

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

National Safeguarding Officer: Lesley Taberer - 07890 414236

Local Centre Safeguarding Officer: Naomi Waite 07748 053955 (whilst we do not have a Director)

Local Centre Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility: Naomi Waite 07748 053955

Overview

As a Christian organisation, Youth for Christ affirms our belief in the God-given value of every individual with whom we work or have contact. In recognition of God's wholehearted commitment to them, we are committed to treating each individual with value and dignity and aim that none suffers abuse of any kind.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk against any form of harm and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. With this in mind, Youth for Christ is committed to supporting, resourcing and training all those who work with children, young people and adults at risk across our ministries.

As part of the national federation of Youth for Christ, all local ministries commit to informing the national Youth for Christ safeguarding officer of any safeguarding or welfare issue or concern that arises in their context. This is so that they can be appropriately advised and supported and so that any wider implications or risks can be assessed and managed.

British Youth for Christ have entered a partnership with Thirtyone:eight (formerly known as CCPAS) as a demonstration of our commitment to safeguarding. This partnership enables us to gain both up-to-date, expert support at a national level and to provide the same level of support and guidance to all our local ministries. As part of our service agreement with Thirtyone:eight, an information sharing agreement is in place, whereby in the event that a Youth for Christ local centre contacts Thirtyone:eight via their safeguarding helpline, notification is sent automatically to the designated safeguarding leads at British Youth for Christ, so that they can provide clear and robust support around any decisions or specific actions that need to be taken.

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Organisational Details

Name of Organisation: National Office Address: British Youth for Christ Business Park East,
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Midlands, B62 8BH

Tel No: 0121 502 9620

Email address: yfc@yfc.co.uk

Charity Numbers: 263446 (England & Wales) and SC039297 (Scotland)

Local Ministry

Name of Organisation: Office Address: Camberley Youth for Christ
Kings International College
Watchetts Drive
Camberley
Surrey
GU15 2PQ

Tel No: 07496 945778

Email address: director@camberley.yfc.co.uk
admin@camberley.yfc.co.uk

Charity Number: 1076760

Part One: Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Youth for Christ is committed to the prevention of abuse and the appropriate handling of suspicions or concerns regarding the abuse of children, young people and adults at risk. We recognise that each individual worker (employed staff, volunteer or trustee) is responsible for ensuring everyone in their care is kept safe from harm and any concerns regarding the infliction of harm or the failure to prevent harm are reported appropriately.

Youth for Christ will ensure that children, young people and adults at risk in our care are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern. A sample poster to display relevant contact details is available from Thirtyone:eight or British Youth for Christ which is to be displayed in all Youth for Christ centres or projects (and at all events and activities, as far as is possible).

A. **Responding to an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse**

1) *Reporting Responsibilities*

If abuse is suspected, observed, disclosed or otherwise alleged; under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation. In all cases, they should follow the procedures as below:

The person in receipt of an allegation or who has suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to their Safeguarding Officer via telephone or Safeguarding form which is available on our website www.camberley.yfc.co.uk

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRHTWiKOybZYTufHOb1OuFJONZBKFEtBi4hstdmJpF5t5l1w/viewform>

Local Ministry

Local Safeguarding Officer (dealing with local ministry staff and volunteers)

Name - Tel: Naomi Waite 07748 053955 (while we have no Director)

In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

Local Ministry Deputy Safeguarding Officer/s:

Name - Tel: Katy Baker 07988 575419

Other Helplines (Local Contacts)

Surrey Children's services tel 0300 470 9100. Out of hours 01483 517898
Surrey Police child protection team via 101
Surrey Duty LADO please call **0300 123 1650 (option 3)**
Surrey adult social care 0300 200 1005 Out of hours 01483 517898

The absence of the nominated safeguarding officers should not delay referral of the allegation to the relevant bodies. Therefore, if for some reason, the Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguarding Officer and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the Trustee Board are all unavailable then the individual should take action themselves (in accordance with their training and following the process below themselves). They should continue to make every effort to contact the safeguarding officer as the process develops. They should also contact the Thirtyone:eight Helpline on 0303 003 1111. Thirtyone:eight will be able to advise on the appropriate next steps, which may involve contacting the local Social Services or Police.

2) Process for Safeguarding Officers

The role of the safeguarding officer is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. It is not the role of the Safeguarding Officer, or anyone within Youth for Christ, to investigate allegations and concerns, unless directed to do so by the relevant statutory agency or advised by Thirtyone:eight to explore and gather more information. A written record of the concerns, observations or disclosure should be made as soon as practically possible (ideally within 1 hour) in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place. The date, time, location and people present should be included in the written record. (A sample reporting form can be found in Appendix D)

a) Dealing with Allegations of Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional abuse

If a child, young person or adult with additional care and support needs has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact Children's Social Services immediately for advice in cases where a child/young person or adult at risk is afraid to return home, there has been a deliberate injury, a disclosure of physical or emotional abuse, or you are concerned about their safety and believe there is a risk of significant harm. If there is immediate danger, threat or risk from further harm, then the police should be contacted.
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing by email) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so by social services or Thirtyone:eight
- For concerns related to poor parenting, they will encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places anyone at potential risk of harm. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, they will offer to accompany them. If they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services for further advice.

b) Dealing with Allegations or Suspicions of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department or Police Child Protection Team direct.

They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult up to the age of 25 with additional care and support needs is in need of protection

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger to themselves or others, or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Contact Thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.
- Identify support services for the victim, ie counselling or other pastoral support

c) Dealing with Allegations or Suspicious relating to Staff or Volunteers

- If an allegation is made against a worker (employed staff, volunteer or trustee) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer within Children's/Social Services whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. You should also make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults at risk. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved. (Terminology Note: this role has different titles in different areas.) The Designated Safeguarding Lead within their own Trustee Board will also be informed. If the allegation involves the designated safeguarding lead then the Chair of the Board will be informed.

In any of the cases above, the safeguarding officer will: keep their

- nominated trustee informed
- keep the National Safeguarding Officer informed
- not discuss details of the case to anyone else, other than those nominated above
- seek advice from Thirtyone:eight and follow their guidance - this can be done at any stage, but is most helpful and effective when advice is sought at the earliest possible time

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults up to the age of 25 years with additional care and support needs.

The Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards to the suspicion of the worker
- Inform the LADO
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.

The Care Act 2014 or its equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide.

3) DBS (*Disclosure Scotland Referrals see separate Scotland policy*)

Where there is a proven allegation against a worker (employed staff, volunteer or trustee), there is a requirement under law to make a referral to the DBS who manage and maintain the lists of people barred from working with children, young people and adults at risk. We have a duty to ensure that individuals who pose a threat to vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups. The duty is upon us as a 'regulated activity' provider, which includes churches and other voluntary organisations. They must be informed by way of a referral where the 'employer' (of a paid or volunteer worker) withdraws permission for an individual to be engaged in the relevant activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant, or been transferred to a position which is not regulated or controlled. The referral should be made when the organisation has obtained sufficient evidence and, where appropriate, has consulted with the relevant statutory designated officer. Further information and advice is available from Thirtyone:eight.

4. Charity Commission Notification

Any serious safeguarding incident involving a Youth for Christ worker must also be reported to the Charity Commission (OSCR in Scotland) by the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the Trustee Board. They have a duty to report what happened and explain how this was handled, even if you have reported it to the police or another agency. Further guidance can be obtained from the Charity Commission/ OSCR. This applies to where the incident relates to a worker whether employed or a volunteer.

B. Prevention of Abuse

1) *Safer Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers*

Having in place robust practices surrounding the recruitment of staff and volunteers; including trustees, is an essential element in our safeguarding arrangements. These help to deter, detect and prevent those we would wish not to be working with children, young people and adults at risk from doing so at the earliest point. Both British Youth for Christ and local ministries will ensure all staff and volunteers are appointed and supervised in accordance with a safer recruitment policy and guidelines. It is advised that suitable questions around safeguarding should be asked as part of the interview process.

Specific guidance on recruitment practice can be found in the British Youth for Christ Recruitment Policy & Selection Procedures. To request a copy, please email hr@yfc.co.uk.

Youth for Christ comit to ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidelines on safer recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description/person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply the Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- Suitable training is provided for the successful applicant The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has access to the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

2) *Guidance on Recruiting Workers with a Criminal Record*

If there is evidence that an applicant for a role has a criminal record, either through self - disclosure or through the DBS check, or it comes to light that a current worker or volunteer has a previously undisclosed criminal record, then the following guidelines outline the relevant process.

a) Context

The Police Act 1997, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975 will apply. As Youth for Christ we recognise that gaining employment is an essential part of successful individual rehabilitation and that failure to secure employment or meaningful voluntary opportunities can be a key reason for re-offending.

Consideration must be given as to whether Youth for Christ is an appropriate place for this rehabilitation for each individual. It is unlikely that any policy can cover all of the circumstances which may arise, but the intention is to ensure equal opportunity and fairness to all prospective members of staff and volunteers.

b) Recruitment and Employment

Offers of work will be based primarily on the person's ability to undertake the tasks as stated in the job or role description. The nature of any criminal conviction will be considered as to its relevance to the work in question and will not of itself be a reason for non-employment. An assessment will be carried out by the Trustees, with advice from British Youth for Christ's Safeguarding Officer and Head of HR. Risks will be assessed and consideration given to not allowing a risk to be knowingly imposed on any of those whom Youth for Christ is serving, or on other staff or volunteers. An examination of the circumstances and events leading to an offence will be considered, as will repeat offences and the time since an offence took place. Careful attention will be given to relevant references and advice sought from appropriate agencies, taking into account the requirements outlined below. When there is an offence relating to children, young people or adults at risk of harm, or there is a known or suspected risk, Youth for Christ will undertake a risk assessment (please refer to appendix A for a sample risk assessment) and agree appropriate action to mitigate any risks. For existing workers, this may involve removing the person from the relevant activity, either temporarily or permanently. Alternatively, Youth for Christ reserves the right to supervise the individual concerned, if any known risk is assessed as manageable and will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. This may involve the use of behavioural supervision agreements. Whatever action is taken, appropriate pastoral care will also be offered.

c) Requirements

Information contained in a Disclosure or obtained from an individual about a criminal record will be treated in strict confidence and on a need-to-know basis in accordance with The Disclosure and Barring Service code of practice and GDPR. Disclosures from applicants for a role will be kept securely retained for no longer than six months from the date they were received, and disposed of securely. Information on spent convictions will be asked only of those who are applying for work which allows exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Applicants who wish to submit confidential information concerning any criminal convictions will be encouraged to do so separately from the application form, sent to the Chair of trustees or other nominated person.

d) Decision

The decision to employ someone with a criminal record is the legal responsibility of the trustees. Consideration should be given to any and all possible risks and how these can be minimised or excluded, including:

- The length of time since the conviction
- The severity and nature of the offence(s)
- Whether there was a repetition of offences
- All and any potential risks
- Evidence of rehabilitation

In taking such decisions, advice should be sought from the national Youth for Christ Safeguarding Officer and Thirtyone:eight.

3. Training and Supervision Training

Training

Youth for Christ is committed to on-going safeguarding training for all workers, including trustees;

- developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding to help protect everyone. All workers at both national and local level should receive safeguarding training during their induction period. This will be updated annually. Workers involved in recruitment and management will also receive appropriate training which includes safeguarding considerations.
- Appropriate evidence of training in safeguarding will be detailed to trustees annually as part of an annual cycle of review of policy and practice. Local ministries may seek advice on training levels and needs from the national Local Ministries team or the national safeguarding officers.

Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

Youth for Christ commit to ensuring all staff and volunteers are appropriately line managed and/or supervised by a named individual who arranges regular meetings. This is critical to the cycle of review and to ongoing development in all areas, not just safeguarding. Part of the role of the line manager/supervisor is to ensure all training needs are met and that those they supervise have understood their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and are able to raise any concerns or suspicions appropriately. The Line Manager/supervisor should also be aware of each worker's performance in their role and their approach to personal relationships with the children, young people and adults at risk in their care. It is expected that each Line Manager/Supervisor will regularly observe the worker in their role. They should also keep a written record of supervision meetings and ensure any concerns or training needs are addressed. Evidence of

training attended should be kept. Appropriate evidence should be presented to trustees as part of an annual cycle of review which demonstrates good working practice in this area.

4. Whistle-blowing (for more information see British Youth for Christ's Whistleblowing Policy)

In addition to effective management of allegations against staff, there is a mechanism in place for staff and volunteers to raise legitimate concerns (e.g. improper actions or omissions) about other workers. This is known as 'whistleblowing'. The reporting principles of which are contained in the Public Disclosure Act 1998 which gives legal protection to workers against being dismissed or penalised as a result of disclosing certain legitimate concerns. The policy is designed so that workers can raise safeguarding or other concerns internally and at a high level. It is not necessary for the worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is Youth for Christ's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns raised anonymously are less credible but will still be considered at the discretion of Youth for Christ. If told not to raise or pursue wrongdoing, even by a person in authority such as a manager, employees should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to their line manager, supervisor or designated trustee. Youth for Christ upholds the importance of creating and working in a culture which encourages individuals to feel safe, open and transparent.

There may also be occasions when a worker has a personal difficulty which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Workers have a responsibility to discuss each situation with their line manager or supervisor so professional or personal support can be offered. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare and safety of children, young people or adults at risk but any discussion of these personal difficulties will be limited to those who need to know within the organisation and with statutory authorities.

5. Pastoral Care - supporting those affected by abuse

Youth for Christ is committed to offering pastoral care to all those affected by abuse. This may be young people or those working within the organisation as employees, volunteers or trustees who have been personally affected by abuse in the past or have been involved in dealing with abuse in some form as part of their current role. In offering pastoral care, we seek to work with each individual to provide the most

appropriate support, working with an individual's home church if applicable and any local contacts, including relevant statutory agencies.

Support may be provided in a variety of ways including through personal contacts, local clergy or other church connections, pastoral care teams, through counselling agencies, specific Safeguarding services or any other possibilities. The main aim is to ensure that no-one feels isolated because of their experiences, and no one is left to deal with difficult feelings or stress because of the safeguarding aspects of their role within Youth for Christ.

6. Categories of Abuse

Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child, young person or adults at risk and includes somebody inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may take place in any context; a family setting, an institution or a community setting and may involve someone known to the child or may involve a stranger. Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual or by a group and may be by an adult or by another child or children.

1) Statutory Definitions

Although the statutory definitions of abuse vary slightly in England, Scotland and Wales, the following are broad definitions on which we base this policy. *(Please refer to Appendix B for further information on specific categories of abuse)*

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

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.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexting is another form of sexual

abuse and refers to the sending of sexually explicit messages or images usually between mobile phones. Sexting is now a criminal offence. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- tend to a child's basic emotional needs.

2) Abuse and Additional Needs

Additional needs covers a wide range of disabilities and impairments, including but not limited to moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities; physical or visual impairments; deafness; autism and autistic spectrum needs, physical or mental health needs; speech, language and communication needs and behavioural, emotional and social development needs. This range of needs have a different impact on each individual child and their experience of disabling barriers. Any one child's experience of their impairment will be unique to them.

Research consistently shows that children and young people with disabilities are more likely to experience abuse (NSPCC 2018) and specifically more likely to experience multiple kinds of abuse and multiple episodes of abuse. The increased risk applies to disabled children in all impairment groups and all forms of abuse.

One of the factors that places disabled children at higher risk is that they may have less access to services and support which would otherwise protect them. Consideration needs to be given of any barriers to communication and sense of isolation they may have, either as a result of their needs or as a consequence of our own attitudes or assumptions. Consideration needs to be given to appropriate training for all workers engaging with children and young people with additional needs to ensure there are no ongoing skills gaps or any lack of awareness.

In implementing this policy and our safeguarding procedures, Youth for Christ seeks to ensure that specific consideration is given to those with additional needs and to ensuring that our services and safeguarding support is accessible in ways appropriate to all, regardless of any disability or impairment. Consideration should also be taken to children with sensory needs such as hearing or visual impairment.

3) Specific Contexts

Children affected by gang activity

Such children may be at risk of violent crime and are therefore considered vulnerable. Children are considered vulnerable due to age in general, but children who are affected by gang activity may be at greater risk of potential harm. Risks include access to weapons (including firearms), retaliatory violence and territorial violence with other gangs. Other risks include increased likelihood of involvement in knife crime, dangerous dogs, sexual violence and substance misuse.

County lines and criminal exploitation

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which criminals groom and manipulate children into drug dealing. The 'lines' refer to mobile phones that are used to control a young person who is delivering drugs, often to towns outside their home county.

Self-harm (e.g. overdoses, cutting, misuse of drugs or alcohol).

Local Safeguarding Children Boards vary in their approach to deliberate self-harm. It will always be appropriate to discuss such a case with Thirtyone:eight and the local authority children's social care. Help can also be obtained from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), through the general practitioner (GP) and, sometimes, from direct access counselling services.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic violence is the abuse of adults within a household. It may involve coercion and control, it need not involve physical assault to count as violence, and the adults concerned need not be married or of opposite sexes. If there are children in the household they are witnesses to the abuse and then they are considered to be emotionally abused, whether or not they are in the same room.

Parents who are adults at risk of harm

It is not uncommon for the parents of children who are abused or neglected to be themselves adults at risk of harm. Particularly common are problems of mental ill-health, domestic abuse and substance abuse (i.e. drugs and alcohol), often in combination. Where someone with such a difficulty is known to be a parent with a child living with them, a referral to the local authority children's social care service may be required.

Female genital mutilation

This is a Criminal offence under UK Law, and any suggestion that it is being sought or has been carried out should be referred using the process outlined in this policy.

Child trafficking

Child trafficking is transporting children across national borders, sometimes without proper immigration arrangements, for a variety of illegal purposes which can include domestic service, illegal adoption, organ harvesting, benefit claims or prostitution. Such children may speak little English. The police should be contacted immediately if a member of staff or volunteer comes across such a child.

Sexual exploitation and Prostitution

Children can be exploited by being given rewards in return for sexual activities. Internet and other media technology may be used in the abuse. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Regardless of the challenging behaviours they may display, exploited children should be viewed as victims of child sexual abuse, not as criminals.

Forced marriage and honour-based violence

Disclosures of actual or possible forced marriage should not be treated as simply a family matter or be disclosed to other family members, but should be referred to the relevant statutory agencies.

Complex (organised or multiple) abuse

This is abuse which involves one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers may be acting in concert, or in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to abuse children. The internet may also be used.

Bullying

Bullying is another way in which children (or adults) abuse other children, and it can be verbal or physical. Bullying includes teasing, making unkind comments about a child, demanding money, "ganging up" on a child or physically assaulting a child. You might see evidence of torn clothes, bruising, burns, or scratches. A child might be afraid to attend school or other activities if they think the bully **will** be present.

PART TWO Best Practice Guidelines

Introduction

The following provides specific guidance about expectations for those who work as staff and volunteers for Youth for Christ nationally and locally with children and young people. The over riding principle of working safely in this context is that workers should take every opportunity that is reasonable to ensure that their actions do not cause harm, or fail to prevent harm, or provide opportunity for misunderstanding, misinterpretation or unnecessary allegations to be made. In doing so, the following guidance should be followed.

(Note: 'Workers' refers to all those who work with and have contact with children, young people and adults at risk through the activity of Youth for Christ. This includes staff, trustees and all volunteers.)

1) *Position of Trust and Expected Behaviour*

As a result of their role, all those working with children, young people and adults at risk are in 'positions of trust' in relation to those in their care. As of 2022 the Sexual Offences Act (2003), now includes faith group leaders and sports coaches (defined in section 22), as well as teachers, care workers, youth justice workers, social workers and doctors. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship. Workers should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

It is unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop with a child, young person or adults at risk for as long as the relationship of trust continues. This can be achieved by staff and volunteers respecting boundaries and privacy of those being cared for, knowing how to deal with issues of discipline appropriately and developing an awareness of issues related to equality, inclusion and additional needs. Any incident, behaviour or attitude that has potential to be misinterpreted or which could lead to a breach of trust should be reported at the earliest opportunity.

All workers have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work. There may be times when a worker's behaviour, or actions in their personal life, come under scrutiny because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position or indicate an unsuitability to work with children or young people. The behaviour of a worker's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and require careful consideration by an employer as to whether there may be a potential risk to children and young people in the workplace. All workers and trustees will have

signed the Youth for Christ Code of Conduct which is available on request from British Youth for Christ from hr@yfc.co.uk.

A sample Volunteer Agreement is available on request from British Youth for Christ from hr@yfc.co.uk

2) Record Keeping and Data Protection

Workers may have access to personal or sensitive information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child or young person concerned. If a worker is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from their manager or Safeguarding Officer. Any actions should be in line with the Youth for Christ Data Protection Policy. Trustees should provide clear advice to staff and volunteers about their responsibilities under this legislation. Whilst workers need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children and young people, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a child or young person under any circumstances.

Records of contact with children, young people and adults at risk of harm will be kept for every activity in accordance with the Data Retention Policy of the organisation. The record should cover the number of children, young people and adults at risk of harm in attendance; the activities done or the issues covered in conversation; and any unusual events (e.g. fire alarms, unexpected guests, behaviour incidents). These records safeguard children, young people and adults at risk and also all workers.

Every child, young person, adult with additional care and support needs, parent or carer should be able to view what is recorded about them. This information will be kept in a way that does not breach the confidentiality of an individual. Whilst it is important to observe data protection requirements, safeguarding is always the priority. Information about the prevention and detection of crime is exempt from Data Protection requirements. It may, therefore, be inappropriate to release information to a parent that has been disclosed by a child, young people or adults at risk, without first consulting the statutory agencies.

Information of a sensitive nature (e.g. a child/ young person/ adult with additional care and support needs disclosing abuse) will need to be kept separately in a secure place and recorded using a report form. (samples available from British Youth for Christ or Thirtyone:eight)

However, a cross reference could be recorded along the lines of "Jenny spoke to Bill tonight - see separate note in her file".

For further information around record keeping and data protection please refer to the Data Protection Policy available from British Youth for Christ and the Data Retention Policy of the organisation.

3) Social Contact

Social contact and communication between workers and children, young people or adults at risk, in whatever form, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.

Workers should not request or respond to personal information from a child or young person, other than that which is appropriate as part of their professional role. Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny and should also be clear in their approach to communication, so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details (including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers) to any child, young person or adults at risk of harm, unless the need to do so is agreed in advance with their management and parents/carers. Communications outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. (See Online Safety policy)

Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This also applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work or through the worker's own family or personal networks. All contacts established or continued with children, young people or adults at risk outside of the normal work environment should be open and transparent, with appropriate caution for safe working practices being adopted.

This means that workers should:

- ensure that all contact with children, young people or adults at risk is transparent and open to scrutiny and therefore have no secret contact or private communication
- consider the appropriateness of all their contacts and communication, according to their role and nature of their work
- maintain appropriate levels of accountability in relation to their contact with children, young people and adults at risk and advise management of any social contact they have which may give rise to concern
- report and record any situation, which may place anyone at risk or which may compromise the organisation or their own role or standing

4) *Appropriate Relationships*

a) Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when workers may wish to give a child or young person a personal gift. The giving of gifts or rewards to children, young people or adults at risk should be part of an agreed plan for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. Workers need to be aware that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or 'groom' a young person.

Adults should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Care should also be taken to ensure that workers do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential

treatment. There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis of any significant value.

b) Infatuations

Occasionally, a child, young person or adults at risk may develop an infatuation with someone who works with them. Workers should deal with such situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach and they are transparent and accountable. A worker who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a manager so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress, misunderstanding or embarrassment. Such concerns should be reported and recorded with an agreed plan of action implemented to ensure professional boundaries are maintained.

c) Sexual Contact and Relationships

All workers should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their work with children, young people and adults at risk up to the age of 25. Intimate or sexual relationships between workers and children or young people will be regarded as a grave breach of trust and a matter of gross misconduct. This includes contexts in which the worker and the young person are close in age. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is always unacceptable, due to the breach of trust and the nature of the worker's position of power.

This means that workers should NOT:

- have any form of intimate relationship with a child, young person or adults at risk
- have any form of communication with a child/young person or adults at risk in their care which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative
- make sexual remarks to, or about a child/young person or adults at risk of harm
- discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children/young people or adults at risk of harm

5) Physical Contact

Not all children and adults at risk feel comfortable about physical contact. Permission should be sought from a child or young person before physical contact is made. Where the child is very young, there should be a discussion with the parent or carer about what physical contact is acceptable and/or necessary.

a) General Principles

When physical contact is made with a child, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. However, physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of an adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a worker believes that their action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the manager as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and parents/carers should also be informed in such circumstances. Workers should always be prepared to report or explain their actions and accept that physical contact will be open to scrutiny.

Where a child seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult, the situation should be handled sensitively and care taken to ensure that contact is not exploited in any way. Careful consideration must be given to the needs of the child and advice and support given to the worker concerned.

b) Activities that may require Physical Contact

In some contexts, workers will have to initiate some physical contact with children, for example in sporting, drama or other physical activities. This may be to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. Contact should be relevant to their age or understanding and workers should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

This means that workers should:

- Have an approved plan for any regular activities involving possible physical contact
 - Treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
- Always explain the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- Seek consent of parents where a child or young person is unable to do so because of a disability
 - Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret any such contact
 - Be aware of gender, cultural or religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact

c) Managing Challenging Physical Behaviour

All children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Workers should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of corporal punishment is not acceptable and whilst there may be a legal defence for parents who physically chastise their children, this does not extend, in any circumstances, to other adults who work with children and young people.

Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, workers must follow an agreed plan of work, and use strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed. Where a child has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a positive handling plan may be drawn up and agreed by all parties. The use of physical intervention should only be used to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances. When used it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they may cause. The minimum necessary force should be used and the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported. The parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible.

This means that workers should:

- try to defuse situations before they escalate
- inform and agree with parents any behaviour management techniques used
- be mindful of factors which may impact upon behaviour e.g. bullying, abuse
- always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary
- record and report as soon as possible any incident where physical intervention has been used
- ensure they have appropriate training to handle challenging behaviour
- hold a debrief

A recommended guidance on safe ratios whilst working with children over the age of 8 years old is one adult to be present to every 10 children.

d) Children and Young People in Distress

There are some contexts in which workers will need to manage occurrences of distress and emotional upset. When a distressed person needs comfort and reassurance, this may involve appropriate physical contact. Young children in particular may need immediate physical comfort, for example after a fall, separation from parent etc. Adults should use their judgement to comfort or reassure a child in an age appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries.

This means the worker should:

- —consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed child
- be circumspect in offering reassurance in unsupervised or one-to-one situations, but always record such actions
- not assume that all children seek physical comfort if they are distressed

e) Personal Care

Children, young people and adults at risk are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard those in our care and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of those concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

This means that workers should:

- avoid any physical contact when children and adults at risk are in a state of undress
- avoid any visually intrusive behaviour
- where there are changing rooms announce their intention of entering before doing so

This means that workers should NOT:

- change in the same place as children and adults at risk shower or bathe with children
- assist with any personal care task which a child, or young person or adults at risk can undertake by themselves

f) First Aid and Administration of Medication

It is expected that there should always be at least one worker present who is trained in basic first aid techniques. When administering first aid, workers should ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered and this should be documented in an accident book as appropriate. In circumstances where young children need medication during the course of their activities, an agreed plan should be in place and appropriate permissions given by parents/carers for administration of medication. Depending upon the age and understanding of the child, they should where appropriate, be encouraged to self-administer medication or treatment including, for example any ointment or use of inhalers.

6) *Lone working and working 'One-to-One'*

There are some contexts in which it is appropriate to work with a young person alone, such as mentoring or pastoral contexts. Due to the nature of this context, it is vital to have clear procedures and agreements in place. 'One-to-one' situations have the potential to make a child/young person more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Those working in 'one-to-one' settings with children and young people may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Both possibilities should be recognised so that when one to one situations are unavoidable, reasonable and sensible precautions are taken.

Workers should consider the safest and most appropriate venue for meeting a young person one-to-one and how to make this space the safest it can be. There should be a written agreement in place which outlines the expected setting and purpose of the work. This should include the worker and young person outlining expectations, and could also include the agreement of their parent/carer, school or church, social worker or other professional contact. There are occasions where workers will need to undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of 'one-to-one' work. These assessments should take into account the individual needs of the child/young person and the individual worker and any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. Meetings with children and young people outside regular agreed working arrangements should not take place without prior agreement of managers and parents or carers. Workers should be aware of the need to be transparent and accountable in all their work and the particular risks of working alone with a young person.

7) *Home Visits*

There may be workers for whom home visits are an integral part of their work. In these circumstances it is essential that appropriate procedures and risk assessments are in place to safeguard children and young people and the adults who work with them.

A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child/young person, parents and others living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances can make workers more vulnerable to an allegation. Specific consideration should

be given to visits outside of 'office hours' or in remote or secluded locations. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed. Visits should not be made alone, unless there is prior permission from trustees and an existing relationship between the worker and the family. There will be occasions where risk assessments are not possible or not available, e.g. when emergency services are used.

In these circumstances, a record must always be made of the circumstances and outcome of the home visit. Such records must always be available for scrutiny.

Under no circumstances should an adult visit a child in their home outside agreed work arrangements or invite a child to their own home or that of a family member, colleague or friend. If in an emergency, such a one-off arrangement is required, the worker must have a prior discussion with a manager and the parents or carers and a clear justification for such arrangement is agreed and recorded. This means that workers will agree the purpose for any home visit with their line manager, undertake a risk assessment where possible and ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is discussed with their manager and, where appropriate action is taken.

8) *Transporting Children and Young People*

There will be occasions when workers are expected or asked to transport children or young people as part of their duties. Workers who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children, should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Under normal circumstances, staff and volunteers should not transport a single child or young person. Wherever possible ask another member of staff or volunteer to accompany you when transporting a single child/young person. However, this may be necessary in an emergency or when other possibilities have been explored but are not possible and this is the only means of the child attending a particular group or activity. In these circumstances, workers should do their utmost to spend the least amount of time alone in a car with a young person and should ensure they have written permission from their line manager and the parents/carers, (please refer to appendix C.) In emergency contexts, where not giving a child a lift alone would cause them to be put at risk from harm, then this must be recorded and reported to a manager and parents/carers.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers should wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Workers should also be aware of current legislation and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children. Where workers transport children in a vehicle which requires a specialist licence/insurance, they should ensure that they have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle. A child or a young person should always be seated in the back seats of the car and never in the front passenger seats for good practice.

It is inappropriate for workers to offer lifts to a child or young person outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the line manager and has been agreed with the

parents/carers.

9) *Praying*

The following guidance provides additional considerations when praying with or for a child/young person/ adults at risk, which may be relevant to a range of contexts, including one-to-one meetings.

- Always talk and pray with someone in a group of more than two if possible. Otherwise the guidance for one-to-one meetings should be followed as usual practice.
- Prayer should be offered by someone of the same biological gender as the young person, if possible. However, consideration should be given where a young person approaches a leader of a different gender to ask for prayer and this should be handled sensitively. For example, by suggesting another leader of the same gender or where appropriate to the relationship this can be accommodated as safely as possible, for example, by inviting another leader to join or simply ensuring transparency and accountability. These considerations also apply to those with non-binary gender identification.
- Whilst it is understandable to want privacy when praying, it should usually take place in an open space or a public venue. Where this is not possible or the context is already in a one-to-one context or more private setting such as an office or classroom, then the worker must ensure all efforts for transparency and accountability have been made.
- Whilst confidentiality is important, as in any context, there should be no promise of confidentiality.
- When praying for someone, the worker should not initiate a physical touch. If appropriate, they could ask if it is OK to touch an arm or shoulder, but this should not be assumed and any touch should be primarily to offer comfort. A hug initiated by a child or young person can be reciprocated appropriately in response to their distress or for comfort.

10) *Residentials, Outings and Overnight Activities*

Workers should take particular care when supervising children and young people on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Workers remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where activities include trips away from the normal workplace and/or overnight stays, it is best practice to visit the venue in advance whenever possible. Activities should be well planned in advance and any necessary risk assessments undertaken in relation to activities and arrangements for personal care and sleeping. Children, young people, adults and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip. In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/child ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays. Health and Safety

arrangements require workers to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.

The following guidelines are intended to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk during residential activities, whether staying in camps, churches, hostels or other accommodation. All workers will:

- Respect the privacy of young people. Leaders will ask before entering accommodation, changing rooms or washing facilities and (except for emergencies) only enter the accommodation or changing rooms of young people of the same biological gender.
- Allocate accommodation on the basis of biological gender. Therefore, there will be separate accommodation for males and females. (Note: where there is a young person who identifies as transgender or as a non-binary gender, advice can be sought from Thirtyone:eight or the national safeguarding officers on best practice in this context.)
- Always use separate accommodation for leaders or if unavailable ensure permission is sought for shared accommodation from trustees and parents/carers.
- Always ensure that there are leaders of the same gender as the young people attending.

11) Working in Partnership

The diverse nature of the organisation and settings in which Youth for Christ works means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations to ensure that the partner organisation's and Youth for Christ's safeguarding policies are compatible and that the procedures within each are followed, should any incident or allegation occur. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of a letting agreement, will have their own policy that meets our safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children, young people and adults at risk and to all those with whom we work in partnership.

Policy End

Policy approved November 2024

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