



BESSELS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH

POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. Policy for the Protection of children and young people

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to commit Bessels Green Baptist Church to the care and protection of its children and young people, to set out procedures for dealing with alleged or actual abuse and to establish procedures for the appointment of those who work with our young people. It is not within the scope of this document to describe forms of abuse, discuss its effects or other issues surrounding child abuse. This is done in the Baptist Union's "Safe to Grow" publication and other secular publications.
- 1.2. All people are made by God and in his image. We at Bessels Green affirm that this is so, whether that person is young or old. All are loved and valued by our Father in heaven and we seek to reflect that in our relationships with one another and all those with whom we come into contact.
- 1.3. Children and young people are an important part of the fellowship. The Bible quite clearly values children and tells us that they are a gift from God. They should be respected as young people in their own right. They have an important contribution to make to our church and we should listen to and consider their views and opinions. They should not be treated as second-class citizens in any way at all. It is worth noting that Jesus said we should accept his kingdom as little children.
- 1.4. Sadly, it is a fact of life that some adults and their peers abuse children and young people. This abuse takes place in all sections of society and the Christian community is not immune. We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in our fellowship in which young people can grow and develop without fear, ultimately leading to their personal commitment to Jesus Christ.
- 1.5. As part of our responsibility we need to make sure that we choose the right people to work in Junior Church, our children and youth groups and our clubs. We need to ensure that they have appropriate training, know how to keep the young people in their care safe and how to protect themselves from unwarranted suspicion. We need to teach our children and young people how to stay safe.
- 1.6. In producing this policy statement we are not saying that abuse is around every corner. We are not encouraging people to be continually suspicious of the actions of others. We are raising the awareness of the fellowship at Bessels Green to a very real issue and making sure that we are ready to cope with situations that may arise. This policy is as much to do with prevention and good practice, as it is protection and action, should the need arise.

2. Policy Statement concerning the protection of children and young people

- 2.1. As members of Bessels Green Baptist Church we commit ourselves to the nurture, protection and safe keeping of all, especially children and young people.
- 2.2. It is the responsibility of all members to prevent any form of abuse of children and young

people taking place.

- 2.3. Any abuse that is disclosed, discovered or suspected should be reported to the designated responsible persons.
- 2.4. We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.
- 2.5. We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people.
- 2.6. The church is committed to supporting and training those who work with children and young people in their area of work and in the area of child protection.

3. Supervision

- 3.1. All children's and young people's workers are directly responsible to the group leaders who in turn are ultimately responsible to the church meeting through the Trustees.
- 3.2. The group leaders are responsible for arranging regular meetings to plan and review the work of their particular groups and to discuss relevant issues. Minutes should be taken of these meetings.
- 3.3. The group leader should report regularly to the church meeting and be able to raise concerns, in confidence, with the minister, youth minister/worker, elders, Trustees or the responsible persons, at any time.
- 3.4. The Trustees are responsible for all of the children's and young people's groups including the appointment of leaders and workers. The church meeting will ratify these appointments. They should also be prepared not to appoint or to close groups, should appropriate people not be available to run them.

4. Procedure for the Appointment of staff

- 4.1. The church relies on both paid and voluntary workers to run its groups and clubs. However, we do need to make sure that inappropriate people are not appointed to work with children and young people. Those who are interested in working in this area of the church's life and are concerned for the safety and well being of the younger generation and will not object to the following procedure, even though it may make them feel uncomfortable.
- 4.2. The church endorses the Statement concerning Equal Opportunities annexed to this Policy. However, on no account should anyone who is known to have committed an offence involving children or young people, no matter how long ago, be allowed to work in such groups.
- 4.3. Appointments are approved by the church meeting after recommendation by the Trustees. People should not be approached until their names have been brought to the Trustees.
- 4.4. Before appointments are made the Trustees, in liaison with the minister, youth worker/minister and elders should:
 - 4.4.1. Explore the person's experience of working with children and young people.

- 4.4.2. Seek a reference from at least one person who has first hand knowledge of the person and/or the person's work with young people.
- 4.4.3. Ensure that the person fully understands the work and objectives of the group in which they will be working and the duties they will be undertaking.
- 4.4.4. Ask the person to apply for and obtain an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 4.4.5. Provide an opportunity for training.

5. Procedure for Disclosure and Discovery (Flow chart, page 5)

- 5.1. If a child or young person alleges abuse, discloses abuse or you discover abuse has been taking place you should:
 - 5.1.1. Consult the designated responsible persons as quickly as possible. They are Jessica Jamieson and Colin Cross.
 - 5.1.2. Not promise confidentiality.
 - 5.1.3. Not investigate. Your role is to listen.
 - 5.1.4. Not act alone.
- 5.2. When listening to a child or young person you should:
 - 5.2.1. Look at the child/young person directly.
 - 5.2.2. Accept what is being said.
 - 5.2.3. Be aware that the child/young person may have been threatened.
 - 5.2.4. Assure the child/young person that they are not being accused.
 - 5.2.5. Not press for information.
 - 5.2.6. Reassure the child/young person.
 - 5.2.7. Let them know what you are going to do.
 - 5.2.8. Finish on a positive note.
 - 5.2.9. As soon as possible, make a note of exactly what was said, along with the date and the time.
- 5.3. In all cases the minister(s) and a Trustee will be advised of the incident by the responsible persons and should they think it appropriate, Social Services and the police will be informed.

6. Good Practice Guidelines

- 6.1. Bessels Green Baptist Church accepts and adopts the guidelines published by the Baptist Union, which can be found at http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220884/Safe_to_Grow.aspx
 - 6.1.1. Each worker with children and young people must know the agreed procedures and observe them.
 - 6.1.2. The church has appointed Jessica Jamieson and Colin Cross as the responsible persons and these appointments will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting and ratified, if appropriate.
 - 6.1.3. This policy will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting.
 - 6.1.4. These guidelines are brief. All those working with children and young people should undertake further training.

7. The Church's Responsibilities

- 7.1. The main responsibilities of church members are:
 - 7.1.1. To pray for those working with our children and young people and for those with whom they work.
 - 7.1.2. To ensure the safety of the children and young people who enter the premises.

- 7.1.3. To ensure the safety of children's and young people's workers.
- 7.2. These responsibilities can be discharged in the following way:
 - 7.2.1. Receiving regular reports at church meetings and making the children's and young people's work a focus of corporate prayer meetings.
 - 7.2.2. Appointing appropriate leaders and workers.
 - 7.2.3. Ratifying the appointment of leaders and workers at the church meeting.
 - 7.2.4. Providing for the training of leaders and workers.
 - 7.2.5. Making sure the premises are safe.
 - 7.2.6. Issuing guidelines for day trips and residential visits.

8. The Leaders' and Workers' Responsibilities

- 8.1. Leaders and workers have a key role in providing a safe environment for the children and young people in their care. They also have a key role in ensuring their own safety.
- 8.2. Leaders and workers should:
 - 8.2.1. Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
 - 8.2.2. Use appropriate language.
 - 8.2.3. Beware of invading personal space.
 - 8.2.4. Learn to control and discipline through a variety of strategies.
 - 8.2.5. Avoid excessive attention from individual children or young people.
 - 8.2.6. Avoid being alone in a room with a child or young person.
 - 8.2.7. Always be with another adult should a child's clothing need to be changed for any reason.
 - 8.2.8. Not invite a child or young person to their home alone.
 - 8.2.9. Be prepared to speak to other staff or the group leader if any person, including a child, is behaving inappropriately.
 - 8.2.10. Not engage in any of the following:
 - rough physical or sexually provocative games, making sexually suggestive comments about a child or young person (even in "fun"), corporal punishment, inappropriate and intrusive touching, scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting a child or young person.
 - 8.2.11. Know the procedures for dealing with suspected or alleged abuse.

Responsible Persons (Also known as Safe to Grow Officers)

**Mrs Jessica Jamieson, 2
Uplands Close,
Sevenoaks, TN13 3BP.**

Telephone 01732 669162

**Mr Colin Cross, 17
Filmer Lane
Sevenoaks Kent TN14 5AG**

Telephone 01732 453003

FLOW DIAGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH BESSELS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH'S "POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE"

This flow diagram has been produced for those who work with children and young people within the Church. Its aim is to provide guidelines for how workers should respond if a child or young person alleges or discloses abuse or you discover or suspect abuse has been taking place.

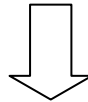
If a child or young person alleges abuse, discloses abuse or you discover or suspect abuse has been taking place you should:



Listen to everything they have to say without interrupting them. Accept what is being said, be aware that the child/young person may have been threatened. Reassure the Child/young person and try and finish on a positive note.



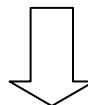
Not promise confidentiality, not investigate, your role is to listen, do not act alone, and let them know what you are going to do. It is your legal responsibility to report it.



Contact and consult the responsible persons (Safe to Grow Officers) who are Jessica Jamieson and Malcom Yates. They are held to account by the Trustees who are legally responsible for following up on the report.



Write up as soon as possible afterwards, what happened, where it happened, what time it happened and who was there at the time.



In all cases the minister and a trustee will be advised of the incident by the responsible persons and should they think it appropriate, Social Services and the police will be informed.

The Safe to Grow Officers will carry out an investigation (in conjunction with a Trustee) and with the assistance of the Safe to Grow Officer of SEBA if deemed necessary and a report prepared for the Trustees.

BESSELS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH

POLICY STATEMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN RELATION TO THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, this church undertakes to treat all applications for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information received.
2. We welcome 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.
3. A Disclosure is requested only after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned.
4. A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to a person serving with children and young people. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.
5. In order to protect the confidentiality of those with criminal records we will access Disclosures through the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding. We invite the Baptist Union's Child Protection Advisory Panel to advise us in the appointment process when necessary and we agree to act on their advice for the protection of children and young people.