



**SHORELINE CHURCH  
SAFEGUARDING &  
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

# **Shoreline Church Reference Information:**

Address: 9, Mornington Road, Southport, Merseyside, PR90TS

Tel No: 01704 535989

Email address: [office@shorelinechurch.org.uk](mailto:office@shorelinechurch.org.uk)

Membership of Denomination/Organisation  
Assemblies of God in Great Britain (United Kingdom)

Charity Number: 1141607

Company Number: 07490464

Insurance Company: Ansvar

Type of insurance: Public Liability Insurance

# **1. Child Protection Policy**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Everyone who attends activities or events at Shoreline Church is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Shoreline Church have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people and vulnerable groups, Leaders and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Shoreline Church is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone, it's staff and volunteers accept their responsibilities to safeguard children and vulnerable groups from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and vulnerable groups, to report any concerns about their welfare and if necessary to inform the appropriate local authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice providing children, young people and vulnerable groups with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Shoreline Church and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses including specific child protection or other issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 aims to prevent unsuitable people from working (either paid or unpaid) with children or vulnerable adult. (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006)

## **1. Policy Statement**

Shoreline Church is committed to the following:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ethnicity, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to attend Shoreline Church and to participate in activities in a fun and safe environment
- All reasonable steps are taken to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All Shoreline Church employees voluntary or paid working with children, will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility. They will also be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- Working in partnership with parents, children and outside agencies is essential for the protection of children

- We uphold, adhere to and practice guidelines as set out in the National framework of standards in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults
  - ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
  - file a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with CCPAS and any amendments subsequently published. The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

## **2. Monitor and review the policy and procedures**

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. Department Leaders should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the Church senior Leadership team.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

Every person who works with young people or vulnerable adults regularly on behalf of Shoreline Church either paid or unpaid is only allowed to do so on the successful application and issue of an enhanced disclosure certificate (DBS) if required.

## **2. Promoting Good Practice**

### **2.1. Introduction**

Shoreline Church provides children with the best possible experience's and opportunities to learn and have fun within activities.

It is not always clear to distinguish between poor practice and abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants of Shoreline Church to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of an attendee, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

### **2.2. Good Practice** (Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

- All Shoreline Church personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
  - make the experience of activities and games within the clubs and meetings at Shoreline Church involving children or young people fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
  - treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
  - always put the welfare of the young person first, before any essence of competition or activity.
  - maintain a safe and appropriate distance with children (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
  - Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
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- request written parental consent if Shoreline staff are required to transport young people in their cars
  - When transporting children or vulnerable adults the driver will be accompanied by an appropriate escort
  - gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
  - ensure that if mixed groups are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
  - ensure that while away on residential trips, such as camps etc., adults should not, except for reasons of safety, and never unaccompanied, enter a young person's room. Neither should a young people invite adults into their rooms
  - be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
  - secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
  - Complete the accident book to keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

### **2.3. Poor Practice** (Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/care and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to The Designated Safeguarding Officer and make a written note of it. Parents may also be informed of the incident and where appropriate it may fall to the DSO to inform them.

### 3. Defining Child Abuse (Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

#### 3.1. Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.** The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

### 3.2. Types of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

In a sports or games, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training or the game disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

- **Emotional Abuse:** the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse may occur when the young person is constant criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

- **Bullying** may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

- **Neglect** occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in the Church could occur when a Church worker does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

### **3.3. Indicators of Abuse** (Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite



- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequents loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in (Organisation/Club) to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

### **3.4. Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment within Shoreline Church**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All clubs and departments within the Church should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Senior Minister.

Written permission should be obtained from parents to use photographs or videos of a child or children as promotional material.

## **4. Responding to Suspicions and Allegations**

### **4.1. Introduction**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Shoreline Church in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within Shoreline Church and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

## 4.2. Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the individual affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to alarm them further
- **reassure** them that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to them, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict with many abuse cases being dismissed where it is felt that the victim has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- **inform** the discloser that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell them this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the children** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information in a safe and secure method
- **report** the incident to the DSO

**In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from CCPAS on 0845 120 4550 or on the NSPCC Helpline Tel 0800 800 500**

## 4.3. Recording Information (Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes

- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

#### **4.4. Reporting the Concern**(Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

All suspicions and allegations MUST be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Shoreline Church expects it's members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the DSO and subsequently to note that appropriate action has been taken.

If the DSO is unavailable then you should approach the Senior Pastor and if he is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the CCPAS or NSPCC helplines, the duty officer at your local Social Services Department or the Police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police become immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the SSD (and possibly) the Police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case (Organisation/Club) will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document Shoreline Church staff are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with Shoreline Churches DSO whose responsibility it is to take legal advice and inform the appropriate professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social Services Department have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family

(where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

**NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern**

Any suspicion that a volunteer or employee has abused a child should be reported to the DSO. If the DSO is the subject of suspicion or disclosure then The Senior Pastor is to be informed who in turn will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- Legal advice will be sought
- Shoreline Church may then refer the matter to Social Services Department
- The parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following the taking of advice
- The DSO at Shoreline Church should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- The DSO should also notify the relevant governing body (Assemblies of God UK)

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to Social Services Department. This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

#### **4.5. Concerns outside of the Church Environment (e.g. a parent or carer)**

- Report your concerns to the DSO
- If the DSO is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact the Senior Pastor. If neither are available Social Services Department may be contacted or the Police immediately
- Social Services Department and the DSO will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- The DSO should also report the incident to the Shoreline Church senior leadership team and the governing Body (Assemblies of God UK). The Senior leadership team and the governing body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

#### **4.6 Confidentiality**

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The DSO
- The Senior Minister and Senior leadership team

- The departmental leader
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services Department/Police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek Social Services Department advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

## **4.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension**

- The Senior minister and the senior leadership team will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services Department inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services Department or Police inquiries the Senior leadership team will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases the Senior leadership team of Shoreline Church must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

## **5. Recruiting and Selecting Personnel with Children**(Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

### **5.1. Introduction**

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

### **5.2. Controlling Access to Children**(Applying equally to children and vulnerable groups)

- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau and a Certificate obtained. (Enhanced disclosure form)

- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references MUST be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

### **5.3. Interview and Induction**

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self disclosures
- Their qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to the organization's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

### **5.4. Training**

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child and vulnerable groups
- Work safely and effectively with children and vulnerable groups

Shoreline Church requires:

- All staff and volunteers who have access to children and vulnerable adults to undergo a DBS check
- All employees, volunteers and department leaders to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection/safeguarding
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards vulnerable groups
- Each department should seek to have two staff members trained in first aid

#### **Declaration**

On behalf of **Shoreline Church** we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Child Protection Safeguarding Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

**Signed:**

**Signed:**

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**Name:**

**Name:**

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**Position within Shoreline Church:**

**Position within Shoreline Church:**

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**Date:**

**Date:**

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