

## Congregation name : Child Protection Policy

...your children will be like olive shoots around your table (Psalm 128, v3)

This church takes seriously the charge of our Lord to protect and nurture the young and the vulnerable. Every member therefore has a responsibility to protect and promote the welfare of children in our congregations. The abuse of children cannot be tolerated.

This policy cannot hope to cover all aspects of child protection. It deals with essential priorities for action. All members working with children and youth are urged to ensure that they have received basic training in the recognition of child abuse and the appropriate procedures for dealing with child protection concerns. The church is committed to helping its workers find appropriate training and to support the work of its youth leaders, Sunday School teachers and all others working with children.

### Notes:

- The term 'child' refers to anyone under the age of eighteen
- The term 'member' embraces all those who regularly attend the church
- The term 'church' refers to the congregation named at the top of this document
- The term 'abuse' includes the four categories outlined in 'Working Together' (HMSO) guidelines, which are summarised here:
  - Neglect** - 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;
  - Physical abuse** - the category includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding or deliberately causing the ill health of a child (factitious illness) or any other form of physical harm.
  - Sexual Abuse** - forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

**Emotional abuse** - the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

More detailed definitions can be found in:  
Working Together to Safeguard Children (Crown Copyright)  
Published by HMSO 1999 ISBN 0-11-322309

### **Co-ordinators for Child Protection**

Each congregation has appointed at least one or ideally two designated child protection co-ordinators as officers of the congregation. One of these is usually the pastor. All E.L.C.E. pastors receive child protection training (co-ordinated through the annual pastors' study week in Cambridge) and this training is regularly updated. The second co-ordinator, where one is appointed, should also receive basic training. Where the co-ordinator has been trained in relation to a job outside the church (e.g. child protection training in connection with a post as social worker, teacher, nurse etc) this training will be accepted as fulfilling the requirement, but must be updated regularly. The pastor (or vacancy pastor in a vacant congregation) is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the child protection policy in the congregation.

### **What to do if you are concerned that a child might be at risk of harm**

Report your concerns as soon as possible to one of the co-ordinators. Try to make a written note which is clear and factual, saying what you have seen or heard. Sign and date it, and also print your name. Give this to the co-ordinator.

The co-ordinator will then seek advice on the situation from an appropriate source (see Appendix 1). The concern may be passed on to Social Services or the Police, or the person working with the child may be asked to monitor and log all concerns, reporting back regularly.

In all concerns about the possible abuse of a child, advice will be sought from outside the congregation, using one of the contacts listed in Appendix 1. The co-ordinator will let you know what he/she has done regarding your concern, although it may not be possible to share any details of the case.

### **What to do if you have been a victim of abuse**

If abuse has been, or continues to be, an issue in your life, the church will do its best to support, defend and protect you in facing the future. Speak to the pastor or other child protection co-ordinator for advice on where to go for help.

If you have been abused by a member of this, or any other, church or for whatever reason you do not feel able to seek help from someone here, please look at the list of sources of support on Appendix 1 and call one of those numbers.

### **What to do if you are concerned about the behaviour of a member of the congregation with regard to a child/children**

Report your concern to one of the child protection co-ordinators. If your concerns relate in any way to the co-ordinator, you should contact one of the other sources of advice and support listed in Appendix 1 and follow their instructions.

### **People with records of offending behaviour**

The church would never seek to place anyone outside the embrace of God's great mercy and forgiveness. However, where someone attending church is known to have abused or posed a significant risk to children the co-ordinator will meet with the individual and discuss the boundaries that the individual will be expected to keep. No person who has a criminal record that involves offences against children or other vulnerable groups, or any offences involving violence, will be permitted to work with children.

### **Voluntary and paid workers within the church**

In appointing workers, whether paid or voluntary, the church is responsible for ensuring that the worker has completed a protective ethos contract (see Appendix 2). The worker is given a written note about his/her responsibilities and the name of the person who will support and supervise him/her. S/he is also be issued with guidelines for behaviour in working with children (see Appendix 3).

Where the work involves substantial one-to-one contact with children, especially where the worker will often work alone, a criminal records check at the appropriate level is undertaken. For other situations the voluntary disclosure statement contained in the protective ethos contract is usually deemed sufficient, but if in doubt this congregation always takes the more cautious approach.

Those working with children follow the protective ethos guidelines provided (available from the co-ordinator). These guidelines are designed to discourage people who seek contact with children in order to abuse them and also to protect workers from situations where allegations of misconduct might arise. Workers are strongly advised not to accept working conditions that do not conform to the guidelines.

### **Calling a pastor**

Pastors who are called to the E.L.C.E. are required to sign a declaration confirming that they do not have a criminal record and granting permission for the appropriate checks to be made. Once a pastor has accepted a call, a full criminal records bureau check (i.e. including police intelligence as well as actual convictions) is undertaken. The start of the pastor's ministry in the new congregation is conditional upon this check being clear. The check is done every time a pastor moves from one congregation to another, even if he is moving within the E.L.C.E. (unless the time served in the previous parish is less than one year).

Where a pastor is called from outside the U.K. the home country's equivalent checking procedures should be followed.

### **Protection as a positive step**

The church promotes and upholds this policy as part of its commitment to making **(name of congregation)** a happy and fruitful place to work and worship. We see child protection as a positive part of our ministry, not as an insurance policy against false allegations. We encourage all our members to work together to uphold and promote a protective ethos within this congregation, and we ask God's blessings on all our endeavours in His name.

**Child Protection Co-ordinator(s) for Name of Congregation:**

**Name**

**Tel no.**

**This policy is held in common with all congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England.**

This policy was last reviewed in 2003.

Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers:

**Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service**

P O Box 133, Swanley

Kent BR8 7UQ

Tel: 0845 120 4550

Helpline: 0845 120 4551

E-Mail: info@ccpas.co.uk

This inter-denominational Christian charity runs child protection seminars each year throughout the United Kingdom. Contact CCPAS on the above number for details of a course near you. The E.L.C.E. subscribes to the organisation.

**NSPCC**

42 Curtain Road

London EC2A 3NH

Tel: 0207 825 2500

Child Protection Help line: 08808 800 500 (open 24 hours)

**ChildLine**

Freepost 1111

London N1 0BR

Tel: 0207 239 1000

Help line for all children: 0800 1111 (open 24 hours)

**The Line**

0800 884444

This is an additional Childline number for children living away from home (in foster care or residential care). It is not a 24 hour line:

Mon - Fri 3.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Sat - Sun 2.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

**Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse**

BM-CSSA  
London WC1N 3XX  
**Appendix 1**

**LOCAL CONTACTS FOR CHILD PROTECTION ADVICE**

(to be filled in with appropriate local contact numbers and displayed on a prominent notice board)

**Social Services Duty Team**

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**Police Family/Domestic Violence Unit**

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**Designated Person for this church**

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**Others:**

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## **Appendix 2**

SAMPLE

### **Protective Ethos Contract for Work with Children and Teenagers**

To: (Name of worker)

Thank you for volunteering to work with our Sunday school children and with our youth group here at (Name) Church. Your contribution to the work of the congregation is greatly appreciated.

The details of the groups you will be working with are as follows:

Sunday School: 3 - 4 years

Youth Club: 10 - 16 years

The Sunday School supervisor is (Name), and (Name) has responsibility for the youth club. They are available to talk over any concerns you may have, and to support and supervise your work. Please read the Protective Ethos Guidelines you have been given, and discuss anything that is not clear with the person named above. Please also complete the attached form and return it to Pastor. Thank you. May God bless your service to His Church.

**Protective Ethos Agreement  
for Those Working With Children and Teenagers**

I confirm that I have read the church's child protection policy. I will do my best to carry out the policy and to speak to the supervisor if there are any matters I do not understand or if I have reason to be concerned about any child protection matter.

I confirm that I have also read the protective ethos guidelines and will work within them to the best of my ability.

- I have not been charged with or convicted of any criminal offence.
- To my knowledge there has never been an allegation made against me that has been reported to, and investigated by, Social Services and/or Police.
- If it is considered appropriate, I consent to a formal Criminal Records Bureau Check.

Signed..... Print name.....

Date.....

## Appendix 3

# Guidelines for Behaviour when Working with Children and Teenagers

In all your interactions with children and teenagers, treat them with the same respect you would accord to people of your own age. Also, bear in mind that the protective ethos is designed to protect the children in your care from those who might try to abuse them. It also seeks to protect you from false allegations that might arise, whether this is through simple misinterpretation of your actions or a malicious untruth. So it is important that you always think about what you are doing from the point of view of an outside onlooker. Apply the 'video test': if your actions were caught on videotape, how easy would it be to explain what you were doing?

The first and most basic rule for working with young people is not to put them - or you - in a situation where suspicion could be aroused. But don't be paranoid either. Use common sense and sound judgement, and in addition bear in mind the following general principles:

1. Do not meet one to one in any place or situation where you cannot be seen by another trusted adult. For example, if your Sunday School room is off in an annexe somewhere behind a closed door, try to change it. If this can't be done, arrange with the supervisor that someone will pop in at random intervals to see if everything is O.K.
2. Do not give lifts in your car unless it is unavoidable, especially if it will mean being alone in the car with just one child. If this is unavoidable, make sure someone else knows what you are doing, and ask the child to sit in the back seat.
3. ALWAYS have a GOOD reason for any kind of physical contact. Do not pick up young children to say hello, or place them on your lap. Reading stories etc. can be done just as well with children gathered round your feet or sitting beside you on the floor. If a child is sick or distressed, of course you will wish to help them. Use appropriate contact - for example, a comforting arm around the shoulders, not a full frontal hug. Break away from contact as soon as you can without distressing the child. Afterwards, make sure your pastor or another trusted adult knows what happened. If you feel at all worried about it, make a written note (with the date, the facts of what happened, and why you acted as you did).

4. Physical discipline e.g. a smack is always unacceptable when you are working in a professional or voluntary capacity with someone else's child. If you are having problems with particular individuals, talk it over with the child's parents as well as the child. Also, seek advice from your pastor or another trusted adult.
5. Sometimes, the behaviour of a child will grate particularly on you even though it does not seem to affect others in the same way, or a clash of personalities might make it difficult for you to relate to an individual child. This is an unfortunate and inevitable part of human relationships, but it is important to recognise the situation for what it is, and seek support. If you know that you are very angry, step away. It may be that you will have to hand over to someone else for a short time, or call the parents to collect the child or, in the case of older teenagers, exclude them from that day's activity. Do not struggle on alone; seek support before there is any risk of the situation getting out of control.
6. Be very careful about offering confidentiality. If you are asked if you can keep a secret, say something like, 'That depends. I will keep secrets where I can, but if I think it involves someone being hurt I might have to tell.' If a child is clearly distressed and will not talk without a guarantee of confidentiality, give him/her access to a telephone to call Childline. If you have questions about handling confidentiality, seek advice from your pastor.
7. If you see a fellow worker doing something that breaks the protective ethos, talk to him/her about it and point out the risk. Expect and encourage others to do the same for you, not in a spirit of suspicion, but in the spirit of strengthening the protective ethos and of looking out for each other in Christian love and concern. If you are still worried about that person, talk to the child protection co-ordinator.
8. These guidelines do not suggest that you never touch under any circumstances. Most human beings would find it impossible to keep this rule anyway, as our instinct is to reach out and touch people who are in need or distress. Accept that some level of risk is always there when you work with children, and your actions may be misinterpreted. The only way to avoid this risk altogether is to having nothing to do with children at all. The important thing is to minimise the risk, and communicate quickly and efficiently with others at the first sign of a problem.