

“Safe to Grow”

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Information Pack – policy and procedures

Aim

We are seeking to:

- Guard against abuse and accusations of abuse with our youth and children’s work.
- To recognise and respond appropriately if a child or young person within our care is being abused by anyone either within or outside the church.

NB: This document has been drawn up with a view to the safety and security primarily of children and young people and the corresponding work which the church undertakes in this area. Vulnerable adults (i.e. those who are unable to take care of their own basic needs and/or safeguard themselves against abuse) should also be cared for with the same level of vigilance. Whilst they are not always named within the context of this policy, it is assumed that the same principles will apply when working with vulnerable adults as with children and young people.

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1. Youth and Children's work at NMBC – Aims and Vision

Within the youth and children's work at NMBC we aim to:

- Encourage children and young people to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- Help them to explore and understand God's Word and how it applies to daily life
- Develop and awareness of the person and work of the Holy Spirit
- Help the children and young people see the value in meeting together to learn from, support and encourage one another
- Work together with parents to give the children and young people in our care a firm foundation for faith in the living God, and a clear sense of their identity and self-worth.

2. NMBC Policy Statement on Children, Young People and the Church

This statement was agreed at the church meeting of **OCTOBER 2018**

It will be read once a year at a suitable church meeting where progress in carrying it out will be monitored.

1. As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people.
2. 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.
3. We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.
4. The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision.
5. We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or volunteers.
6. The church is committed to following the guidelines and procedures published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain in its booklet "Safe to Grow" which is based in the Home Office Code of Practice "Safe from Harm". The key points of this are summarised below.
7. Each worker 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.

Affirmation of the place of children and young people in our church's life:

Children and young people are an integral part of our church today. They have much to give as well as receive. We will listen to them. As we nurture them in worship, learning and community life, we will respect the wishes, feelings and interests of children and young people.

The “Safe to Grow” guidelines can be summarised as follows:

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.
3. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.
4. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
5. Use supervision as a means of protecting children.
6. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
7. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant’s paid work or volunteering with children.
8. Explore all applicants’ experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.
9. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.
10. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
11. Train all paid staff and volunteers, their supervisors and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

3. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Safeguarding Lead – nominated person to be first point of contact for any child protection concerns = *Simon Bramwell*: safeguarding@nmbc.org.uk, 07740 047801.

Management Trustee with responsibility for youth and children’s work – nominated person to act on behalf of the church in child protection matters, including liaison with statutory agencies = *Simon Bramwell*.

Youthworker = *Analice Miná Collyer*: youth@nmbc.org.uk, 07961 056732 / 020 8942 6912.

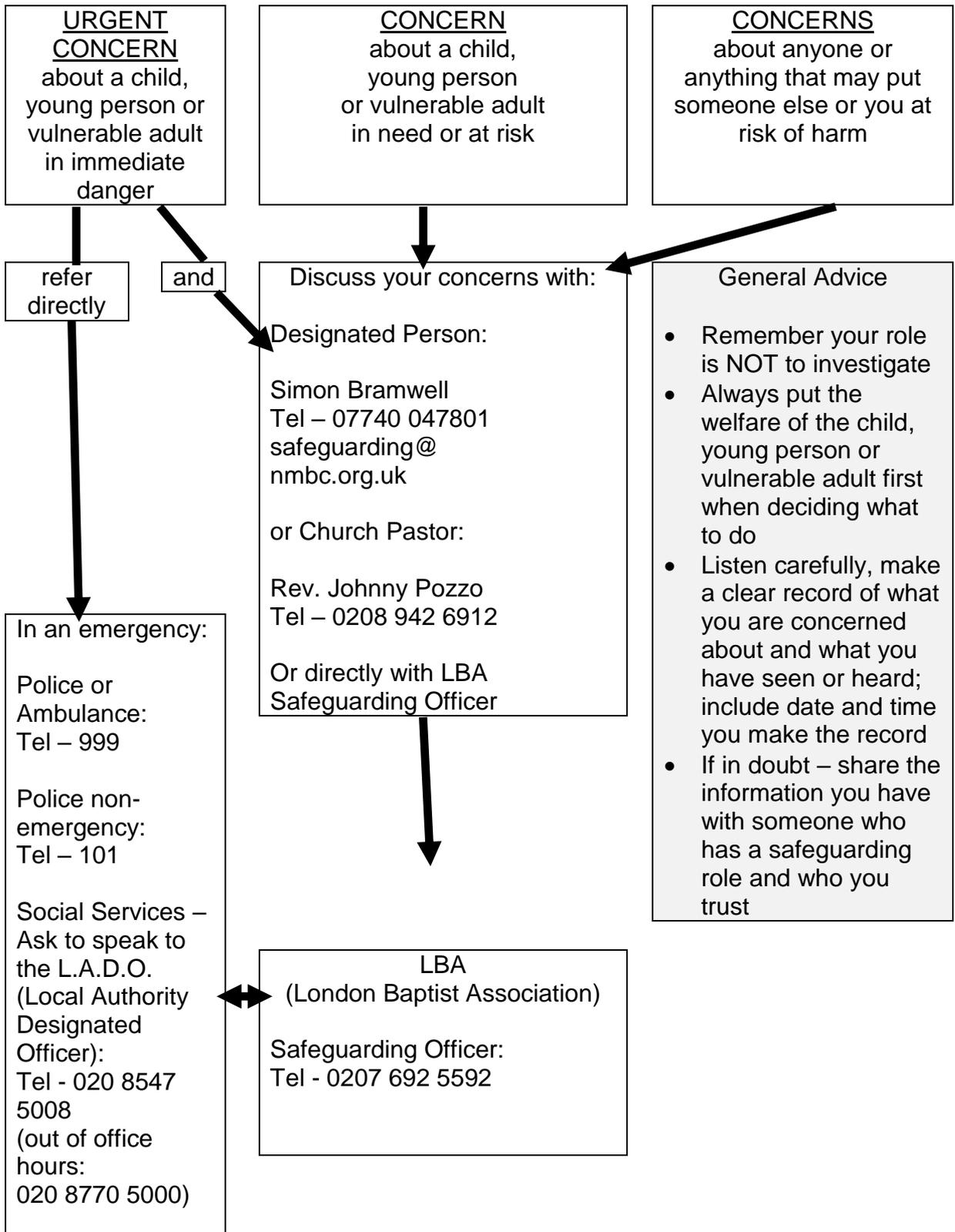
Child Advocate – nominated person, independent of direct involvement in youth & children’s work who acts as a point of contact for children and young people = *Caroline Wilson*: caroline.wilson27@btinternet.com, 0208 942 1915.

4. Procedure following allegation or suspicion of abuse

If there is any immediate danger or risk to a child or vulnerable person’s life you should call the police on 999 immediately.

A flowchart with suggested course of action in the case of safeguarding concerns follows on the next page...

What to do if you have any safeguarding concerns



It is not the task of an individual or the church to investigate.

If any abuse (emotional, sexual, physical or neglect) is suspected, or if allegations are made, do not jump to conclusions or start to investigate. You must report your concerns as soon as possible to the Child Protection Lead (**Simon Bramwell Tel: 07740 047801**) who is nominated by the church to act as the first point of contact for child protection concerns.

In the absence of a Youth & Children's Worker or in cases of immediate concern the matter should be brought directly to the attention of the statutory authorities via the **Single Point of Access (SPA) Tel 0208 547 5008 / 0208 770 5000 (Out of Hours)**

Suspicious should not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

Our aim will be to work in an open and co-operative way with the statutory authorities for the good of the child/children involved.

If abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered:

- do not delay
- do not act alone
- do not start to investigate
- do not contact alleged abusers
- do not talk to parents or guardians
- do not discuss with friends

- **do** report to the relevant Child Protection leads as above
- **do** write down what the child has said in exactly the child's own words. It is important not to change words to make them more adult or less offensive. You may be asked for this report and in the event of a Social Services investigation this written account will be very important and will be passed to Social Services.

How to react to a child who wants to talk about abuse

It is important that you react in a way which will be helpful and supportive to the child.

It is not easy to give precise guidance but the following may be helpful:

- do not agree to keep the information secret
- do not say or suggest that you are shocked
- do not say or suggest that you do not believe the child
- do not ask questions, except to clarify what has been said
- do not make false promises
- do allow the child to talk but do not press them for information
- do look at the child directly
- do explain to the child at the outset that you may have to tell someone else if you think it necessary
- do remain calm and supportive

- do be aware that the child may have been threatened
- do show acceptance of what the child says
- do re-assure the child they were right to tell you
- do tell the child what you are going to do next, i.e. who you are going to tell and why, and roughly what will happen
- do finish on a positive note with the child
- do tell the youth and children's worker as soon as possible, who will inform the management trustee with responsibility for youth & children's work that an incident has occurred.

The management trustee with responsibility for youth and children's work, after consultation with the reporting person, will decide what needs to be done by way of referral to an agreed outside agency.

If abuse is only suspected, more detailed discussion and discreet observation may need to take place before referral.

If abuse by someone within the church is disclosed or suspected, the procedure will be as above, then the worker will need to be immediately withdrawn from their area of service in their own interests. They will be given support and help throughout the process. No guilt or blame will be implied.

5. Safeguarding: Useful points of contact

- SPA (Single Point of Access): Tel 0208 547 5008 / 0208 770 5000 (Out of Hours), Website https://www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200235/supporting_and_safeguarding_children/473/concerned_about_a_child/2
- Pete James (Safeguarding Lead at London Baptist Association): E mail Safeguarding@londonbaptist.org.uk, Website <http://www.londonbaptist.org.uk/safeguarding/>
- LSCB (Local Safeguarding Child Protection Board): Website <http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/>
- NSPCC: Website <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

6. Good Practice Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse

The church should ensure that:

- As far as possible, a worker is not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working together in the same room.
- In a counselling or one-to-one situation with a young person where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building and the young person should know they are there.
- Where children come to church accompanied by an adult, they are the responsibility of that adult when not in their group.
- Where children come to church unaccompanied by an adult, the group leader will take active responsibility for ensuring their care.

You, the worker should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age, watch language, tone of voice, and where you put your body.
- Be extremely careful and sensitive in the use of any electronic communications with young people. In general the advice is that these should be kept to a “necessary minimum” (with parents/other responsible adult copied in) but further guidance in this area is included at the end of this document as Appendix B.
- Not engage in any of the following:
 - invading the privacy of children when they are toileting
 - rough, physical or sexually provocative games
 - making sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a young person even in “fun”
 - inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
 - any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person
- Learn to control and discipline children without using physical punishment. This may include warnings, visits to parents, and possible suspension for persistent unacceptable behaviour (i.e. swearing, harming other children physically or verbally, verbally or physically abusing a volunteer worker). This behaviour should be reported to the Child Protection co-ordinator, who will be responsible for making the decision and informing the child’s parents. The latter will be done initially by letter, and subsequently by a visit to the home. A copy of the NMBC “Discipline Policy” for children and young people’s groups, follows at the end of this document as Appendix A.
- Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed
- Not take children into an individual toilet on their own. As a general rule, the main toilets near the Westbury door of the church should be used. If an individual toilet is being used with a young child then the door should remain slightly propped open.
- Not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

- Not invite a child or young person to your home alone; invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parents know where the child is.
- Not give lifts to children or young people on their own.

Good practice with other youth/children's workers:

- If you see another member of the youth/children's team acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or your supervisor about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

These measures will also protect workers from false accusation.

Appendix A

“Discipline policy” for NMBC Sunday morning children’s and young people’s groups

Whilst the behaviour of the children and young people in our groups is generally extremely good, the guidelines below are intended to help all concerned (children, leaders and parents) on the rare occasions where leaders do need to apply discipline. Whilst the children’s and young people’s groups that we run are obviously different from school, all those taking part should still be able to expect the same conditions as they would in a school environment i.e. the ability to learn/play and to lead/teach in an environment free from the unhelpful distraction/interference of others.

The steps below are intended to be as simple and easy to apply as possible although judgment and discretion will clearly be necessary on the part of the leader according to the individual situation.

1. Step one = “Gentle” warning.
2. Step two = “Stern” warning.
3. Step three = Removal from the activity/time out (within the group).
4. Step four = Removal from the group, and leader to ask for parent to come out of church/be contacted (if not in church in the case of teenagers) and to resume responsibility for the child.

Where the behaviour is of an obviously serious nature i.e. striking another child/leader (rather than low-level disruption) it would probably be suitable to escalate action immediately to step four. It is expected that leaders will do their best to remain calm and “professional” and to seek the support of co-leaders where necessary. **Use of physical discipline, including removal of drink/snack privilege, would never be appropriate.**

Whichever level of discipline is reached, it is important to give the child the opportunity to apologise for their actions/behaviour to the relevant parties and to “make good” the situation.

If step three is reached, then the overall group leader(s), and ideally Simon/Analice, should be informed after the session. If step four is reached, then Simon/Analice must be informed and, if around, can be called upon to help deal with the situation if required.

The steps above apply to an individual session, but if a pattern of disruptive behaviour is repeated in subsequent weeks then it is important to feed this back to overall group leaders and Simon/Analice, in order for them to broach this with the parents concerned.

In the case of Crèche/Seedlings, because of the age of the children, slightly different guidelines should apply, as follows...

Crèche/Seedlings will operate a ‘Time out’ policy. Kindness towards each other will be the expectation. If a child’s actions are deemed to be unkind (e.g. consistently pushing, snatching another’s toy, hitting adults or children) we will explain that this is unkind and ask nicely that they act in a kind way. A warning will be given that if the behaviour continues they will be placed in ‘Time out’ - ... minutes attributed for each year of age. Obviously this is not a hard and fast rule - our hope is that we know the individuals well enough to understand behaviours and avert problems before they arise e.g. by distraction.

It is the aim that any/all of the above be applied in an overall spirit of love and forgiveness and that children, leaders and parents all feel supported in any measures that need to be taken. Please speak to Simon/Analice at any stage if you have any concerns about behaviour or discipline matters.

SMB/AMC April 2018

Appendix B

Using electronic communication within the context of youth and children's work

Electronic communication has become enormously important and popular over the past ten years. It is an easy way to communicate with young people in particular. However, there are dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance:

- electronic communication is often an extremely informal mode of communication which can create the potential for communication to be misunderstood.
- because of the informal style of electronic communication, workers can easily cross appropriate boundaries in their relationships with young people.
- some adults who are intent on harming children and young people choose to use electronic communication as a way to meet and 'groom' children.

These guidelines are written to try to maintain healthy and safe relationships between adults and children:

- electronic communication must never become a substitute for face to face contact with young people.
- parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.
- workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given.
- direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided.
- only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children or young people on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations.
- contact with children and young people by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter.
- workers should not share any personal information with children and young people, and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role.
- workers should be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives, clear, unambiguous language should be used and the use of unnecessary abbreviations should be avoided.
- electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 8.00 am and at the very latest 10.00 pm.

Official church e-mails to young people should be sent out with a church header and footer indicating to the young people that this is an official communication, this should also be copied to the church e-mail address.

Any photos or video taken on personal mobile phones should not be uploaded to social networking sites without parental permission.

Workers should not retain images of children and young people on their mobile phone.

Instant Messaging Services (IMS)

The use of instant messenger services should be kept to a minimum.

Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:

- significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
- a log kept of who and when they communicated.

Social Networking sites

If adults are intending to add young people to their social networking sites they must first have the permission of the parents of the young person.

Adults should not normally make 'friend requests' of young people.

It should not become expected behaviour that adults say yes to young person when a friend request is received.

It is the adult's responsibility to ensure that all of the content on their site is appropriate for young people to see (including contents of photos uploaded).

All communication with young people should be kept within public domains.

All communications with young people should be transparent and open to scrutiny.

Remember – 'never alone and unseen' is the basic rule of thumb in Safeguarding young people, and this extends to electronic communications too.