



NEWLIFE

NEW LIFE CHURCH, BLACKBOYS CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Policy Statement

The leadership of New Life Church, Blackboys recognises the importance of its ministry to children and young people and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to its care.

As members of New Life Church, Blackboys we are committed to:-

- The belief that we all have the right to feel safe and accept that it is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the abuse of children and young people and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- Following the agreed procedures for recruiting, supervising and training of all the children and youth workers and volunteers within the Church and to supporting and resourcing them.
- Following the agreed procedures for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Encourage and support parents/carers.
- Support those in the Church affected by abuse.
- Appoint a Children's Advocate
- Adopt the guidelines and procedures published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain in its publication Safe to Grow (revised edition).

NB – A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Procedures

The Church recognises the need to provide a safe environment for children and young people. It also acknowledges that children and young people can be the victims of neglect, grooming, physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual or organised abuse. It has therefore adopted the following procedures:

1. Safe recruitment procedures.
2. Good working practices and guidelines for running activities.
3. How to respond if there are concerns/suspensions of abuse.
4. Supporting those affected by abuse.
5. What we do if we have a known sex offender in the Church.

1. Safe Recruitment Procedure

- Candidates must complete an application form.
- The Church will take up the two references provided on the application form.
- The Church will carry out an interview with the candidate.
- Candidates must apply for appropriate criminal records check form the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Following receipt of satisfactory references and criminal records check the appointment decision will be made.
- All workers and volunteers must read and sign a copy of the Child Protection Policy Statement and Procedures stating that they will abide by them.
- All workers and volunteers will attend training to develop awareness of child protection issues.
- All workers and volunteers will be given a role description and an induction into their role.

2. Good working practices and guidelines for running activities.

- Treat all children and young people with dignity and respect.
- Respect personal privacy.
- Be available, but also be ready to refer a situation or problem to someone who is more experienced to deal with it.
- Be sensitive to needs, likes and dislikes
- Avoid questionable activity e.g. rough/sexually provocative games and inappropriate language.
- Follow accepted guidelines relating to physical contact.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Report all allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- Do not spend time alone with a child or young person if at all possible. If you need to spend some one to one time with a child or young person ensure that it is an area that although maybe away from others is still in clear view of those around you.
- If leading a small group where there is only one leader present, spotcheckers will be used to check that everyone is safe and happy.
- Do not put yourself in a situation that may lead to allegations being made against you.
- If you need to transport children to activities, make sure that you are not alone in a car with a child, arrange to drop children together.
- If you are in text or email contact with children, make sure there is an agreed time limit to these texts and emails.

3. How to respond if there are concerns or suspicions of abuse.

- Common scenarios that you may come across:
 - A child or young person discloses alleged abuse to you.
 - You observe signs of possible abuse in a child or young person.
 - You may have concerns about inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person by another worker or volunteer.
 - You may have concerns about inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person by someone else who is not a worker or volunteer.
- If you are involved in such a situation you should as soon as possible report what has been disclosed to you or what you have observed to your:
 - Group Leader
or
 - The Safeguarding Officer – Hannah Sullivan 07976 569581
or
 - The Minister – Guy Partridge 07702 836057
- The key principles of reporting concerns are:
 - The welfare of the child or young person is of primary importance.
 - Do not promise to 'keep secrets'.
 - Confidentiality should be maintained as much as possible, with only those who need to know being notified and kept informed.
 - One person should be the first and single point of contact for the child whenever possible.
 - Reporting and communication should be carried out with minimum delay.
 - There is a need to maintain a balance between a) taking seriously all concerns, disclosures and allegations, and b) the principle that a person is innocent until proven otherwise.
 - In the case of adult welfare, the vulnerable adult has the right to ask for their disclosure not to be reported, unless they are lacking the mental capacity to make that decision, or if there is a risk of harm to others.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the East Sussex Children's Services (formerly known as Social Services) or the Police. If you feel that your reports of your concerns or observations have not been responded to appropriately, then it is open to you to contact one of these agencies direct. Contact details are:

East Sussex County Council

Duty and Assessment Team

West 1st Floor

St Mark's House, 14 Upperton Road

Eastbourne

East Sussex

BN21 1EP

Phone: 01323 747373

Fax: 01323 747343

Emergency Duty and Assessment Team

Available out of hours – Mon-Fri 5pm-8am, all weekends and bank holidays.

Phone: 01273 335905

Sussex Police

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or need urgent medical attention – **dial 999.**

If the child is not in immediate danger – call Sussex Police on 101.

Because of the nature of what the child or young person has shared, you may want to talk over your own response. Please do not be afraid to ask for support if you feel you need it.

4. Supporting those affected by abuse

New Life Church Blackboys is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and supporting those attending the Church who have been affected by abuse, be they children or adult survivors or families of those abused.

5. What we do if we have a known sex offender in the Church

Occasionally, Churches find that a member of their fellowship has been convicted in the past of abusing a child. For the sake of the protection of children and for the sake of an offender's journey towards forgiveness and restoration, it is important that those who have offended against children in the past are not given positions of responsibility for children within the Church.

The Leadership will have an open discussion with the person concerned in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the Church. A written contract will be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour which the person will be asked to sign.

Contact will be made and information shared with the Police and Probation Service as appropriate.