



## **Smethwick Old Church Child Protection Policy**

### **General Statement**

Old Church Smethwick takes issues of privacy and child protection extremely seriously. It fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and is proactive in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children during their time at Old Church or in connection with activities organised by Old Church. In this connection, we have in mind particularly but not exclusively the work of Junior Church.

Our policy applies to all those working with children at Old Church, mainly as volunteers. There are five main elements to our policy,

We will,

1. ensure that we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of those working with children, following the Diocesan DBS Guidelines and Procedures.
2. raise awareness in the Old Church family of child protection issues whilst equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
3. develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of abuse, following the Guidelines established by the Diocese and outlined in the publication *God's Children – Our Diocese*.
4. support children who have been abused in accordance with any agreed child protection plan.
5. establish a safe environment in which children can be happy, learn and develop.

### **Responsibilities of those working with young people**

Members of the Old Church family are advised to take normal precautions and not to place themselves in a vulnerable position when working with children.

## **Designated Child Protection Officer**

When interviewing or working with children individually, Junior Church leaders/teachers are advised to conduct these in the sight of other adults.

Member of the Old Church family and particularly Junior Church leaders/teachers should become familiar with and, where required, be trained to recognise any signs of suspected child abuse and to report any concerns immediately to the Child Protection Officer.

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of the Old Church family or to a Junior Church leader/teacher, that adult must advise the Child Protection Officer and or the Reverend Deb Buckley immediately.

Junior Church leaders/teachers are required to monitor children who may be at risk and to advise the Child Protection Officer or the Reverend Deb Buckley immediately of any concerns that they might have.

Smethwick Old Church has designated Julie Humphrys as the Child Protection Officer (CPO). In the event of Julie's absence, concerns should be expressed to the Reverend Deb Buckley in the first instance or to the Churchwardens or other members of the Ministry team in the second.

The Child Protection Officer's responsibilities include:

- ensuring effective communication and liaison between Smethwick Old Church and relevant agencies, when there is a child protection concern.
- working with others to ensure that members of the Old Church family and specifically Junior Church leaders/teachers have an appropriate understanding of child abuse and its main indicators.
- advising members of the Old Church family and particularly Junior Church leaders/teachers of their own child protection responsibilities.

In the event of a member of the Old Church family having a child protection concern about a child, they

must immediately report that concern to the Child Protection Officer or, in their absence, one of those persons indicated above.

Old Church Smethwick follows the Guidelines of the Birmingham Diocese in making concerns known to the relevant authorities. The actions required are described in the flow-chart appended, taken from the Diocesan Safeguarding Policies, *God's Children – Our Diocese*, 4<sup>th</sup> Revision, November 2011, Section 3, Page 4.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse**

Members of the Old Church family and specifically Junior Church leaders/teachers should be helped to become increasingly aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. This can take many forms but is often divided into four categories,

- **Physical injury**: including over-chastisement, slapping with the hand, a belt, a stick or other object, shaking, punching or throwing a child across the room. Children have died as a result of deliberate physical injury by parents or other carers.

- **Neglect**: including ignoring a child's developmental needs, not feeding or clothing adequately, and not supervising adequately.

- **Sexual abuse**: involving a child or adolescent in sexual activities they do not understand, cannot give consent to and which are not socially acceptable nor legal. This includes inappropriate touching, obscene photographs, child pornography, as well as attempted or actual sexual intercourse.

- **Emotional abuse**: including the rejection of a child, refusing to show a child love or affection, deliberately making a child unhappy by continually belittling or verbal abuse.

## **Record Keeping**

The Child Protection Officer is required to manage the keeping of records with regard to child protection matters. These records must be stored securely.

When a person makes an oral statement, a written record should be produced and signed and dated by the author.

Junior Church leaders/teachers should be advised when a child is on the Child Protection Register or where there are concerns about a child. It may be appropriate in some cases to inform other members of the Old Church family in order to raise general awareness that there are issues that may affect a child's behaviour. In such rare circumstances, only the minimally necessary details would be provided.

All documents that are no longer required should be shredded.

## **Listening to Children and Young People**

Smethwick Old Church recognises the importance of listening to children and young people at all times,

particularly when they are distressed, worried or concerned. It is appreciated that at times that children and young people may feel stressed and confused.

Junior Church leaders/teachers may be able to identify quiet areas and provide the opportunity for children and young people to take time out from the ongoing activities of Junior Church, where this is seen necessary.

All Junior Church leaders/teachers will be aware that children and young people who are not yet known to be the subjects of concern may be experiencing ill treatment, neglect or abuse. This means that leaders/teachers should be aware of the need for sensitivity at all times when dealing with young people.

Junior Church teachers/leaders and the Old Church family generally are encouraged to recognise that young people who are distressed through experiences outside the church may be less able to achieve their potential and to manage their behaviour.

## **Confidentiality**

Children and young people at Old Church should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. However, Junior Church leaders/teachers and other officers of Old Church cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, the child should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.

Parents or any adults holding parental responsibility should not be informed of concerns unless the relevant officers of Old Church are certain that the child would not be put at risk by their doing so.

## **Policy Revisions**

This policy will be reviewed and updated every 12 months.

Child Protection Policy  
Updated April 2019

Approved:

Taking Action when you have concerns about the welfare of a child or when an allegation has been made:

Share your concerns with the incumbent and/or Parish Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator.  
Make a record of the discussion and any decisions reached.

If the child is at risk of harm or an allegation of abuse has been made, refer to children's social care services as soon as possible. Inform Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser within 24 hours.

Seek advice from the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser. Make a record of the discussion and any decisions reached

Possible Decisions:

No further action

Continue to observe & offer opportunities for the child to confide in you

If safe, speak to parent(s) /carer(s)

Refer to children's social care services.

Decision will be made in consultation with the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser