



It is hard to overemphasise the value Jesus put on children; it can be a pleasure to teach them; it is always a responsibility.

At Slough Baptist Church we want our children and young people to be as safe as possible and so we have agreed and implemented various safety procedures outlined in this document.

This booklet is intended to outline them to you and also to provide advice and guidance should you ever need it.

Any procedure is limited, so please do talk to Debs Warren or Dorothy Ayoma should you have any questions or concerns.

Andy Perryman
July 2021

Contents

Policy Statement

Procedure

- Prevention and reporting of abuse
- Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers
- Respecting children and young people
- Safe working practices
- A safe community
- Responsible people

Appendix

- Children and Youth Work Volunteer role Description
- Incident Report form

Policy Statement **on** **Safeguarding Children and Young People in the Church**

Slough Baptist Church (referred to as 'the church')

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children and young people under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, *Safe from Harm* (HM Government 1994) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2010).

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of all children and young people associated with the church and will pray for them regularly. In pursuit of this we commit ourselves to the following policies and to the development of procedures to ensure their implementation.

Scope

This policy and the following procedures apply to all activities organised and run by Slough Baptist Church. Outside organisations that run groups or activities involving children must have their own Safeguarding policy and procedures in place.

Prevention and reporting of abuse

It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.

Respecting children and young people

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

Safe working practices

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

A safe community

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding children and young people within the church is everyone's responsibility. However, the church has appointed a safeguarding team and they will work together to achieve best practice in safeguarding for children and young people within the church.

The church has appointed **Debs Warren** as Designated Person for Safeguarding to:

- Receive reports of disclosures, abuse or concerns and maintain confidential records
- Take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected
- Keep the safeguarding policy up to date
- Advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and young people

The church has appointed **Dorothy Ayoma** as the Safeguarding Trustee to:

- Oversee and monitor implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church's charity trustees.

Policy and Procedures

A copy of the policy statement will be displayed permanently on the notice board in the main hall.

Each worker with children and young people whether paid or voluntary will be given a full copy of the policy and procedures and will be required to follow them.

A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of the church, the parents or carers of any child or young person from the church or any other person associated with the church.

The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed at least annually.

Procedure for Safeguarding Children and Young People in the Church

For the purpose of this procedure the term children is used to describe those under the age of 18. The terms children and young people are used interchangeably. *These guidelines are in no way intended to paralyse good work with the young people in our church or to stop anyone from doing what they are good at – engaging and working with children and young people.*

Prevention and reporting of abuse

It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

Child Protection Background

There are a number of types of abuse defined by the government: *physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.* Most abuse (90%) is carried out by someone known to the child, rather than a stranger. This may be a member of the family or someone trusted by the child and their family. There is no certain way of identifying a would-be-abuser.

It is often hard to admit that abuse may be taking place in our community. We need to be aware so that we can do the right thing as well as protect ourselves; this is why these guidelines have been set up so we can know what to do.

How do children suffer abuse?

There are several categories of abuse. The most common are physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical Abuse: Where children's bodies are hurt or injured non-accidentally and with force, normally by someone who has authority over the child. This includes the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and other traditional harmful practices. It is an offence to perform or assist someone in performing FGM on a girl, including taking a girl abroad for such a procedure.

Emotional Abuse: Where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats and taunts, or are given responsibility beyond their years. This can also include 'spiritual abuse' where children can suffer harm through the

practices of a faith community. This could include labelling a child as 'evil' or placing pressure on children to make decisions that are not appropriate to their age.

Sexual Abuse: Where adults use children and young people to satisfy sexual desires from a position of power, or where young people are involved by an adult in sexual activities inappropriate to their age. (Children and young people can also abuse others, normally those over whom they have some power or influence).

Neglect: Where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children and protect them from danger, leading to serious impairment of the child's health and development.

A variety of circumstances cause adults to abuse children. Children do usually know the person who abuses them and this person is normally in a position of trust or authority towards the child. Abuse happens in all parts of society and is not gender specific.

Signs of Abuse

Unexplained, hidden or untreated injuries, change of behaviour, pre-occupation with sexual matters in play and drawings, lingering injuries etc.

How can children express concerns?

The names of the Safeguarding Trustee and the Designated Person will be displayed along with details of how to contact them. However, all who work with children should know how to respond if a child talks to them about an abusive or harmful relationship.

Responding to concerns

If abuse is disclosed or discovered:

- Do listen and remain calm
- Look at the child
- Don't stop the child from talking
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened
- Tell the child he / she is not to blame
- Let him / her know what you are going to do next
- Don't make any promises (especially not confidentiality)
- Try not to prompt or push for information

- As soon as possible afterwards make written notes of exactly what was said, what the child said and the date and time. Forms to help you do this are available in the church office.
- Don't delay and consult with the Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee as soon as possible.
- Don't discuss the disclosure with the parents without seeking advice and consultation first.

The flow chart on the following page shows how a concern should be reported and what will happen in response.

Responding to concerns about the behaviour of adults

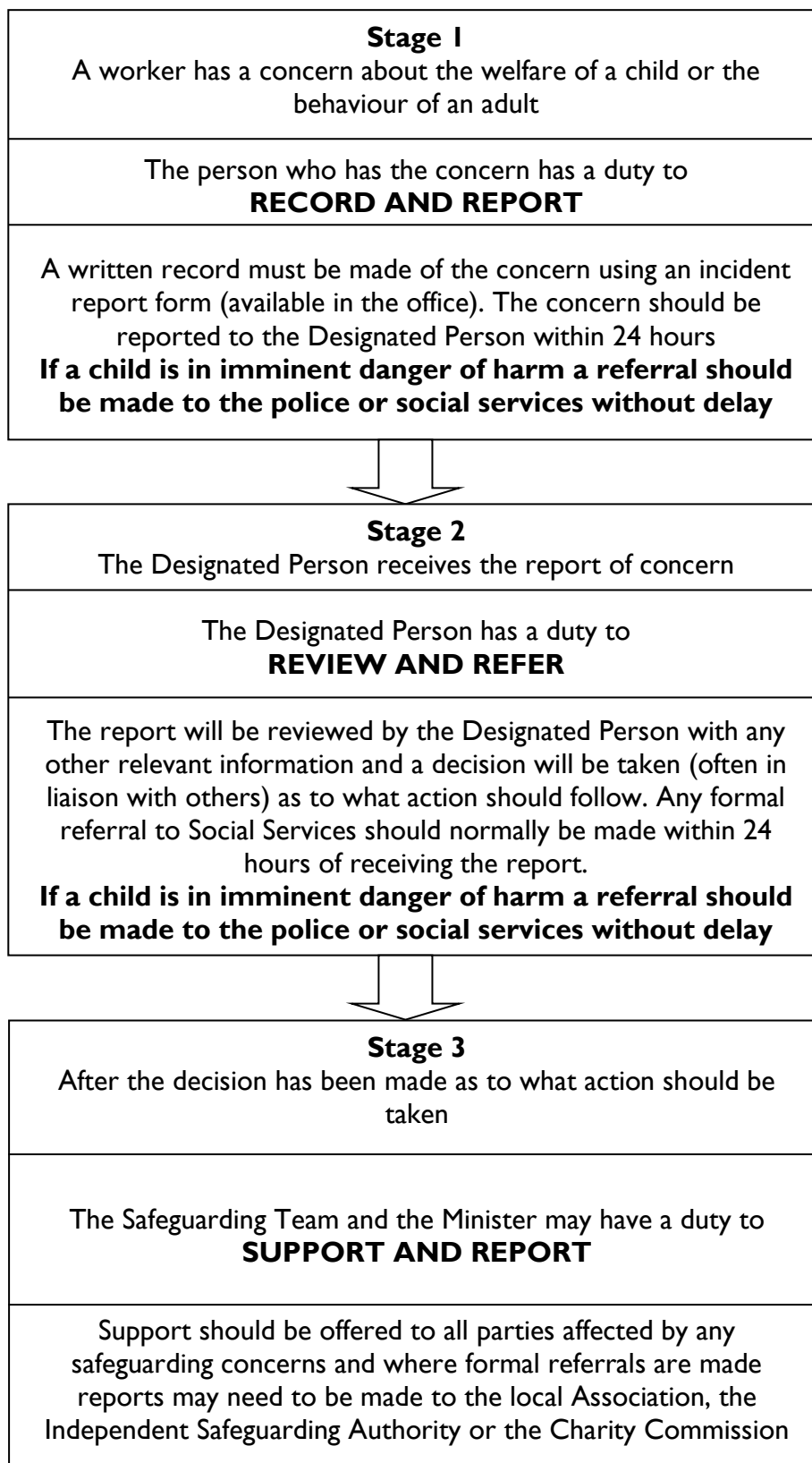
Workers need to be willing to point out to one another and other adults where their actions are inappropriate. The leader of a group must take seriously their responsibility to supervise the behaviour of the workers in their group and encourage all workers to follow the agreed code of conduct for workers.

It is not appropriate or necessary to report all incidents to the Designated Person – particularly if they are one-off events. A leader should usually discuss minor issues with the adult concerned before taking further action. However, the following situations should trigger a report being made:

- All occasions where an adult causes harm to a child or young person or where the actions and behaviour of an adult poses a risk of harm to children and young people
- When a worker repeatedly breaches the code of conduct, whether or not it is thought to be wilful.
- Any situation in which a worker feels uncomfortable about the behaviour of an adult.

A report should be made to the Designated Person who will then follow stage 2 of the procedures for responding to concerns on the following page.

Responding to concerns (continued)



Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.

Recruitment Guidelines

Leaders and helpers who work with children and young people at Slough Baptist Church will be appointed and will follow the process laid out in these procedures in order to work with children.

Appeals for leaders should only be made in exceptional circumstances and by a trustee, the Designated Person or a Minister and due care has to be given in order to ensure the safeguarding of all involved.

If a person is interested in working with children at Slough Baptist Church, he / she will need to complete an application form. This form will request information on basic personal details, two suitable referees and will also include a declaration confirming the person is prepared to work within the safeguarding policy and procedures and a declaration of any previous relevant convictions. The decision as to the suitability of an applicant must involve two people, usually the group leader and the safeguarding trustee.

All interested in working with children are welcome to join a group as an observer and see the group in action, but need to complete the application form before becoming part of any team. An informal interview should also take place. The informal interview will discuss the following

- Details of the role
- Expectations and responsibilities of the youth / children's worker
- The safeguarding procedures
- Support available
- Any training opportunities

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks or equivalent checks will be carried out for anybody over the age of 16 working with children or young people at Slough Baptist Church.

There are criteria which exclude someone from working with children at Slough Baptist Church, such as those who have been involved in misconduct in relation to children, not depending on a criminal conviction. A criminal conviction in itself does not prevent a volunteer from working with children, this depends on the conviction and the circumstances.

Any information obtained will be handled and stored confidentially.

As in all other areas of church life we welcome people to serve the church on the basis of the right mix of talent, skills, character, potential and call of God and practise a policy of equal opportunities.

Young Leaders

We aim to closely support and encourage the appointment of young leaders, who for the purpose of these procedures are those under the age of 18. The appointment of young leaders follows the procedure outlined above with respect to the work with children and will need to be assessed on an individual basis with respect to any additional support needed.

There will be no DBS checks for those under 16 years of age. The presence of a young leader in a group does not influence the adult – child – ratio, the young leader is not counted as an adult.

Respecting children and young people

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

The following points are guidelines for working with children or young people and are aimed at helping develop best practice:

- Treat children with respect whatever their age, culture, race, background or ability
- Be aware of your language, tone of voice, dress sense and your body. Be aware that children don't always understand sarcasm.
- Keep the parents (or guardian) of the child informed, especially about the child's whereabouts, e.g. if you are planning to leave the church premises. For further details refer to the Church's Offsite Activity Policy, SBCP-21
- Don't leave the child you are looking after with other adults without permission from the parents.
- Try not to be on your own with a child unless necessary:
 - Make sure you never lead a group on your own
 - Keep doors open
 - Be aware when making travel arrangements, try and avoid giving children a lift on their own.
 - If inviting young people to your home ensure that other people are present.
 - If you are talking confidentially with a child, privacy is important; try to ensure that another adult is in the building and that the child is aware of this.
- In the event of an injury to a child, accidental or otherwise ensure this is recorded. The Accident Book is in the kitchen.
- Be mindful of how and when you touch children:
 - Touch has to be age appropriate
 - Don't touch inappropriately or intrusively;
 - Don't engage in physical or sexually provocative play;
 - Never do something of a personal nature for a child, they can do themselves, e.g. opening trouser buttons;

- Do comfort a child in distress, just in a sensitive and appropriate way.
- Teenagers, but also younger boys and girls can have romantic feelings towards their youth leader. Take such things seriously.
- Explain to the child that sexualised behaviour (language or actions) or aggressive behaviour is not accepted; don't make the child feel guilty. Always be aware of the games children are playing and stop inappropriate behaviour immediately.
- Learn ways to control children and discipline children without physical punishment; never smack a child.
- Learn ways to control and discipline, excluding emotional maltreatment, e.g. making a scapegoat, ridiculing or rejection. Be aware not to engage in such activities with the children.
- When running a regular group take a register, including the adults present; these will be kept safe in the church office after your group or term has finished.
- Try not to be afraid of possible allegations, but engage with the child and befriend the child.

Electronic Safety

Direct messaging & Social Media (e.g. Texts, Whatsapp, Email etc)

Electronic communication can be a great tool, but has to be considered carefully.

These are our good practice guidelines which should be followed:

- Workers should only use electronic communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given. This is included in the annual consent forms for secondary age children.
- Direct electronic communication with children of primary age is inappropriate
- Contact with children and young people by electronic communication should primarily be for information-giving purposes.

- Where a young person in need or at point of crisis uses this way of communication with a worker a record should be kept.
- Workers should be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives, consider the risks of using things like text speak.
- Where instant messaging services are used (e.g. WhatsApp) this is ideally sent to groups and records of any messages should not be deleted.
- If using social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) be aware of what the young person can access. If they can see your profile and photos consider whether there any posts or images which are inappropriate. If in any doubt avoid using social networking sites.
- If a leader has photos or video footages of activities these should not be shared publically online. However, they may be posted privately on a restricted group or private group message. Leaders should be mindful that there may be children for whom consent for photos to be taken has not been given. We are not in control of what young people personally share online. Although there may well be occasions where we need to discuss with a young person the appropriateness of what they are posting online.
- Leaders should be aware of the issues of e-bullying and 'sexting' (sending indecent images or video footage). Concerns about these issues should be taken seriously and details referred to the Designated Person where appropriate.

Online meetings (e.g. Zoom)

The ability to hold youth group meetings online can be a useful tool. The principles of this safeguarding policy apply to all meetings. The following points are important to consider:

- Meetings must meet the same leader to child ratio with a minimum of two leaders present for a meeting to begin and throughout. Care should be taken to ensure all children have logged off before leaders.
- Consent for online meetings/electronic communication must be obtained from parents/guardians
- Attendance registers must be kept
- Meetings must be held at published times (not ad hoc).
- Meetings must be secure, using a platform approved by the Safeguarding Trustee and using a waiting room or password as a minimum.
- Meetings should be held on a church account where possible

- For primary age children parents will be asked to be available nearby should the child need assistance.
- Leaders must ensure that when taking part in online meetings anyone else present in the house is aware the meeting is taking place and that their conduct will be appropriate. If someone else is able to hear the meeting this should be declared.
- Leaders should ideally not participate from a bedroom, although a virtual background may be used to obscure where they are.

Further guidelines and case studies are available in the “safe to grow” booklet available from the Safeguarding Trustee or the Designated Safeguarding Person.

Safe working practices

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

Parental Consent

Parental Consent must be sought for all children attending onsite activities, offsite events, or online meetings where their parents or guardians are not present. The Church's Offsite Activity Policy, SBCP-21, details requirements for off-site activity consent forms and a model annual consent form.

Health and Safety

As part of the Church's Health and Safety Policy the Health and Safety Officer will:

4.1 carry out appropriate risk assessments (these to be reviewed annually) of the church's premises and activities and report to the church's charity trustees as necessary;

Risk Assessments shall be carried out for offsite activities by the group leader in accordance with the Offsite Activity Policy.

Ratios

Careful consideration shall be given to the ratio of staff to young people and the following factors should be considered:

- The age of the children
- Special needs or behavioural issues
- The venue
- Emergency cover
- Gender balance

There shall always be a minimum of two adults present for any group to run. If suitable leaders cannot be found the group shall be cancelled.

Overnight Events

For overnight events particular care needs to be taken, not least when it comes to making arrangements for sleeping accommodation. It is impossible to lay down specific rules to cover all situations. However, there should be careful planning to ensure all reasonable precautions are taken to minimise the risks for young people and workers.

A safe community

The church is committed to the prevention is bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

When children and young people become a part of the life of the church, they become part of a far wider community. This wider community life of the church has the potential to enrich their development and growth, but it also brings with it additional risks that need to be addressed. The safeguarding of children and young people has to be paramount.

Prevention of bullying is one area for consideration. Bullying can take many forms, like name-calling, teasing, mocking, kicking, hitting, intimidating, unwanted physical contact, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging, spreading rumours, exclusion and many others. Bullying will always cause a great deal of pain and harm for those on the receiving end. In order to prevent bullying, it is good practice to involve children in agreeing a code of behaviour for their group. Children should also know how to report bullying. If bullying behaviour occurs parents of both parties (bullied and bully) should be informed and an attempt should be made to modify behaviour.

A church community should be welcoming and open to all, this includes those **convicted of abuse** (sexual or otherwise), but special rules will apply. The Safeguarding Team and the Minister, together with the Probation Service will define a clear contract and individual guidelines to manage the situation and safeguard vulnerable members of the church community. Anyone aware of a convicted offender (of offences against children or vulnerable adults) within the church community has the duty to report this to the Designated Person, the Safeguarding Trustee or the Minister.

Responsible people

Role	Responsibilities	How
Designated Person for Safeguarding	A recognised person for receiving disclosures or reports of disclosures of abuse.	Displaying name and contact information, preferably with photo, so church members know who to contact.
	Liaising with the Association Safeguarding Contact and external agencies where necessary.	Creating a list of contact numbers and having blank copies of the Safeguarding Incident Form ready for use.
	Keep the safeguarding policy relevant and up to date.	Annually review and update if necessary.
	Advocating and facilitating safe church practices.	Promoting a culture of best practice throughout the church life.
	Report to the church meeting on safeguarding issues.	Make sure safeguarding is on the church meeting agenda.
DBS Verifier	Making sure that all relevant persons working with children have an up to date DBS check in place at all times.	Coordinating the completion and renewal of DBS forms, and liaising with the Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding on the outcomes when required.
Safeguarding Advisor	Advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of adults at risk	Working with the safeguarding team to give advice on best practice and review policies and procedures
	Support the Designated Person in taking appropriate action when required	Working with the safeguarding team to discuss concerns and supporting the decisions taken.
Church Meeting	Adopt the safeguarding policy	Discussing and agreeing the policy
Safeguarding Trustee	Taking the lead on safeguarding matters on behalf of the trustees.	Regular communication and reporting from the Designated Person(s) for Safeguarding and ensuring safeguarding is on the agenda at trustee meetings.
Trustees	Responsible for safeguarding best practice within the church	Make sure that all necessary safeguarding measures are in place (including policy, procedures, training, safe recruiting, etc.).

Leaders of Children's or Youth Groups

All leaders of groups need to know the following:

- How to go about appointing new staff following the appropriate procedures
- How to contact the Designated Person

They are responsible for:

- Ensuring their workers have appropriate supervision
- Informing the Designated Person of any concerns about children raised by their workers.

Workers with Children and Young People

All of those who work with children should take personal responsibility for implementing the Safeguarding policy. They should each:

- Know and implement the guidelines for good practice
- Follow the agreed code of behaviour
- Be aware of the ways in which children are harmed
- Know what to do if a child discloses abuse
- Know what to do if an allegation is made about another adult
- Know who to speak to if they have any suspicions or concerns

Appendix I

Children and Youth Work Volunteer role Description

Slough Baptist Church is committed to the care and nurture of children and young people. We aim to offer a Welcome to all children, Witness to them in a way appropriate for their age and enable them to Worship God together. To this end the church appoints specific people as volunteers to work with children and young people.

Responsibilities

Volunteers will usually be assigned to a specific group and responsible for the children who attend their group. They will be responsible for helping to ensure the smooth running of their group including helping with setting up, clearing up, preparation before sessions and attending leaders meetings. The leadership of most groups works on a rota basis and volunteers will be expected to ensure they attend when they are on the rota or contact the group leader if there is an issue. All volunteers are accountable to the leader of their group. Group leaders are accountable to the Minister.

Child Protection

As part of this role volunteers will be required to apply for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure, complete an application form and provide references. They will be expected to work within the church's Safeguarding Policy. Their specific responsibilities are to:

- Know and implement the guidelines for good practice
- Follow the agreed code of behaviour
- Be aware of the ways in which children are harmed
- Know what to do if a child discloses abuse
- Know what to do if an allegation is made about another adult
- Know who to speak to if they have any suspicions or concerns

To this end volunteers will be required to attend Safeguarding training when available.

Support

The church is committed to providing volunteers with prayer, resources and training. If you have any concerns please speak to your group leader or one of the Ministry team. Further details can be found in our Volunteers Policy available from the church office.

Appendix 2

Incident Report form

This report form is for the purpose of keeping a record of reports made to the Designated Person. As well as this report, you should make a full factual written record of your observations and any conversations, which should be signed and dated.

Name of worker

Name of organisation

Name of child

Date & time of incident

Nature of concern:

Have you made a full written record of the incident/concern? Yes No (Please tick)

Who have you spoken to about your concerns?

Child Yes No (Please tick)

Carer Yes No (Please tick)

Organisation leader Yes No (Please tick) Name

Other Yes No (Please tick) Name

Social Services Yes No (Please tick) Name

What feedback have you received?

How have your concerns been followed up?

Signature of Worker: Date and time

Signature of Designated Person Date and time