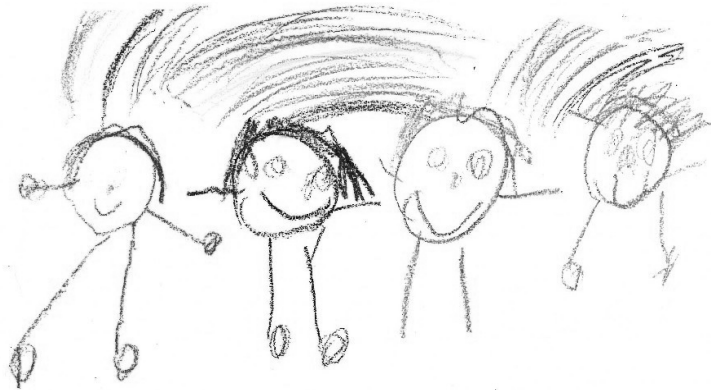




Safe and Sound



Our Child and Young Person Protection Policy



SAFE AND SOUND

PBC's Child and Young Person Protection Policy

INTRODUCTION

Why this policy?

Our mission statement at PBC is 'to know Jesus and make him known'. In Promiseland, our children's ministry, and in our youth ministry, our aim is to encourage young people to become disciples of Jesus by developing their relationship UP with God, by strengthening their relationship IN with each other in godly community, and by encouraging them to look OUT to impact Pembury, the UK, and the world.

Yet today we also face the reality that children and young people are victims of neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Pembury Baptist Church works with over 100 young people/children and babies every week. The question for us is: **in our pursuit of excellence, what precautions are we taking in our work with children and young people?**

The Home Office has produced a set of recommendations and guidelines to give all voluntary groups, including churches, a framework for action to promote children's and young people's welfare, in particular to prevent abuse taking place. Called **Safe From Harm**, these recommendations and guidelines give clear steps for an organisation like ours to adhere to. Whilst **Safe From Harm** does not force the law, it is our responsibility before God, the children and young people, their parents (guardian/carer) and our community to safeguard ourselves and those with whom we work.

A few myths.....

- "It couldn't happen here"
- "We don't want to put anyone off"
- "We won't have enough young people in our group to worry about it"

A few facts.....

- Any child could be abused.

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- Any adult could be an abuser.
- People who abuse children can be devious and may be drawn to places where they have easy access to children.
- Churches are often seen as easy targets.

PBC pursues equal opportunities and welcomes people to serve the Church on the basis of the right mix of talent, skills, character, potential and call of God, including those with criminal records.¹

This policy is not about mistrust, but rather about our responsibility as Christians to be:

***blameless in everything we do so there is
no place to point the finger***
(2 Corinthians 8:21).

Our church should hold a trusted position in this community. Therefore, all youth/children workers are expected to follow these guidelines so that we know how to:

- protect children and young people from abuse
- act responsibly if abuse is discovered or disclosed

Safe From Harm:
Summary of Recommendations

(Published: Home Office, London 1993,

¹ PBC has an Equal Opportunities statement. If interested, please see Simon Cragg, Associate Pastor.

ISBN 0 862529 93-x)

The Home Office recommends that in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in their charge, voluntary organisations should consider each of these guidelines and take action if appropriate in the light of their circumstances and structure, and the nature of their activities.

- 1 Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.
- 2 Plan the work of the organization so as to minimize situations where the abuse of children may occur.
- 3 Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.
- 4 Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers.
- 5 Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.
- 6 Use supervision as a means of protecting children.
- 7 Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.
- 8 Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children.
- 9 Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.
- 10 Find out whether an applicant has any convictions for criminal offences against children.
- 11 Make paid and voluntary appointments on the successful completion of a probationary period.
- 12 Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse.
- 13 Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.



Policy statement on children, young people and the church

It will be read annually at the *Annual General Church Meeting* normally held in the month of *March or April* where progress in carrying it out will be monitored.

- As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people.
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or volunteer.
- The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision.

- The church is committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice **Safe from Harm** and adopts the guidelines and procedures published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain in its publication **Safe to Grow** (revised edition).
- Each worker with children and young people must know the recommendations, and undertake to observe them. Each shall be given a copy of the church's agreed procedures and Good Practice guidelines.
- As part of our commitment to children and young people, the church has appointed Jennifer Roberts to be the Responsible Person. Her role will be regularly explained to children, her name and telephone number will be publicly displayed.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE

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Purpose

The policy is formulated both to avoid abuse occurring and to assist youth workers to respond appropriately if abuse is disclosed or discovered.

A. Good Practice with Children and Young People

1. The church should ensure that: -

- As far as possible a worker is not alone with a child where activity cannot be seen. On church premises this means choosing the most appropriate room. It may also mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room. In a counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible another adult should be in the building and the young person should know they are there.
- Ensure that accesses to the building is safe and well lit.

2. Guidelines for you, the worker: -

It is not sufficient to care for our young people, we must be seen to be beyond reproach. To avoid misunderstanding or unfounded allegations, here's a very helpful thing to remember:

*Be careful **what** you **say**.
Be careful **what** you **do**.
Be careful **how** you **relate**.*

- Always let other leaders know where you are and what you are doing.
- As far as possible, never let yourself get into a situation where you are alone with a young person, particularly if they are of the opposite sex.
- If a young person asks to speak to you about a private matter, you

may not withdraw to a place out of sight of others. Use a quiet corner of a public room, but in full view of others.

- Never promise to keep anything told to you by a young person secret. You must make it clear that, if it is in *their* best interests, it may be necessary to speak to someone who can help.
- Never initiate physical contact with a young person.
- Inappropriate physical approaches must be rejected firmly but kindly. Reject the action, not the person.
- Be especially careful when involved in activities involving physical contact. Lose the game rather than be at risk of accusation.
- If at all possible do not give lifts to young people on their own, particularly if they are of the opposite sex. In cases of distress when it is necessary to take a young person in your car, always ensure there is someone else with you.
- If a young person tells you about abuse, do not prompt them in order to gain further information. You may repeat what they have said in the form of a question, but it is vital that you are not seen as having given them ideas.
- If a young person calls at your home, ensure that you are appropriately dressed to receive them, try to ensure that someone else is around, and never take them into a bedroom.
- Do not engage in inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form.

Arrangements for supervision of activities

Club nights at the church – e.g. Lads Group

- All leaders present are responsible for supervision of activities. In particular, at least one leader must be present in each room where youngsters are. Particular care must be taken to ensure the safety of the young people in all activities. In cases of doubt, refer to one of the main leaders. As part of a busy site, it is also vital that leaders be aware of strangers or intruders.

Meetings at other venues – e.g. Youth socials, small groups

- The same responsibilities exist as for evenings at the church. Additionally leaders must look out for unexpected or unknown dangers. When coming into contact with members of the public, look out for and avoid situations where abuse is possible. Do not let youngsters wander off on their own. Transport must be properly organised and legal.

Day Trips

- Day trips are activities outside the normal meeting times, but not involving an overnight stay. Details of day trips must be provided to the parent/guardian/carer from whom a signed permission slip which includes authority for medical attention must be obtained. A method of contacting the parent/guardian/carer (preferably by telephone) in the case of emergency must also be obtained.

Camps, holidays etc. involving overnight stay

- All the provisions of meetings in the church, at other venues and day trips apply. In addition, sleeping arrangements appropriate to the location must be made. Under no circumstances must a leader sleep in the same room or tent with one individual young person.

First aid and medical issues

- All accidents, whether onsite or offsite should be reported in the accident book, located in the kitchen. Emergency situations should be dealt with by emergency services, and parents should be contacted immediately.

Making and publishing images of children

- Making and publishing images of young people and children is usually enjoyed by children and parents and can bring useful publicity, but there are some issues to note:
- Some children may have been involved in legal disputes, local authority care, or adoption, and their whereabouts should not be

too widely known; if individual children are identified, it would be possible for potential abusers to use them to target prospective victims; images made using digital cameras can be manipulated for child pornography which is a growing problem on the internet.

- Therefore, consent should be obtained from the parent or guardian of the child if the photographs are going to be published in any way (i.e. internet, newspaper etc.).
- Where possible, each child should be part of a group.
- Avoid naming the child when it is published.

Technological communications

- With advances in communication through phone text messaging and social networking sites such as Facebook, we need to be very careful that our words to young people cannot be wrongly interpreted. These forms of communication need to have the same standards of conduct and appropriateness applied as any other situation, and care must be taken when sending written messages that they cannot be misread as inappropriate.

Discipline

- The methods of imposing discipline are limited to verbal warnings and exclusion of a young person from present and/or future activities. In general a verbal warning should be issued in cases of unacceptable behaviour. If this is ignored, a ban from one or more future meetings should be imposed. This should be accompanied

by a letter to the parent/guardian/carer explaining the conditions of the ban and the circumstances under which it was imposed.

- If behaviour is considered detrimental to the safety of others, then the person should be asked to leave immediately. In cases where a person refuses to leave, physical expulsion should not be used. In extreme cases it may be necessary to call the police. Physical intervention is only permissible in order to prevent damage to a person or property. Such intervention must only be at a level

sufficient to prevent the damage.

B. Good practice with colleagues

If you see another member of the team acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or your team leader about your concerns. (If you feel your team leader is not demonstrating good practice, speak to the Youth Coordinator). Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all team members to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

These measures have been put in place in order to protect workers from false accusation

C. Recruiting volunteers and staff

This will be the basic flow of how we will recruit new members to any of our children's and young people's leadership teams.

After a potential leader has expressed interest (to Associate Pastor or Team Leader) they will be:

- Invited to come along to different groups for a few sessions to establish which group is appropriate for that potential leader.

After which the Team Leader fills in **Information for Volunteers** and gives the potential leader an **Application Form**.

- Once this is filled in they will meet for an **informal interview** to discuss whether all parties are happy.
- If everything is acceptable, the potential leader will sign a declaration form and proceed with the **CRB Disclosure** and take away a copy of our 'Safe and Sound' – our good practice guidelines.

- Complete the **Volunteer Agreement** form.
- They are then free to join the team, with a **probationary** period of 6 months after which they will meet again with the most appropriate leader. If all is satisfactory then a yearly-renewable contract is made where there is an opportunity on both sides for discussion and feedback.

PROCEDURES IF ABUSE IS DISCOVERED OR DISCLOSED

Recognising and Responding to Abuse

The following behavioural signs *may* be indications of child abuse. They should not be considered in isolation, but an overall picture should be formed.

Recognising physical signs

- any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- injuries which have not received medical attention
- instances where young people are kept away from the group inappropriately
- bruises, bites, burns, fractures, etc. which do not have an accidental explanation
- cutting/slashing/drug abuse

Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- any allegations made by a young person concerning sexual abuse
- young person with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or who regularly engages in inappropriate overt sexual play

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- young person who is sexually provocative 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

Emotional signs

- changes or regression in mood and behaviour, particularly where a young person withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression
- nervousness/watchfulness
- sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- inappropriate relationships with adults and/or peers
- attention-seeking behaviour
- persistent tiredness
- running away/stealing/lying

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

RESPONDING TO ABUSE

If you suspect that abuse may have occurred or it has been disclosed to you:

- Do not delay
- Do not act alone
- Do not start to investigate
- Maintain confidentiality at all times - do not discuss with anyone other than Jennifer Roberts (responsible person) or Wayne Alexander (Senior Pastor) - details will be displayed on the child protection policy board

- If the child is in immediate danger, call the police

How to react when a young person wants to talk about abuse

- Behave kindly and calmly, listen carefully
- Workers should always believe what the child is saying in the first instance
- Try not to appear shocked or in disbelief by anything you are told
- Never promise to keep anything secret - explain why and to whom you may need to disclose information to
- Talk in a quiet part of a public room, in view of others
- Do not prompt the young person or impose your own assumptions on the child's version of events

What to do once a child has talked to you about abuse

1. Make a handwritten record of what has been said as soon as possible, noting dates and times of events, signing and dating it. If possible, use the child's own words. There are official incident forms in the church and church office which should be used where possible.
2. Report your concerns as soon as possible to the named responsible person or the Senior Pastor (depending on whom the allegations are against). It is always better to share concerns which later prove groundless, than to wait for certainty which may mean actual harm to the child.
3. Do not discuss your concerns with anyone else.
4. Following discussion, if the concerns are thought to be well-founded, it is the responsibility of the child protection named responsible person to report the suspicions to social services, either for advice or to make an official referral.

Abuse of Trust

Relationships between children/young people and adults can take many different forms, but all of them can be described as 'relationships of trust'. Within the relationship between a youth worker and a child, there is the potential for the trust to be abused by the leader, who is in a position of power over the child or young person.

It is always wrong for a leader to enter into a sexual relationship with a young person - even a 16 or 17 year old who can legally consent to some types of sexual activity may still be emotionally immature. Regardless of consent, the imbalance of power between a youth worker and a child/young person makes it an abuse of trust.

Romantic relationships can be seen as an abuse of trust, even when the leader is also a young person, as the roles of romantic partner and leader could easily be confused. If such circumstances should arise, it is vital to seek the advice of our Associate Pastor, Simon Cragg.

Supporting those affected by abuse

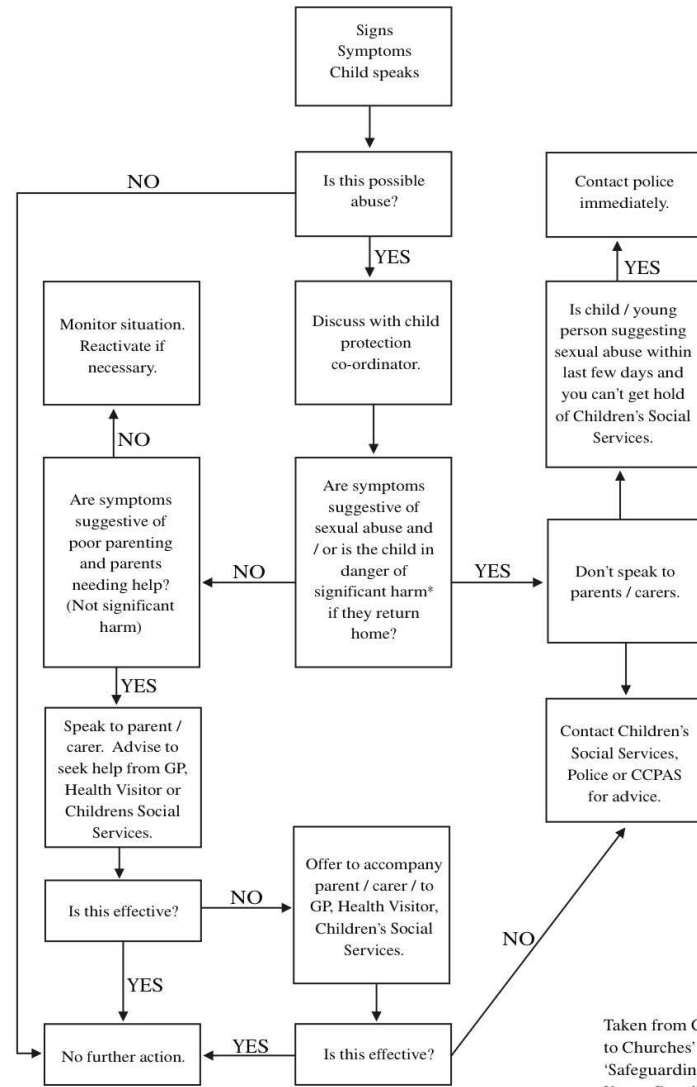
Pembury Baptist Church is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and supporting those attending the church who have been affected by abuse, be they children or adult survivors or families of those abused.

Working with Offenders

When we become aware of known sexual offenders, our duty is to extend love and friendship to the individual, but also to protect children and young people within the church by:

- Establishing clear boundaries so that they are not allowed in settings with children or young people.
- Write a contract stating these boundaries, and get them to sign it.
- Provide close support, and supervision when on church site.

'Responding to Abuse' Flowchart



Taken from CCPAS 'Guidance to Churches' and 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' manuals.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

**In a situation posing an immediate serious risk to the child, dial 999
(or 112 from a mobile)**

Social Workers duty office: for Children and Families	01892 515045
Out of hours emergency Social worker	0845 7626777
Child Line (Child requiring counselling)	0800 1111
Kent Police, domestic violence unit	01732 370648
Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service	0845 1204550
Jennifer Roberts – Church Administrator/ Named Responsible person	01892 825590
Simon Cragg – Associate Pastor/ Child Protection Co-ordinator	01892 823315 07841631883
Wayne Alexander – Senior Pastor	01892 825590



Jennifer Roberts
Church Administrator/
Named Responsible person



Simon Cragg
Associate Pastor/
Child Protection co-ordinator

The material in this pack has been adapted from the Baptist Union's *SAFE TO GROW*, Worthing Tabernacle and Maybridge Community Church's Child Protection Policies and also Churches Child Protection Advisory Service.