



THE GATEWAY
CHURCH 

A Safe Place Child Protection

A SAFE PLACE Contents

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Policy Statement on Children Young People and the Church

This statement was drawn up on 26th February 2007. It will be reviewed periodically at future Leadership Team meetings.

As the leadership team of this church, we commit ourselves to the valuing, nurturing, protection and safe keeping of all, especially children and young people and will ensure that the church is kept aware of this policy.

It is the responsibility of each member of the church to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

We recognise our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.

The leadership team is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision.

The leadership team is committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice Safe from Harm.

Each worker with children and young people must undergo the selection process and know the recommendations and undertake to observe them. Each shall be given a copy of the church's agreed procedures and Good Practice guidelines.

As part of our commitment to children and young people, the leadership team have appointed a children's advocate. The major duties of the advocate are to input on policy matters, check that records are correctly kept and respond to requests from children/youth leaders for help on particular issues. This role will be explained, as appropriate, to children's and youth workers and the advocate's name, address and telephone number publicised. The children's advocate will meet the elder responsible for child protection twice yearly to review policy and records.

The leadership team will ensure that clear boundaries are set for any church attenders who are known to be a risk to children and young people. (Reference to be made to the PCCA document entitled "Guidance To Churches, Protecting Children & Appointing Children's Workers", page 9.)

A child/young person is defined as one who is aged up to and including 17 years.

Good Practice Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse

These guidelines are for the protection of both the children/young people and the children's/young people's workers in the church. The measures given below will help protect team members from false accusation. Unfortunately, touch can sometimes be misunderstood; words or actions can occasionally be taken out of context. It is, therefore, important to be aware of how misunderstandings can occur.

1 The leadership team should ensure that

- Regular workers have undergone a selection process and have received guidance in respect of these procedures.
- 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 in the same room.
- In a counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, 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.

Ensure that access to the building is safe and well lit.

2 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.
- Not engage in any of the following;
 - inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form.
 - rough and tumble games or activities which produce excessive physical contact (both age and sex of the participants need to be taken into account)
 - any scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting a child or young person.
 - invading the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting.
 - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in "fun".
- Learn to control and discipline children without using physical punishment.
- Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed.
- Not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

If you invite a child or young person to your home, ensure this is with the knowledge of the children's leader/youth leader and that a parent is aware. Do not invite an individual of the opposite sex alone.

- If a child/young person comes to your house unannounced, take great care in respect to the length and nature of the visit. Advise your leader of such a visit.
- Ensure that arrangements for transporting children are with the knowledge of the

children's leader/youth leader and have parental approval. Avoid wherever possible carrying a particular child/young person on their own, if it is absolutely necessary then ask the child to sit in the back of the car. Avoid lengthy chats at the end of a car journey.

- Not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people if you take a group away. Make sure that proper supervision is possible.
- Obtain written permission for any overnight stay away from home, including a contact and telephone number in the event of an emergency.

All members of the church

If you see a church member or a fellow member of the team acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your leader 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. Members of the church should feel able to encourage good attitudes and draw to leader's attention any areas they feel may be misunderstood.

Procedure if abuse is suspected disclosed or discovered

What is abuse?

The leadership and all the appointed children's and youth workers are committed to the protection of children from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Types of abuse

Physical	where children's bodies are hurt or injured.
Emotional	where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts or are given responsibilities beyond their years
Sexual	where adults (and sometimes other children) use children to satisfy sexual desires.
Neglect	where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.

Signs of abuse

The following may indicate abuse, but do not jump to conclusions. There could be other explanations.

Physical	unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention.
Emotional	reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement. attention seeking, running away, stealing, lying.
Sexual	pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually provocative with adults; disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting; secretive relationships with adults or children; tummy pains with no apparent cause.
Neglect	looking ill-cared for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, having lingering injuries or health problems.

How to react

If a child or young person starts to talk about something which suggests that abuse has occurred you should remember the following:

- Listen and don't appear to be shocked.
- Accept what the child says (however unlikely it may sound).
- Don't ask "leading" questions.
- Don't promise confidentiality.

If abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered

1. Do not start to investigate, but make a note of anything you are told, what the child said or did, what the circumstances were with date and times.

2. Do not contact family members, close friends or discuss with others except an elder, Children's Leader, Youth Leader or the children's advocate.
3. Do not delay or act alone. If you have doubts it is better to share these rather than risk something being missed.
4. Inform the person to whom you are responsible, the children's advocate or an elder. (unless this creates unnecessary delay or these people are in some way involved)
5. In some circumstances you or the children's advocate may feel it appropriate to discuss the situation with PCCA (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) before deciding to contact the Social Services. The telephone Number of PCCA is 01322-660011 or 01322-607207.
6. The person who you inform will make a decision as to whether it is appropriate to contact the social services or the police. The response will be very dependent on the particular circumstances and also on whether the abuse is neglect, a physical injury or sexual abuse.

Social Services Involvement

Once the social services or police are contacted, they will instigate an investigation. It will be very important that once they have been contacted, you do not make any further contact with family or friends. Neither should you ask the child any questions.

Contacts

Leader Responsible	Andy Moyle 07905 913291
Children's Advocate	Janet Moyle 07936 936824

As indicated above, the person to whom you report the incident will make the decision with regard to contacting social services or the police. The contacts below are for their use or the children's/youth worker in an emergency. Social Services; Telephone 0844 800 8014 and ask for the Children's Duty Social Worker. The office is open for telephone calls from 24 hours a day.

If the child is in immediate danger, call the police. The number of King's Lynn police station is 0845 456 4567. The station is open between 8am and 10pm or dial 999

Procedure for the appointment of workers

The church recognises the valuable role that children's/young people's workers play in the life of the children/young people and the church. The church, therefore, expects and is responsible for the following:

- No-one should work regularly with children/young people before this appointment procedure is completed.
- All prospective workers will be asked to complete an application form. (see page 15)
- All prospective workers will be asked to provide a recent CRB or to complete a CRB Disclosure form sent out by the CRB. This must be returned to Pat Amos with the relevant documentation.
- All prospective workers will be asked to provide two references, at least one of which should be from outside of The Gateway Church.
- All workers will be given clear roles.
- All workers will be provided with a copy of this document - the church's Child Safety Policy & Procedure and be expected to understand it. Training will be given where necessary.
- All workers are expected to support and encourage each other.
- If necessary, they should refer any queries or concerns regarding fellow workers or children/young people to the relevant leader, elder or children's advocate.
- All workers will be provided with support and supervision.
- All workers will be encouraged and expected to attend training as appropriate.
- All newly appointed workers will undertake a probation period of three months. The reason for this period is as follows
 1. It gives opportunity for the worker to receive training and further information and advice.
 2. It gives time for both the worker and the leadership to be sure of their suitability and to provide support.

The leadership team reserve the right to refuse a church member's offer to work with children/young people or to terminate their involvement if they consider it necessary.

Policy on recruitment of Ex-Offenders to Voluntary and Paid Positions within The Gateway Church

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service through an umbrella body to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, The Gateway Church complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The Gateway Church is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a Disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within The Gateway Church and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

Unless the nature of the position allows The Gateway Church to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all those in The Gateway Church who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured

discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment in a paid or voluntary capacity.

We make every subject of a CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Sample Reference Letter

Dear

has offered to help with our children's/young peoples work. Before we can accept any new worker we must be sure that they are suitable. # has given us your name as someone who can give a character reference.

I would be grateful if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire, which will be treated in the strictest confidence, and return it in the pre-paid envelope as soon as possible.

will mainly be working with # year olds, as

In commenting on the worker, please bear in mind that it is the church's duty to protect children from harm of a physical, emotional or sexual nature, and all workers are required to sign an undertaking to this end.

With thanks,

Andy Moyle

The Gateway Church Reference Form

Private and confidential

Name of worker

.....

What is your relationship with the person?

Relative

Friend

Employer

Other (specify)

How long have you known the person

.....

With your knowledge and experience of the person, please comment on his/her suitability to work with children/young people. Please include comments about his/her honesty, reliability, health and experience of working with children/young people. (Continue over the page if necessary)

Are there any other comments you would like to make about the person?

If you have provided information which is likely to infer that the person is not suitable, can we share this with the applicant? YES/NO

Name Signed Date

The Gateway Church Worker Agreement

Name of worker

.....

We welcome you as

.....

You are joining a team which, together with the whole church, commits itself to the care and nurture of children and young people.

On behalf of the leaders of this church, we undertake to support you and your work by prayer, by our interest and providing resources and training.

The person who will give you primary support is

.....

He/she is there to discuss any matters of concern you may have.

The responsibilities of your job are

.....

.....

Working with children and young people is a responsibility, but it also brings great rewards. We hope you will enjoy your work.

SignedElder Date.....

The Gateway Church Declaration

To be completed by the worker.

I understand the nature of the work I am to do with
(Fill in the name and age range of the group)

I have read the church's guidelines for safeguarding children and workers. I understand that it is my duty to protect the children and young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is suspected, discovered or disclosed.

Signed Date

The Gateway Church

Children's Youth Worker Application Form

Name

I'd like to be involved with

Creche

Explorers

The Gate Youth Club

Youth on Sundays

I am providing two referees, one of whom must be outside of The Gateway Church

Referee name

Referee Address

.....

Referee Email Address

Referee name

Referee Address

.....

Referee Email Address