who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can indicate sexual abuse include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- substance or drug abuse
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

iv) Recognising neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet has some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children and young people.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children/young people
- constantly dirty or "smelly"
- loss of weight, or being consistently underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning they're being left alone or unsupervised

The above list is not meant to be definitive but a guide to assist you. It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour, such as a death or the birth of a new baby in their family, relationship problems between parents/carers etc.

What may give cause for concern?

- Bruising on parts of the body which do not usually get bruised accidentally, e.g. around the eyes, behind the ears, back of the legs, stomach, chest, cheek and mouth (especially in a young baby), etc
- Burns or scald marks
- Bite marks
- Any injuries or swellings, which do not have a plausible explanation
- Bruising or soreness to the genital area
- Faltering growth, weight loss and slow development
- Unusual lethargy
- Any sudden uncharacteristic change in behaviour, e.g. child becomes either very aggressive or withdrawn
- A child or young person whose play and language indicates a sexual knowledge beyond his/her years
- A child or young person who flinches away from sudden movement
- A child or young person who gives over rehearsed answers to explain how his / her injuries were caused
- An accumulation of a number of minor injuries and/or concerns
- A child or young person who discloses something which may indicate he/she is being abused
- Concern about a parent or carer's behaviour or presentation, e.g. evidence of possible alcohol or drug misuse, mental health difficulties or domestic violence
- Concern about arrangements for the collection of the child or young person

A 'cluster' of these signs should increase concern.

8. Guidelines for working with children and young people:

The Children act defines anyone under eighteen as a child, therefore at Woodgreen Evangelical Church, anyone under eighteen and involved in a children's group, will be considered a 'helper' and not a 'worker'. Helpers will not be expected to carry out the duties associated with a worker and will not be required to have a DBS check. They will, however, be expected to attend team training sessions.

General Guidelines

- The agreed ratio of workers to children:

Age	Child:Adult Ratio	Minimum number of workers
Up to 3 years	4:1	2
3-5 years	5:1	2
5-11 years	8:1	2
Over 11 years	10:1	2

- Children or young people attending a group should not be left alone at any times.
- As a rule, the only people allowed to participate in children and young peoples activities are team leaders, workers (who have clear DBS checks) and helpers. Every effort should be made to prevent free access to children by other adults.
- The team leader should keep a register of children or young people attending the group or activity for each session. This must include a list of all adults present.
- Registration forms should be given to parents/carers/young people to complete. Completed forms should be kept by group or team leaders.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should not be allowed into premises/rooms until the staff for their group are present.

- If a child is disruptive or their behaviour is unacceptable and they do not respond to correction from a team leader, the parent/carer should be contacted by the leader or nominated worker.
- All children and young people must be supervised whilst on the premises until they are collected by parents/carers.
- Any accidents or injuries, no matter how small, should be recorded in the church Accident Book (kept in the kitchen at church for activities held on site).

Workers and helpers...

- should treat all children and young people with the respect and dignity befitting their age - watching language, tone of voice and body language.
- should not be left alone with a child or young person where their activity cannot be seen.
- should control children or young people in a positive way without using physical punishment.
- should know any dietary requirements from the registration forms (which indicate health/medical concerns, including food allergies).
- should not invite a child or young person to their home alone. Instead, they should invite a group, making sure they have the knowledge and agreement of parents.
- should not give lifts to children or young people on their own.
- should not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in 'fun'.
- should not do anything to ridicule, reject or use a child or young person as a scapegoat.

Guidelines on touch:

- Only workers who have a DBS clearance obtained through Woodgreen Evangelical Church should accompany young children to the toilet, waiting at the door without going in.
- Everything should be kept in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's. Avoid any activity which is, or could be construed as, sexually stimulating to the worker.
- Avoid rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Avoid inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form.
- Team members should take responsibility for monitoring each other in the area of physical contact. They should feel free to constructively challenge a colleague if necessary.

Good practice with colleagues:

- If a worker sees another member of the team acting in a way which might be misconstrued, they should be prepared to speak about their concerns and always speak to the designated person. An atmosphere of mutual support and care needs to be encouraged so that team members will feel comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

Risk assessment of group activities:

- Taking care of children and young people involves taking responsibility for their well-being at all times, being prepared for every eventuality and anticipating situations where there is possible harm and taking steps to minimise the risks.
- Before undertaking any activity, the team leader should ensure that a risk assessment is carried out and it is advisable to appoint someone specifically for the task.

The following should be considered:

- consider who might be harmed and how this might happen
- assess the risks and take action to remove or reduce them as far as possible.