



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

Part 1: Prevention of Abuse

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

Charity Number: 1126593

## Part 1: Prevention and Reporting of Abuse

**It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people, and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.**

### Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. There are four types of abuse as officially defined in government guidance: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

#### Physical abuse

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

Physical abuse shapes and influences the child's behaviour, and 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 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.

Emotional abuse significantly harms a child'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.

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.

### **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.

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.

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.

### **Abuse of Trust**

A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. The individual in the position of trust could use that position to put a child or young person in a position of advantage or disadvantage.

### **Additional Definitions relevant to Church**

#### **Spiritual abuse**

The term 'spiritual abuse' is not one of the official definitions of abuse but is sometimes used to describe some of the particular features of abuse arising within religious organisations. 'Spiritual abuse' is increasingly being used to describe those situations where an abuse of power takes place in the context of a faith community. The following is a widely used definition of spiritual abuse:

*"Spiritual abuse occurs when someone uses their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice to satisfy their own needs at the expense of others."*

There are a number of ways in which practice in churches can lead to the abuse or neglect of children:

- A belief in demon possession resulting in the labelling and naming of a child as 'evil' or 'a witch';
- Placing pressure on children to make decisions that are not appropriate to their age or developmental stage;
- Creating an environment in which children are not encouraged to ask questions or hold alternative views.

## What do we do if abuse is suspected or disclosed?

Everyone has his or her part to play in ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people within the church.

If the behaviour of a child or young person gives any cause for concern; if an allegation is made in any context about a child or young person being harmed; if the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children or young people causes you concern:

- Do not dismiss your concerns, in particular do not ignore or dismiss concerns about a professional or a colleague;
- Do not normally 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 may have.

You must;

- Follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns (see flowchart overleaf).

Unless;

- You think that the child/young person is in imminent danger of harm then the police (999) should be contacted. A report is then given to the Designated Person as detailed below.

### When a child expresses a concern ...

When a child or young person talks about harm or abuse that they are suffering:

- **DO NOT PROMISE OR LEAD A CHILD TO BELIEVE THAT ANY CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN WHICH AFFECTS THEM OR OTHER CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL;**
- Create a safe environment in which the child or young person can share their concerns;
- React calmly so as not to further distress the child or young person;
- Listen carefully to what the child or young person has to say;
- Allow them time to say what they want;
- Don't rush or interrupt them or ask more questions than you need to in order to establish whether there is cause for concern or to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said;
- Accept what the child or young person says and take seriously what you are hearing;
- Reassure the child or young person, and tell them that you know how difficult it must be to confide in you;
- Tell the child or young person that s/he is not to blame and that they have done the right thing in speaking to you;
- Help the child or young person to understand what is going to happen next. The child should be informed that other people will need to be told about the concerns which have been shared and who those people may be.
- Be aware that a child or young person may be frightened and that s/he may have been threatened if they tell of what has been happening to them;
- Also remember that most children feel loyalty to their parents and other significant people in their lives and often find it difficult to say things to their detriment.

### **Other Concerns about the Well-Being of Children and Young People**

At times, a child or young person discloses other concerns to a worker, or the worker becomes aware of issues which may have an impact on the child's wellbeing. This would include, but is not limited to Mental Health Issues, Self Harm, Suicidal thoughts or Substance misuse, by the child or family member. In this situation, the Procedures for Responding to Concerns should be followed.

## 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*

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*The person who has the concern has a duty to*  
**RECORD AND REPORT**

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*A written record must be made of the concern using an "Incident Report Form for Workers" and the concern should be reported to the Designated Person within 24 hours.*



### STAGE 2

*The Designated Person receives the report of concern*

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*The Designated Person has a duty to*  
**REVIEW AND REFER**

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*The report will be reviewed by the Designated Persons 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.*



### STAGE 3

*After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken*

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*The Designated Persons, the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Minister may have a duty to*  
**SUPPORT AND REPORT**

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*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 local Association, the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Charity Commission.*

## **STAGE 1 – RECORD AND REPORT**

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child or young person is to RECORD their concerns in writing and to REPORT their concerns to the Designated Person. The report to the Designated Person should be made within 24 hours of the concern being raised.

### **The Duty to RECORD**

As soon as possible after a child or young person tells you about harmful behaviour, or an incident takes place that gives cause for concern, a written record should be made.

Ideally, the record should be made on the “Incident Report form for Workers” (available on the website and from the Church Office).

The record should:

- Be written as soon as possible after the event (when hand-written notes are typed up later the original hand-written notes should be retained);
- Be legible and state the facts accurately;
- Include the child’s name, address, date of birth (or age if the date of birth is not known);
- Include the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure ;
- Include a description of any visible bruising or other injuries;
- Include an exact record of what the child has said using the child’s words;
- Include what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported;
- Include any action taken as a result of the concerns;
- Be signed and dated;
- Be kept secure and confidential and made available only to:
  - the Designated Person
  - The church minister as far as this is consistent with the welfare of the child/young person concerned and possible pastoral responsibilities to any others involved.
  - Representatives of the professional agencies.

### **The Duty to REPORT**

If anyone has a concern about the welfare of a child, that concern should be reported to the Designated Person without delay. The report can be made in the first instance either in a face to face conversation or by telephone, but should always be followed up by submitting a written incident report.

If concerns arise in the context of a children’s or young people’s group, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk through their concern with other workers in the group and/or with their group leader. However, such conversations should not delay a report being made to the Designated Person.

The duty remains with the worker to record and report their concerns to the Designated Person.

If a concern is brought to the attention of a leader by one of the workers the leader should remind the worker of their duty to record and report, and will also themselves have a duty to report the concern to the Designated Person.

## STAGE 2 – REVIEW AND REFER

The duty of the Designated Person on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that has been reported and to REFER the concern on to the appropriate people.

### **The Duty to REVIEW**

In reviewing the report that is received the Designated Person:

- Should discuss the report with the other Designated Person for Safeguarding (unless the report refers to that person).
- Should take account of their own experience and expertise in assessing risk to children;
- Must take account of other reports that may have been received concerning the same child, family or adult;
- May speak with others in the church (including the Minister) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision that will be made. Such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action;
- May consult with their Regional Minister in order to seek guidance from their Association;
- May seek advice from the Social Services in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

### **The Duty to REFER**

In reviewing the reported concern the Designated Person must make a decision about who the report should be referred on to.

The Designated Person may:

- Refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation;
- Refer the concern to others who work with the child/children in question asking for continued observation;
- In certain circumstances you can refer to the adult about whom the concern has been raised. This may be the parent/carer of the child or it may be one of the children's workers. If there is any question at all of possible sexual abuse or serious physical abuse the Designated Person should never address the adult directly but should refer their concerns to the police or Social Services. To approach the adult may place the child at more risk, or could make any statutory investigation difficult to pursue because the child may be intimidated;
- Make a formal referral to the local Social Services Department.
- Where a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect:
  - Contact Children's Social Care Team (01792 635700 Office Hours or 01792 775501 Out of Hours) if there are concerns that a child may have been deliberately hurt, is at risk of 'significant harm' or is afraid to return home. Do not tell the parents, or other people involved.
  - If a child needs urgent medical attention an ambulance will be called or they will be taken to hospital, informing the parents/carers afterwards of the action that was taken.
  - The hospital staff will be informed of any child protection concerns.
- Where there are allegations or concerns of sexual abuse:
  - Contact Children's Social Care Team (01792 635700 Office Hours or 01792 775501 Out of Hours). DO NOT try to investigate the matter.
  - In the case of sexual assault which may have occurred over the last few days, and where it has not been possible to get an immediate response from Children's Social Care Team, contact the police.
  - Do not touch or tamper with any evidence, such as stained clothing.

- DO NOT tell other people including the parents / carers; they could be involved.
- Keep information on a need-to-know basis so that any alleged perpetrator is not 'tipped off'.

All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the Designated Person and a written record should be made of the actions taken using the "Incident Report Form for Workers".

## STAGE 3 – REPORT AND SUPPORT

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Designated Person, the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Minister.

### **The Duty to REPORT**

Whenever a formal referral is made to Social Services the Designated Person should:

- Report the referral to the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon;
- Report the referral to the Minister;
- Report the referral to the Regional Minister of the local Association.

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon acting on behalf of the trustees may also need to make further reports, e.g.

- If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post because of the risk of harm that they pose to children and young people there is a duty to report the incident to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- If a worker in the church has been accused of causing harm to children or young people this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission in the annual return.

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding

### **The Duty to SUPPORT**

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected. Even when formal referrals to the statutory authorities are not made, those who make reports will feel uncertain and vulnerable and support will need to be offered to them.

#### ***Child/Young Person***

For the child/young person concerned, Social Services and other agencies may provide support and services. However, the church will have a role to play in complementing this support. The Designated Person should seek to work in partnership with other agencies, clarifying with them how best the church may be able to support the child/young person and to ensure that consistent help and support is being offered.

#### ***Other Family Members***

The church may similarly be in a position to offer pastoral and practical support to family members who may find they are trying to cope with a variety of feelings.

#### ***Church worker/Volunteer***

Support and counselling may also be offered to those within the church who are involved in the incident. This could be the person who the child shared their concerns with and the Designated Person.

#### ***Ministers/ Deacons***

Ministers and deacons should ensure that whenever a referral is made to Social Services that a Regional Minister is informed.

#### ***Alleged Perpetrator***

Support will be offered to the alleged perpetrator without compromising the children or their families. This is one reason for limiting information in relation to allegations of abuse on a need-to-know basis. In this way leaders not privy to the detail are free to offer support to other parties, including the suspected perpetrator. Where an investigation is under way, this support will be provided with the knowledge of the child protection authorities. The Minister and Designated Persons may decide it is necessary for the alleged perpetrator not to attend church during this period. Should they begin to worship elsewhere, the new Church Leaders, or the Designated Persons for Safeguarding in that church, will be informed of the situation.

## Responding to concerns about the behaviour of fellow workers

The basic three stage process outlined above should form the basis for responding to all concerns within the church regarding the welfare of children and young people. If anyone in the church believes that the behaviour of one of the workers is placing children or young people at risk of harm (whether that worker is paid or unpaid, is a relatively new volunteer or is a senior and experienced youth worker) there is a fundamental duty to RECORD and REPORT.

However, there will be many times when workers quite innocently and inadvertently place themselves in situations where they act in an inappropriate way and where they make themselves vulnerable or open to suspicion. Occasionally workers may 'let their guard drop' and may say or do something that falls outside what would normally be considered as acceptable behaviour with children and young people.

It is probably not appropriate or necessary to report all of these incidents to the Designated Person – particularly if they are one-off events – but the church will develop a culture where there will be a proper and proportionate response to situations like this.

Workers need to be willing to point out to one another when their actions are inappropriate.

What should trigger a report being made to the Designated Person?

- All workers should feel able to make a report if they feel uncomfortable about the behaviour of any fellow worker;
- All occasions where a worker causes harm to a child or young person, or where the actions and behaviour of a worker poses a risk of harm to children and young people should be reported;
- When a worker repeatedly breaches safe practices, whether or not it is thought to be wilful, a report should be made to the Designated Person.

When the Designated Person receives any report expressing concern about the behaviour of a worker Stage 2 of the procedures for responding to concerns will be followed.

All those working with children and young people should be aware that if an allegation is made against them this will be referred to the statutory authorities. They will normally be advised or required to withdraw from their responsibilities while an investigation is carried out. They may even be asked not to attend church during this period. Should they worship elsewhere, the new Church Leaders, or the Designated Persons for Safeguarding in that church, will be informed of the situation.

If an allegation is made that a worker has caused harm to a child or young person the procedures outlined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018* (available on the Gov.uk website) require that the allegation is reported to the Local Authority Children's Services who should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If a person who is working with children or young people is removed from their position (or would have been removed had they not resigned) because they have caused harm to a child or because they pose the risk of causing harm to a child, it is a legal duty of the Safeguarding Trustee to make a report to the Disclosure and Barring Service. Further guidance together with a standard report form can be found on the Disclosure and Barring Service website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>.

The Church is registered with the Charity Commission so it will also be the Safeguarding Trustee's statutory duty to report to the Charity Commission in the annual return any significant safeguarding incident that has occurred during the course of the year that has affected the work of the church.

**When the concern involves a Designated Person**

Reports should be made to the other Designated Person, who, in conjunction with the Minister, will follow procedures as above. Whilst the concern is being handled, the Designated Person who the concern relates to will be asked to step down from the Role.

**When concerns are expressed about the Minister**

Whenever any concerns are expressed about the Minister the concerns must be taken as seriously as if they were being expressed about any other person connected to the life of the church. Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Regional Minister of South Wales Baptist Association in addition to following the church's normal procedures.

**Allegations against children or young people**

Children and young people are curious about the opposite sex. However, where a child is in a position of power, has responsibility over another child (as in a babysitting arrangement, or when helping with children's activities as a young leader) and abuses that trust then this is abusive. Where one child introduces another child to some age-inappropriate sexual activity or forces themselves onto a child this is abusive. Such situations will be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great.

Instances such as these are investigated by the child protection agencies in the same way as if an adult were involved, though it is likely that the perpetrator would also be regarded as a victim in their own right. The possibility is that they have also been abused. Since sexual abuse can be addictive and other children could be victims now or in the future, it is important to take the matter seriously and we will need to deal with this as they would any other allegation. It cannot be assumed that young people will grow out of it. Most adult sex offenders started abusing in their teens (or even younger).

**False Allegations**

False allegations are possible. Workers should not, however ignore allegations, assuming they are false. All allegations will be properly investigated by the relevant agencies in an endeavour to establish the truth.