



Pantygwydr Baptist Church  
Safeguarding Procedures –  
Children and Young People  
November 2018

Part 5: A Safe Community

Pantygwydr Baptist Church, Ernald Place, Swansea, SA2 0HN

Charity Number: 1126593

## 5. A Safe Community

**The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.**

### Prevention of bullying

The Government defines bullying as:

*“Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”*

Bullying can take many forms including:

- name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking
- kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating
- unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature or sexually abusive comments
- taking belongings
- inappropriate text-messaging and emailing
- sending offensive or degrading images by phone or over the internet
- gossiping, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- excluding people from groups
- 'unofficial' activities such as initiation ceremonies or practical jokes which may cause physical or emotional harm

Bullies will often pick on a particular feature of a person's appearance or character as a supposed 'reason' for bullying:

- racial difference
- disability
- sexuality
- hair colour
- gender
- belief

Bullies can be:

- children or young people bullying others in their peer group, or other children and young people either older or younger;
- adults bullying children and young people;
- children and young people bullying adults.

Bullying will always cause a great deal of pain and harm for those on the receiving end. Many children and young people affected by bullying believe they have nowhere to turn; they are scared to speak out and often blame themselves. They can become fearful and reclusive.

Some signs that can indicate that a child or young person is being bullied are as follows:

- Withdrawal
- Lack of desire to join activities with certain individuals
- Drop in school marks
- Torn clothing
- Loss of friends
- Avoidance of church groups and other activities
- Bruises
- Need for extra money or supplies

In order to prevent bullying the following procedures should be adopted:

- the children and young people themselves should be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour which makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable
- children and young people should know how they can report any incidents of bullying
- all allegations of bullying will be treated seriously
- details will be checked carefully before action is taken
- the bullying behaviour will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible
- the parents of the bully and of the bullied will be informed
- an attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour
- all allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with actions that are taken.

### **When a known offender is present**

The church is a community that is welcoming and open to all. It is a place for people who have failed and for people in need. Those who have abused children and young people in the past are to be included in this welcome. However, the gospel imperative to welcome the sinner needs to be set alongside the gospel imperative that the protection of children and young people must be paramount.

There is a very particular challenge when it comes to those who sexually abuse children. Present research suggests that sexual offending can be a kind of addiction whereby patterns of behaviour are deeply ingrained in the character of the person. However old the offence, ex-offenders continue to pose a very real threat to children and young people which should be borne in mind when welcoming them into the church. Experience has also shown that those who abuse children can be very persuasive in expressing remorse and in presenting themselves as people who are now living a different way of life. Abusers are often people who are able to get on well with children and whom children are ready to trust. The Christian community has too often misunderstood what it means to practise forgiveness and has often entrusted such people with the care of children and young people.

When it is known that a person who wants to attend church has been convicted of a criminal offence of sexually abusing children or young people it is important that their behaviour within the church is properly managed and that a contract is put in place. There are also times when it will be appropriate to take such measures with a person who has faced a series of allegations about the sexual abuse of children and young people but has never been convicted (such allegations may be revealed on an Enhanced CRB Disclosure under relevant non-conviction information)

In determining the details of the contract:

- there should be a discussion about who should be informed of the nature of the offence and the details of the contract
- the rights of the offender to re-build their lives without everyone knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against the need to protect children and young people
- the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Designated Person for Safeguarding should always be informed

- The church should find out if the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register
- If so, contact should be made with the offender's specialist probation officer (SPO) or police Sexual Offenders Manager to ensure that you are aware of any specific information or restrictions that are relevant
- The church should inform and take advice from the Regional Minister responsible for Safeguarding matters in your Association.

An open discussion must be held with the person concerned in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract should be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour and which the person is asked to sign. The contract:

- will identify the meetings the person will attend (ideally they would attend services where children are less likely to be present)
- will specify that they will always sit apart from children
- may ask that they are always accompanied by a befriender on church premises
- will require the person not to attend small group meetings where children are present
- will require that the person declines hospitality where there are children
- will state that the person will never be alone with children while attending church functions
- will require the person to stay away from areas of the building where children meet

The contract should be monitored and enforced. Those who offend against children can often be manipulative. If the contract is broken certain sanctions should be considered.

- If the initial contract allows the person to attend the main morning service where children are present, a new contract might require them only to attend a service where children are less likely to attend.
- If only a few people know of the person's conviction, more people might be told in order to protect children. In doing this a balance has to be made between protecting the civil liberties of the past offender, the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the protection of children and young people. Any disclosure of the person's criminal background would need to be the minimum necessary to achieve the aim of safeguarding the children and young people in our care. The offender should normally be told if their previous convictions are to be disclosed to others.
- Ultimately, it might be necessary to ban the person from attending the church. If there are concerns that the person might join another church, other local church leaders must not be forewarned by giving details of the person concerned. Other local church leaders should be asked to inform you if any new person joins their church. If the person joins another fellowship it would be appropriate to indicate our concerns to this specific church leader.

A template for a model contract is available on the *Safe to Grow* website ([www.safetogrow.org.uk](http://www.safetogrow.org.uk)) but the church is strongly encouraged to take advice and guidance before implementing any contract.