

Woodside Baptist Church

Safeguarding Policy



Guidelines and Procedures for children's work and
work with vulnerable adults.

Current Policy Drafted Jan 2015

To be reviewed Jan 2016

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Introduction

In all our dealings with children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Church has always been committed to having the same attitude that Jesus did (Matt 18:1- 6 Mark 9:37; 10:13-16). Because of the number of tragic cases of abuse of children and vulnerable adults, and changes in both law and public concern, it is essential that we have clear and formal guidelines and procedures for our workers and all our activities as a church.

These guidelines and procedures have been drawn up in response to:

- "Safe from Harm", published by the Home Office,
- "Working Together to Safeguard Children" Department of Health, 1999,
- "Safe to Grow" Baptist Union of Great Britain, 2011,
- "Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act" 2006.

The intention of this policy is to:

- Minimise the possibility of abuse taking place
- Encourage good practice in all work with children and vulnerable adults;
- Enable workers to respond to disclosure or suspicion of abuse
- Protect children, young people, vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers within the church.

This Policy applies to all the Church's activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and all those working with

them. From time to time, additional policies / guidelines may be drafted to supplement this policy. These are not intended to replace any part of this policy, and will be stored along with this policy and made available in the safeguarding section of the church website.

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Definitions

This Policy refers to both children and young people, which in statutory guidance refers to anybody under the age of 18. The term *vulnerable adults* is less easily defined but can generally be categorised as an individual who is, or may be, in need of support by reason of disability, age, circumstances or illness; and is, or may be, unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

There are four types of abuse as officially defined in government guidance: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. These are defined as follows (definitions taken from Baptists Together guidance):

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child or vulnerable adult whom they are looking after.

Physical abuse shapes and influences the child or vulnerable adult's behaviour and, in the case of children and young people, their emotional and educational development. It may

vary in degree of injury, whether directly or indirectly, from physical injuries, neurological damage, disability or even death.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or vulnerable adult's emotional development or quality of life. It may involve conveying to children or vulnerable adults that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on an individual. It may involve causing children or vulnerable adults to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of an individual. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone. Emotional abuse significantly harms a child or vulnerable adult's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be particularly damaging in infancy.

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 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. It should be noted that Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males.

Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In terms of Vulnerable adults, sexual abuse may include any sexual act to which the vulnerable adult has not consented and may not understand. For example, being touched or kissed when it is not wanted, being made to touch or kiss someone else, being raped, being made to listen to sexual comments, or forced to look at sexual acts or materials.

Children who have been, or who are currently being sexually abused may display a wide range of behaviours, including inappropriate sexual behaviour and sexual knowledge inappropriate to age. A child's ability to cope with the aftermath of a discovery or disclosure of sexual abuse is strengthened by the support of a non-abusing adult who believes the child. The reactions of other adults who interact with a child during this time can also have an impact on the child's ability to cope with what is happening.

According to CCPAS, signs of sexual abuse are as follows:

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of
- Adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances, with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations

- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia, etc.
- Bed wetting and soiling

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or vulnerable adult's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult 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 or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

Long-term neglect is likely to cause far more developmental delay and impairment than any other form of abuse. In extreme cases, severe neglect can lead to the death of a child or vulnerable adult. A distinction must be made between neglect caused by financial poverty which can be alleviated by financial help, and that caused by emotional poverty. These may co-exist, but relief of the former does not lead to relief of the latter.

Safeguarding good practice

The church will at all times endeavour to follow good practice when it comes to its work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The Aim of this policy is not to hinder work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, but to protect all those the church works with, as well as staff, volunteers and officers of the church.

With this in mind, ALL those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults MUST HAVE READ & SIGNED a copy of this policy, and must do so again each time this policy is reviewed.

Appointment of a Safeguarding Officer and a Designated Person for Safeguarding

In Order to ensure best Practice with regards to safeguarding, the Church will appoint a “Safeguarding Officer”, who will be responsible to ensure that these guidelines are kept up-to-date and applied on a continuing basis. In addition to this, they will be one of the primary individuals to whom all safeguarding concerns are referred to.

In Addition to a Safeguarding Officer, the Church will also appoint a Designated Person for Safeguarding. This individual’s role will primarily be as an additional individual to whom referrals are made. In addition to this, their information should be displayed around the Church as an individual to whom children, young people and vulnerable adults can approach and make any disclosure to.

The Designated Person for Safeguarding, Safeguarding Officer and, if appropriate, the Pastor, after consultation will decide whether an issue or complaint should be referred to the Churches Child Protection Agency Service, Social Services or other expert, or is appropriate for local resolution. The Designated Person for Safeguarding will deal with Social Services when necessary.

Any accusation will always be taken seriously and investigated by appropriate authorities (police, LEA etc.). Under no circumstances should the investigation be undertaken by a member of the church.

Appropriate Practices for Work with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Whilst this policy does not dictate the type of activities that take place with children, young people and vulnerable adults, there are a number of safeguards that *must* be adhered to. When working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, it is essential to treat them with respect and to affirm their value, seeking to encourage self-esteem.

In terms of children and young people; UN articles on the rights of the child state that a young person should always be involved in any decision that affects them and their views must be taken seriously. They must never be demeaned in front of others; both careful use of language and avoidance of inappropriate physical contact are essential. Physical punishment must not be used under any circumstance.

Good practice will also involve the following:

- 1) Planning work to minimise situations where abuse may occur, or where workers, vulnerable adults, children or young people are put at risk. This includes insuring accurate maintenance of registers, training and supervision.
- 2) Plan to avoid a single adult being in the prolonged company of a lone child or vulnerable adult. In the case of children, this will include inviting a child to a worker's home or giving lifts in a car without the approval of the parents/guardians.
 - a) In the majority of Youth and children's ministry and work with vulnerable adults, two workers should be present. Best practice is for one of each gender. Where this is not appropriate - for example mentoring, pastoral care etc. - the activity must be reported to either the Safeguarding Officer or Designated Person for Safeguarding, and the Pastor. In addition to this, the activity should take place in a public place if appropriate or, if on church premises, workers must ensure that another adult is present in the building and that they are aware that the meeting is taking place. The door should be kept open, or there should be a window into the room from the corridor or other rooms.
 - b) Workers *must* ensure that parents know where their children are when they are under the workers' care.
 - c) To ensure a safe environment, it is essential to maintain recommended volunteer/child ratios. (The ratios recommended are drawn from section 14 (safe practice and safe premises), page 69 of "Safe to Grow", and are shown in the Appendix).

- 3) It is important to ensure that all activity leaders and workers are specifically identified, and that workers understand clearly their role within the activity or organisation.

Selection of Workers

All children's workers and leaders of work with vulnerable adults at Woodside Baptist Church should be Christians, and should have been attending the church regularly for at least 6 months (ideally they should also be a church member). They must also be 16 years old or over, and any worker under the age of 18 must have the support of an approved worker and must never be left in sole charge of a group of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

The Church will ensure all workers, either voluntary or paid, will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form. (Available in Appendices)
- Those short-listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications, where relevant, have been verified

- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns.

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Dealing with Disclosure or Suspicion of Abuse

In the event of a disclosure of abuse, the person to whom the disclosure is made will tell the child or vulnerable adult what steps they are taking, make notes as soon as possible after the disclosure (signed and dated), and report the matter to the Designated Person for Safeguarding or Safeguarding Officer. These Individuals will then decide the most appropriate course of action to take. They may consult the Pastor if appropriate, or seek advice from external agencies (CCPAS, Social Services etc.). *Under no circumstances should any investigation be carried out by any member of the church.*

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, then any disclosure will be passed onto Police immediately. If a child or young person's parents are not implicated in a disclosure, then they will also be informed, so long as there is agreement from statutory bodies.

In any disclosure, the child or vulnerable adult's needs are paramount. Therefore, unconditional confidentiality must never be promised.

In the eventuality of an allegation being made against any worker (whether voluntary or paid) or member of the Church Leadership, that individual must **immediately be suspended** from all work with children, young people or vulnerable adults, and any leadership positions they hold. Suspension is intended to be a neutral act and does not imply any guilt.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or Designated Person for Safeguarding should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking

advice from External Agencies. The Church Leadership will support the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Person for Safeguarding in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way, on a need-to-know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual, as a citizen, to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies, or seek advice from external Agencies, although the Leadership hope that members of the Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Person for Safeguarding has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Officer(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement, that the Church Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Person for Safeguarding is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies, who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed Procedures Where There Is a Concern about a Child

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse

If a child has a physical injury, or a symptom of neglect, or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Person for Safeguarding will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety, or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.

Allegations of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Person for Safeguarding will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families, or Police Child Protection Team, direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

Detailed Procedures Where There Is a Concern That an Adult Is In Need Of Protection

Suspicious or Allegations of Physical or Sexual Abuse

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Designated Person for Safeguarding will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves, giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, or has sustained a serious injury, contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice, contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team, who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, CCPAS can be contacted for advice.

Allegations of Abuse against a Person Who Works With Children or Young People.

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer / Designated Person for Safeguarding, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

In addition to this, whether or not there are such mechanisms in operation, consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service, which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults. Where individuals are liaising with a SA / LADO, discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS.

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Pastoral Care

Following a complaint or disclosure, the pastoral support of an Elder will be offered to the person against whom the accusation has been made, while investigation takes place. If, after investigation, it is found that the person has been wrongly accused, the church will give every appropriate support in order to affirm the worker's contribution and abilities.

It could happen that a person attends the church having a known background of paedophilia, or having been convicted of child abuse or some other offence that may be a risk to children or vulnerable adults. Perhaps attendance at our church could happen after a conversion experience. A known paedophile would be forbidden access to any area where children's activities were taking place. For other offenders, we would seek advice where appropriate. They may be asked to attend an alternative activity or group, and possibly assigned a supporter, who would keep a close eye on them.

Appendices

Ratios for Youth and Children's Ministry

Indoor Activities		
Age, years	0-2	1:3 (minimum 2) (male & female)
	3	1:4 (minimum 2) (male & female)
	4-7	1:8 (minimum 2) (male & female)
	8 and over	2:20 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every 10 children
Outdoor Activities		
Age, years	0-2	1:3 (minimum 2) (male & female)
	3	1:4 (minimum 2) (male & female)
	4-7	1:6 (minimum 2) (male & female)
	8 –12	2:15 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every 8 children
	13 and over	2:20 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every 10 young people

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Self-declaration Form for a Position Requiring a Disclosure

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

As a place of worship/organisation we undertake to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and all other relevant legislation, and the expectations of the Information Commissioners Office relating to the data privacy of individuals.

All applicants are asked to complete this form, detach it from the Application Form and return it, **to the Recruiter detailed below, in a separate sealed envelope**

To: _____

(Name of Recruiter/responsible person in place of worship/organisation processing Criminal Records Disclosure checks)

Address:

Appointment applied for:

CONVICTION HISTORY

If you have never been convicted of a criminal offence or never received a caution, reprimand or warning then please select 'No' below. If you have been convicted of a criminal offence, or received a caution, reprimand or warning that is now spent according to DBS filtering rules*, then please select 'No' below.

If you have an unspent criminal offence, caution, reprimand or warning (according to DBS filtering rules*), please select 'Yes' below.

For exceptions to this legislation or for more information please refer to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974** and the DBS filtering guidance*.

Do you have any unspent convictions; or are you at present the subject of a criminal investigation/pending prosecution?

Yes No (please tick)

If yes, please give details including the nature of the offences and the dates. Please give details of the court(s) where your conviction (s) were heard, the type of offence and sentence(s) received. Could you also give details of the reasons and circumstances that led to the offence(s). Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

POLICE INVESTIGATIONS

Please complete this section if you are applying for an Enhanced Disclosure Check.

Have you ever been the subject of a police investigation that didn't lead to a criminal conviction (and is not subject to DBS filtering rules)*?

Yes No (please tick)

If yes, please give details below, including the date of the investigation, the Police Force involved, details of the investigation and the reason for this, and disposal(s) if known.

To your knowledge have you ever had any allegation made against you, which has been reported to, and investigated by, Social Services/Social Work Department (Children's or Adult Social Care)?

Yes No (please tick)

If yes, please provide details, we will need to discuss this with you.

Has there ever been any cause for concern regarding your conduct with children, young people, vulnerable adults? Please include any disciplinary action taken by an employer in relation to your behaviour with adults.

Yes No (please tick) If yes, please give details.

DECLARATION

To help us ensure that we are complying with all relevant safeguarding legislation, please read the accompanying notes and complete the following declaration.

I (full name) _____ of (address)

consent to a criminal records check if appointed to the position for which I have applied. I am aware that details of pending prosecutions, previous convictions, cautions, or bind overs against me may be disclosed along with any other relevant information which may be known to the police.

I agree to inform the person within the place of worship/organisation responsible for processing disclosure applications if I am convicted of an offence after I take up any post within the place of worship/organisation. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or vulnerable adults and/or the termination of my employment.

I agree to inform the person within the place of worship/organisation responsible for processing disclosure applications if I become the subject of a police and/or a social services/(Children's Social Care or Adult Social Services)/Social Work Department investigation. I understand that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children or vulnerable adults and/or the termination of my employment.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Those applying for work with children and/or vulnerable adults in positions which fall within the scope of regulated activity please confirm that you are not barred from working with children/vulnerable adults.

I confirm that I am not barred from working with children / vulnerable adults.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

NB: Those applying for work with children and/or vulnerable adults in positions which fall outside the scope of regulated activity should not complete the declaration above.

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/filtering-rules-for-criminal-record-check-certificates>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance>

**https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/148542/rehabilitation-offenders.pdf.pdf

LEGALESE – ATTACHED NOTES

The Disclosure of any offence may not prohibit employment. Please refer to our Rehabilitation of Offenders Policy.

As this post involves substantial, unsupervised contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults all applicants who are offered an appointment will be asked to submit to a criminal records check before the position can be confirmed. You will be asked to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (England & Wales),

As the position is exempted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act this check will reveal details of cautions, reprimands or final warnings, as well as formal convictions not subject to DBS filtering rules. Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this position is exempt from the provision of section 4(ii) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions Orders as applicable within the UK), and you are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the Act with the exception of those that are subject to the DBS filtering rules. In the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children or vulnerable adults within the church/organisation.

This process is subject to a strict code to ensure confidentiality, fair practice and security of any information disclosed. The DBS Code of Practice and our own procedures are available on request for you to read. It is stressed that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to appointment, only if the nature of any matters revealed could be considered to place children or vulnerable adults at risk. As a place of worship/organisation we agree to abide by the Code of Practice on the use of personal data in employee/employer relationships under the Data Protection Act 1998 as well as the expectations of the DBS.

As a condition of employment we ask that you keep us informed of any other work (either paid or voluntary) which you are undertaking that involves working with children or vulnerable adults. Should we ever need to refer an individual to any of the lists of people deemed unsuitable for working with children or vulnerable adults then we would also inform them of any knowledge we have of that individual working in any other capacity with children/vulnerable adults.

Notes for England, Wales & Northern Ireland Only - Children and Young People

Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 it is an offence for any organisation to offer employment to anyone who has been convicted of certain specific offences, or included on either of the two barred lists held by the Disclosure and Barring Service where the post falls within the scope of regulated activity (as defined by the DBS, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). An enhanced with barred list check must be completed. Those

working with children and / or vulnerable adults in posts which fall outside the scope of regulated activity may still be eligible for an enhanced disclosure WITHOUT a barred list check. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and merges the functions previously carried out by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The DBS came into existence on 1st December 2012. The DBS offers both an enhanced check and for those engaged in regulated activity an enhanced with a barred list check.

DBS Eligibility from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/dbs-checking-service-guidance/eligibility-guidance>

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