

Southside Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy

Why have a policy?

- We believe that children are an important part of our church and that they should be nurtured and protected. In the Bible Jesus teaches us to value the children (Mark 9:37) and warns us against harming children (Matthew 18:6).
- We believe that parents/carers of children attending our church should be aware of our approach to protecting children.
- We believe that people working with children should receive training and guidance, and should be supported by the whole church.
- Government guidelines recommend that all organisations working with children should have a written policy.

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

What is our policy?

- As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people.
- It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- We recognise that our work with children is the responsibility of the whole church.
- The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and providing supervision.
- Each worker with children and young people must be read Southside's safeguarding policy, which outlines our safeguarding guidelines and procedures (modelled after the Baptist Union's, "Safe to Grow" manual.)
- As part of our commitment to children and young people, the church will appoint (1) a minister or deacon to oversee child & youth work, (2) a Designated Person for Safeguarding to be available for children and young people to talk to and (3) a Safeguarding Trustee, who will monitor the implementation of the policy and ensure that it is reviewed annually.
- Anyone wishing to work with children will be expected to have been a regular church attender during the previous six months. Exceptions may be made if the individual is approved by senior church leadership, and passes all other relevant background checks.
- Anyone wishing to work with children will be required to obtain a disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). If under 18, this does not apply as youth are ineligible for DBS checks. In this case the Senior Leader at the church will evaluate if the individual is an appropriate fit to work with children. An individual will not be prevented from working with children if they have a criminal record, subject to the nature of the offence.

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How will we implement the policy?

- We will seek to pray regularly for the children attending our church and those who work with them.
- Each worker will be given a copy of good practice guidelines for the prevention of abuse and procedures describing the action to be taken if abuse is disclosed or discovered – see Appendices A,B, and C. Copies of these guidelines and procedures are available to parents on request.
- As stated above, each worker will be asked to read Southside’s safeguarding policy (modelled after the Baptist Union guidelines on protecting children in the manual, “Safe to Grow.”). A copy of both our policy, and the manual will be available in the church if any non-workers (ie other church members or parents) would like to review these documents.

At each Annual General Meeting, the church will appoint a **minister or deacon to have overall responsibility for children's work**. Their role will be to:

- a) approve anyone wishing to work with children
- b) support all children's workers, meeting with them every six months
- c) organise suitable training as applicable

At each Annual General Meeting, the church will appoint a **Designated Person for Safeguarding**. Their role will be to:

- a) make contact with children and young people through existing organisations and groups
- b) be available to listen to any worries they have, and to take any action they think necessary to protect them

At each Annual General Meeting, the church will appoint a **Safeguarding Trustee**. Their role will be to:

- a) monitor the implementation of the policy on behalf of the trustees
- b) ensure that the policy is reviewed annually and to present a report to the trustees
- c) receive reports from the Designated Person for Safeguarding

The policy will be reviewed at each Annual General Meeting.

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APPENDIX A: Good Practice Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse

A. Good practice with children and young people. NB: a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

1. The church should ensure that :

- A worker is never 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, it is preferable to use a corner of a room where other adults are present. At the very least, another adult should be in the building and know the interview is taking place and with whom. The young person should also know that another adult is present.
- 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:
 - invading the privacy of children when they are showering or using the toilet
 - 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
- Ensure that 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
- Only use electronic communication between yourself and a young person of secondary school age or above to convey factual messages e.g. information about events and activities, community building dialogue (not for general chatter) and use between the hours of 8am and 10pm
- Set up a Facebook group instead of adding young people to your own Facebook. Make sure another leader is included in the group.
- Notify someone in leadership immediately if you receive a call or message from a young person in crisis.
- Do not invite a child 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.
- Wherever possible, gain parental permission before giving lifts to children and young people and have another adult in the car with you. If in exceptional circumstances you are on your own, ask them to sit in the rear of the car.
- Make suitable arrangements for sleeping accommodation for children or young people if you take a group away.
- If taking children out locally, obtain parental permission and check if any medication is needed.

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B. Good Practice with colleagues

If you see another member of staff acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to 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 B: Procedures if Abuse is Disclosed or Discovered

The church and all its appointed children's and youth workers are committed to the protection of children from physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual 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 their sexual desires
neglect	where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development
spiritual	where someone uses their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice to satisfy their own needs at the expense of others e.g. labelling a child 'demon possessed'

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; becoming unusually quiet/ withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper
sexual	pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually provocative with adults; disturbed sleep, nightmares, bedwetting; 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

What to do if a child expresses a concern (The following is a summary only, for reference. It is no substitute for training):

- Never promise confidentiality
- Accept what the child says
- Look at the child directly
- Be aware that the child might have been threatened
- Tell the child they are not to blame

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- Do not press for information
- Do not ask leading questions
- Reassure the child they are right to tell you and you believe them
- Let them know what will happen next
- Finish on a positive note
- As soon as possible afterwards, make hand-written notes using the child's own language, date and time
- REPORT TO THE DESIGNATED PERSON

What to do if abuse is suggested or disclosed (see also Appendix C)

- Do not dismiss your concerns, including those about a colleague
- Do not delay
- Do not confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns
- Do not take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place
- Do not investigate allegations
- DO NOT ACT ALONE
- Do not take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you might have
- If appropriate contact: 0208 726 6400 (Croydon Safeguarding Children Board)
- If a child is in immediate danger, call the police. Their number is 101 (ask for Croydon police) or dial 999 in the case of an emergency.

Whenever a referral is made to either of the above the Senior Pastor of Southside Baptist Church should be informed.

NB Any safeguarding concerns involving a minister should always be reported to the Senior Pastor (pending he is not the minister involved in the situation), as well as the Designated Person for Safeguarding. Similarly, the Senior Pastor and Designated Person for Safeguarding should always be kept informed if there is a statutory investigation of a member of the church or congregation.

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APPENDIX C: Recommended Procedures for Responding to Concerns

STAGE 1

A worker has a concern about the welfare of a child/young person or the behaviour of an adult. The person who has the concern has a duty to **RECORD AND REPORT**. A written record of the concern must be made and reported to the Designated Person for Safeguarding within 24 hours. If a child is in imminent danger of harm a referral should be made to the police or Social Services without delay.

STAGE 2

The Designated Person receives the report of concern. Then the Designated Person has a duty to **REVIEW AND REFER**. The report will be reviewed by the Designated Person with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken (often in liaison with others) as to what action should follow. Any formal referral to social services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report. If a child is in imminent danger of harm a referral should be made to the police or Social Services without delay.

STAGE 3

After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken, the Designated Person, the Safeguarding Trustee and the Minister may have a duty to **SUPPORT AND REPORT**. Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns and where formal referrals are made reports may need to be made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority or the Charity Commission.

Important Contacts for Southside Children's Workers

Position	Name	Telephone Number
Recruiter	George Round	07377 675526
Recruiter	Sarah Bunnell	07769 115474
Minister Overseeing Children's Work:	Clark Berryman	07920 393346
Designated Safeguarding Person:	Carly Bruce	07507 550647
Safeguarding Trustee:	Adrian Prescod	07958441672