

# Zetland Evangelical Church

## Safeguarding Children: Principles and Procedures

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## Principles

Zetland Evangelical Church seeks to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for children, in which they can learn about the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly.

We are committed to following legislation, guidance and recognised good practice. Only those who have been approved by the elders of the church are permitted to lead activities for children. All parents, carers and children will be informed about our safeguarding principles and procedures, as appropriate.

This safeguarding policy applies to all members of Zetland Evangelical Church. It was approved by the elders on 30 August 2016 and will be reviewed annually.

## Safeguarding Officer

The elders have appointed Mr James Magness as the church's Safeguarding Officer and Mr Alistair Montgomery as his deputy. They are responsible, on behalf of the elders, for implementing and monitoring this safeguarding policy.

If you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding, please contact them immediately. If your concerns involve the Safeguarding Officer or his deputy, please speak to one of the other elders.

## Leaders and Helpers

Only church members who have been approved by the elders are permitted to lead activities for children. Approval will depend on spiritual maturity and aptitude for teaching, as well as a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Other people may also help or observe if they have obtained permission from the Safeguarding Officer or his deputy. Such permission will only be given when the Safeguarding Officer or his deputy have a reasonable knowledge of the person concerned and no grounds for doubting their character.

Under no circumstances will anyone with a record of child abuse be allowed to teach, help or observe children's meetings, or have any involvement in the transportation of children.

## **Practical Considerations**

Leaders and helpers should make every effort not to be alone with children in places where they cannot be seen by others. In practice this means that at least two adults should be present in the rooms in which meetings are held.

Children who exhibit unacceptable behaviour, such as swearing and fighting, will normally be given two verbal warnings and then, if the unacceptable behaviour is repeated, forbidden from attending the next meeting. In no circumstances should leaders or helpers strike a child. Physical restraint should only be used if the child's behaviour endangers themselves or others.

Leaders and helpers should be alert to the possibility that a child may be suffering neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse in their own homes or elsewhere. They should report any suspicions to the Safeguarding Officer or his deputy. The Safeguarding Officer should in turn report this to the elders and, if appropriate, they will refer it to the local authority.

If someone attending the church is deemed to be a risk to children, such as someone on the Sex Offenders Register, the Safeguarding Officer or his deputy should be informed. He/she will be chaperoned throughout church meetings and told not to speak to children. Failure to comply with these restrictions will result in this person being forbidden from attending the church.

## **Records**

An attendance register will be maintained for all children's meetings. Any breach of this Safeguarding Policy, together with any complaints and their outcomes, will also be recorded.

## **Complaints**

It is hoped that all church activities will be enjoyed by both adults and children. Sometimes, however, a parent, carer, child, or member of the church will be concerned about a helper or leader and wish to register a formal complaint. All complaints should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer or his deputy. The Safeguarding Officer will then meet with the complainant and, if either party deem it necessary, the matter will be referred to the elders. The elders will then take prompt and appropriate action, which may include referring the matter to the local authority or police. The complainant will be informed of the elders' decision in writing.

## Definitions

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined in statutory guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable children in need to have optimum life chances.

**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. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**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 the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, such as kissing, or non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

**Neglect** may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter; protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision; or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

For the purposes of child protection legislation, the term **child** refers to anyone up to the age of 18 years.

## Contact Details

James Magness, Safeguarding Officer: 0117 924 9937; Alistair Montgomery, Deputy Safeguarding Officer: 0117 983 1638; Richard Penn, Church Elder: 0117 908 1174; Eddie O'Brien, Church Elder: 0117 962 9868.

Bristol East/Central Social Care Team: 0117 903 6500 (in hours social workers); Emergency Duty Team: 01454 615 165 (out of hours social workers).

Charity Commission: 03000 669 197. Disclosure and Barring Service: 03000 200 190. NSPCC 24 hour help line: 0808 800 5000 (advice and help for adults); NSPCC Childline: 0800 1111 (advice and help for children).

In an emergency (fire/ambulance/police), dial 999.