



# Barnton Baptist Church

## Child Protection Guidelines

September 2003  
(updated February 2008)

### Advice for leaders

It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not a child is being abused. As a leader in the children's work at Barnton Baptist Church you are to provide a safe and loving environment for the children. If you suspect a child is being abused (as described by our "definitions of abuse") then it is our job to look after the child's interests.

### If you suspect abuse or if a child tells you something:

1. Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said, in the child's own words, and how you responded. Record dates, times and venues, and keep the hand written notes even if they are subsequently typed up.
2. In the first instance contact the Child Protection Advisor as soon as possible. If you cannot contact the Child Protection Advisor or if the matter involves the Child Protection Advisor then contact the elder responsible for children's work or the full-time pastor.
3. After this you will work with the Child Protection Advisor to resolve the issue. If the issue goes to the police or social services this could be a very long process.

### When dealing with a child:

#### Do

- Accept what the child says, keep calm and keep eye contact.
- Listen sympathetically, but do not ask loaded questions or jump to conclusions.
- Let them know you need to tell someone who can help – do not promise confidentiality.
- Let them know they have done the right thing by telling, even if they feel they have broken a rule.
- Say things like –
  - 'I'm glad you told me'
  - 'It's not your fault'
  - 'I will help you'

#### Do not

- Panic
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Probe or investigate or try to sort it out yourself.
- Communicate with the person being accused.
- Say things like –
  - 'Are you sure this is true?'
  - 'I can't believe it'
  - 'Why haven't you told someone before?'
  - 'Don't tell anyone else'

## Process for Child Protection Advisor

Ensure that records of disclosures, incidents or concerns should include:

- The child's name, address, date of birth.
- The nature of the concerns / allegation / disclosure.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- An exact record of what the child has said using the child's words. A child's behaviour and demeanour might also give some indication of what a child means to say and these should also be noted.
- Kept secure and confidential and made available only to –
  - The Child Protection Advisor.
  - The senior minister of the church and/or elder for children's' work as far as this is consistent with the welfare of the child or young person concerned and other children in the church.
  - Representatives of the professional agencies as required by them.

## Child Protection Procedure

The nature and severity of concerns a child, young person or an adult may share will vary considerably. The response to concerns expressed by a child, young person or a worker in the church will be determined by the seriousness of what has been shared.

In some instances, the issue or concern raised may be such that, with the child's knowledge, an appropriate way of resolving the issue can be worked out. In cases of minor concerns, this would involve informing the child's parent and seeking with them a resolution of the issues raised.

In other circumstances an adult who has a concern about a child may wish to discuss their concerns about what they have observed or heard with the child protection advisor within the church in order to decide on the most appropriate course of action to take.

It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Advisor and elder responsible for children's work to ensure that all concerns about possible or actual abuse are dealt with appropriately.

If the concerns in any way involve the Child Protection Advisor, the primary contact for an issue should be the elder for children's work or the full-time pastor.

## Serious issues

If an issue arises which the Child Protection Advisor thinks needs professional assistance they should contact:

**St Leonard Police Station Family and Child Protection Unit**

Or

**The Social work Emergency Team in Shrubhill House (0131 554 4301 or 0800 731 6969)**

## References

Baptist Union (2002) *Safe to Grow* The Baptist Union of Great Britain. Alden Press Ltd, Oxford

[www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)

Central Registered Body in Scotland [www.crbs.org.uk](http://www.crbs.org.uk). Register No: 106743

Department of Health (1999) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

Church Child Advisory Service [www.hq@ccpas.co.uk](mailto:www.hq@ccpas.co.uk)

## **Definitions of Abuse**

October 2003  
(updated February 2011)

### **Definitions of Abuse**

There are four main categories of abuse as officially defined in government guidance<sup>1</sup>: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar 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 frequently 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.

#### **Neglect**

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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### **Non-organic failure to thrive**

Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones (ie physical growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development) where physical and genetic reasons for the failure have been medically eliminated and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established.

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<sup>1</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children – Department of Health 1999

## Indicators of Child Abuse

Knowing whether a child is being abused or neglected may be difficult to judge. However, all those who have contact with children and young people should be alert to the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and know how to respond to any concerns they may have. On occasions an incident or an injury will give cause for concern but often it is a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns which indicate that a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm.

- Children and young people might share with a trusted adult a concern they have about their safety or disclose that they are being abused.
- A child's observed behaviour, their physical appearance, developmental progress and emotional demeanour might indicate that they are being abused or neglected. When sudden changes in a child's behaviour occur, abuse might be a possible reason for this.
- How adults behave might also give rise to concerns. Parents and carers might indicate that they are experiencing difficulties which are having adverse and potentially damaging effects on their child(ren) or observations of an adult's interaction with a child or young person might give cause for concern.

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- Injuries which have not received appropriate medical attention;
- A child or young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him / herself.
- A disclosure or allegation made by a child or young person;
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child or young person;
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts or temper);
- Inappropriate sexual awareness;
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour or play;
- Nervousness / watchfulness;
- Inappropriate relationships with other children and / or adults;
- Signs of neglect, such as under-nourishment, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

**IT SHOULD BE RECOGNISED THAT THIS LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE AND THE PRESENCE OF ONE OR MORE INDICATORS IS NOT IN ITSELF PROOF THAT ABUSE IS ACTUALLY TAKING PLACE. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THERE MIGHT BE OTHER REASONS WHY MOST OF THE ABOVE ARE OCCURRING.**

**Child Abusers** 'Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or more rarely a stranger.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Working Together to Safeguard Children – Department of Health 1999

It is important to recognise that children and young people can be subject to abuse in any and every setting where they have contact with adults. The abuse may be of a physical, sexual or emotional nature and it is important for those working with children and young people to be aware that abuse may be perpetrated by both males and females and by other children and young people.



## **Policy on the Secure Handling, Use, Storage and Retention of Disclosure Info.**

October 2003  
(updated February 2008)

In accordance with the Scottish Executive Code of Practice, for registered persons and other recipients of Disclosure Information, Barnton Baptist Church (BBC) will ensure the following practice.

- Disclosures will only be requested when necessary and relevant to a particular position and the information provided on a disclosure certificate will only be used for recruitment purposes. However all applicants over 16 years old involved in working with children or in pastoral care of venerable adults will be required to complete a disclosure.
- The BBC will ensure that an individual's consent is given before seeking a disclosure, and will seek their consent before using disclosure information for any purpose other than recruitment.
- Disclosure information will only be shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.
- Where additional disclosure information is provided to BBC and not to the disclosure applicant, BBC will not disclose this information to the applicant, but will inform them of the fact that additional information has been provided, should this information affect the recruitment decision.
- Barnton Baptist Church will have a duty to refer people to the 'Disqualified from working with children list' if they decide not to employ an individual on the grounds that the individual has harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm (in keeping with Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003)
- Disclosure information will be stored in a locked non-portable container, for a maximum of 60 days. Only those authorised to see this information in the course of their duties will have access to this container.
- Disclosure information will be destroyed by shredding.
- No image or photocopy of the disclosure information will be made, however the following details will be retained:-
  1. Date of issue of disclosure
  2. Name of subject
  3. Disclosure type
  4. Position for which disclosure was requested
  5. Unique reference number of disclosure
  6. Recruitment decision taken.
- BBC will ensure that all those with access to disclosure information are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.

Barnton Baptist Church undertake to make a copy of this policy available to any applicant for a post with the Church that requires a disclosure

**References:** Central Registered Body in Scotland [www.crbs.org.uk](http://www.crbs.org.uk). Register No: 106743  
Protection of children (Scotland) Act 2003 Information Note 'Disqualified from working with children list'.



# Barnton Baptist Church

## **Policy on Protecting Vulnerable People**

October 2003  
(updated February 2008)

Barnton Baptist Church aims to ensure that any vulnerable people, whether children, young people or vulnerable adults, are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with volunteers/employees in this organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our volunteers/employees are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

### **Screening**

- Volunteers must provide two references and these will be taken up prior to confirmation of a position.
- Where relevant to the position, the successful volunteer will be asked to agree to an appropriate disclosure. Disclosures will be requested prior to taking up position.

### **Training**

- Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis, and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practising skills needed for the work.
- Training on specific areas such as health and safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new volunteers, and will be regularly reviewed.

### **Supervision**

- All volunteers will have an elder who will provide feedback and support.
- Each volunteer's position will be reviewed and discussed annually.

Barnton Baptist Church will ensure that all volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure it full implementation.

**Reference:** Central Registered Body in Scotland [www.crbs.org.uk](http://www.crbs.org.uk). Register No: 106743

### **Vulnerable Adult**

A person, being aged 18 or over, may be considered to be vulnerable if that person:

- Receives personal care, or nursing, or support to live independently in their own / care home
- Receives any health or social services
- Has a substantial learning or physical disability, or
  - a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol or drugs, or
  - a substantial reduction in physical or mental capacity due to advanced age or to illness.

### **Volunteers**

Below are a few examples of the types of post which may have contact with children and/or adults; Pastors, Elders, Youth workers, Sunday School Teachers, Crèche leaders, helpers.



# Barnton Baptist Church

## **Policy on the Recruitment of Ex Offenders**

October 2003

Barnton Baptist Church undertakes to treat all applicants for positions within the organisation fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

We will only request a Standard or Enhanced disclosure where it is necessary and relevant to the position sought.

Where a position requires a disclosure we will make this clear through initial discussions /interviews.

We will ensure that open and measured discussions can take place on the subject of offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of position/employment.

When receiving a disclosure which shows a conviction, we will take into consideration:-

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position being offered
- The seriousness of the offence revealed.
- The length of time since the offence took place
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since offending took place.

We will not knowingly employ a person to work with children if that person is on the 'Disqualified from working with children list'.

We will ensure that all those involved in the recruitment process are aware of this policy and have received relevant training and support.

We undertake to make a copy of this policy available to any applicant for a position with Barnton Baptist Church that requires a disclosure.

**Reference:** Central Registered Body in Scotland [www.crbs.org.uk](http://www.crbs.org.uk). Register No: 106743