

## City Gates Church Safeguarding Policy

### Contents

- 1. Policy statement**
- 2. Noticing and reporting abuse**
- 3. Procedures and systems to prevent child abuse**
- 4. Pastoral care**
- 5. Other safety issues**

### 1. Policy Statement

Our community is shaped by the Bible; God's story of how he created, loved, taught, warned and paid a price for his people. Because of this we understand our responsibility to protect and care for the vulnerable. That is why we are making these statements:

- we commit ourselves to the safety of children and young people and vulnerable adults in our care
- we understand our responsibility to protect them from neglect and physical, sexual, spiritual or emotional abuse
- we will train and support all who work with children and young people or vulnerable adults in our community
- we will also provide supervision and develop mutual accountability
- we know it is our responsibility to act upon any suspected or discovered abuse appropriately and immediately.

Our church has adopted these principles as important guidelines for our work.

#### 1.1 What this policy does and doesn't cover

We want to make sure we take appropriate measures to ensuring all children, young people and vulnerable adults in our congregation are cared for well. We have reviewed our activities and noted that:

- We work with many children and young people (defined as anyone under 18). We provide 'sessional work' on a Sunday and at one off events (e.g. the weekend away). Parents are usually close by during these sessions, but as the children and young people are in our care for these sessions, we have a safeguarding responsibility. This policy therefore covers this work.
- We encounter some vulnerable people (defined as anyone over 18 who cannot look after or protect themselves) through our outreach work. These people, like any other adults, are welcome to attend open sessions (e.g. Sunday services or drop-in food provision) where we provide a community of friendship and support. However, we do not provide formal care (e.g. personal care), support services (e.g. managing someone's finances), formal advice or act as an advocate (e.g. attending appointments with someone and advising them on how to interpret advice), or any 1:1 care. As such, we do not provide services where we are in a position of responsibility for vulnerable adults and have been advised by CCPAS that

we do not need a formal safeguarding policy for vulnerable adults. We do however issue guidance and undertake training with staff and interns regularly interacting with homeless people, those who work in the red light district, those with mental health problems etc. This separate guidance covers best practice. Safeguarding of vulnerable adults does not therefore form part of this policy.

## 1.2 Reviewing this policy

This policy is reviewed annually. All volunteers and staff are presented with a copy of them and are expected to follow the procedures outlined.

## 2. Noticing and reporting abuse

### 1. Terms

Abuse: the most common forms of abuse fall into the categories below:

- Physical: where children suffer physical harm or injury or where there is a failure to prevent such injury.
- Emotional: where children do not receive love and affection; where they are frightened by threats and taunts; or are given responsibilities inappropriate for their years.
- Sexual: where children or young people are involved in sexual activity they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent.
- Neglect: where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children or protect them from danger, resulting in serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- Spiritual: "Spiritual abuse occurs when someone in a position of spiritual authority, the purpose of which is to 'come underneath' and serve, build, equip and make .....[G]od's people MORE free, misuses that authority placing themselves over ...[G]od's people to control, coerce or manipulate them for seemingly godly purposes which are really their own." (Jeff Van Vonderen)

### 2. Noticing abuse

The following behavioural signs may be indications of child abuse, but they should not be taken in isolation:

- Physical: unexplained or hidden injuries; lack of medical attention.
- Emotional: reverting to younger behaviour; nervousness; sudden underachievement; attention-seeking; running away; stealing; lying.
- Sexual: preoccupation with sexual matters (evident in words, play, drawings); being sexually provocative; disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed-wetting; secretive relationships with adults or children.
- Neglect: appearing uncared for or unhappy; being withdrawn or aggressive; having injuries or ongoing health problems.
- Spiritual: If a person seems unhealthily bound by or to someone in spiritual authority over them. For instance If someone is deferring to a person in spiritual authority over them for decisions which they should be making independently.

If you have any concerns at all about a child

- Immediately tell a Safeguarding Officer (Barney Skrentny (Senior Leader) Anna Chamberlain (Assistant Leader), Tomi Ajayi or Martin Pointing). Don't tell anyone else as the matter must be kept confidential while an investigation is carried out.
- Write up and keep detailed notes of exactly what took place including date and time. This should be signed and then be given to the Safeguarding Officer.

### 3. Responding to reported abuse

If a child tells you about abuse:

- Do not panic. Be composed and remain sympathetic.
- Listen carefully. Only ask questions to clarify what you hear. Do not ask questions that seek for further information. Do not start to investigate.
- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you and that you will take their concerns seriously.
- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that you will have to tell someone else.
- Stay with the young person until they are reassured and comforted.
- Immediately tell the Safeguarding Officer (Barney Skrentny (Senior Leader) Anna Chamberlain (Assistant Leader) or Martin Pointing). Don't tell anyone else as the matter must be kept confidential while an investigation is carried out.
- Immediately write up and keep detailed notes of exactly what took place including the date and time. These should then be signed and given to the Safeguarding Officer at the next available opportunity.

### 4. Good practice

- Ensure that all children and young people have completed a registration form which is signed by a parent or guardian and kept on file by the CGC office.
- Be wise in your physical contact with children. Avoid any physical activity that could be misconstrued.
- Be wise in your relationships with children. Don't have favourites.
- Make sure that the level of personal care, (toileting for example) is appropriate to the age of the child (accepting that some children have special needs).
- Be thoughtful about your language and tone of voice.
- Control and discipline children without using physical means (other than, in extreme cases, restraint by holding to prevent injury).
- Develop healthy relationships with the children by listening and respecting them.
- Photos should not be taken of children unless they are for official church use and with the consent of the parent/guardian. These pictures should not be posted online unless on official church media with the express permission of parent/guardian. Parent/guardians should have made their wishes known on the registration form.
- Aim to keep to the government approved child ratio:
  - 0-2 yrs: 1 adult to 3 children
  - 2-3 yrs: 1 adult to 4 children
  - 3-8 yrs: 1 adult to 8 children
- When speaking privately to a child or young person, always make sure someone else knows and is nearby. Any individual prayer should be with a person of the same sex.
- If you see another worker acting in a way that could be misinterpreted, speak to your team leader.
- Keep a register of children, workers and other adults present in each session.
- Record any incidents and what actions were taken. (Please be vigilant in doing this as it maybe useful later.)
- Remember that you are in a position of trust which continues outside the period of the event. Any communication or direct contact with a young person therefore needs to be characterised by transparency and integrity.
- If meeting a young person for one-to-one mentoring please try and do this in a public place or the young persons house (not their bedroom) with the full knowledge of the Parent/ Guardian.

- When communicating with young people via social media, text, email, etc please see separate eSafety policy.
- If a young person starts communicating with you in a private way then please inform a team member.
- You might want to share good news stories or prayer requests with the leadership team or congregation but think carefully about how you maintain respect for the child or young person in doing so.

## 2.5 Nominated Safeguarding Officer

At City Gates Church the Nominated Safeguarding Officers are: Barney Skrentny (Senior Leader) Anna Chamberlain (Assistant Leader), Tomi Ajayi and Martin Pointing.

- If a safeguarding concern is brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer, he/she will decide what action is needed, record this, put this and notes of the incident in an envelope, date it and ensure it is locked in a secure file at the City Gates Church office.
- He/she will carry out the action which could be to monitor the situation, call CCPAS for advice or phone the police.
- The Safeguarding Officer will inform the Trustees and Leadership Team that a safeguarding concern has been raised and outline what actions have been taken.

## 3. Procedures and systems to prevent child abuse

### 3.1. Vetting

- All City Gates Church volunteers or staff work with children (children's workers) will be asked:
  - To complete a self-declaration form
  - For a reference from a church leader who has known them well regarding their suitability, particularly asking about any safeguarding concerns
  - To attend an informal interview where previous experience in children's work is outlined.
- In addition, any City Gates Church volunteers or staff who work with children regularly on behalf of the organisation (i.e. weekly or 4 or more days a month) will also be asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form.
- During 2015 we moved to a position where any City Gates Church volunteers or staff working with children on behalf of the organisation (e.g. on a monthly rota) will be asked to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form. This will usually be completed in advance of beginning the work, but where this is not possible the member of staff or volunteer will be supervised by someone who is already DBS checked.
- Volunteers/staff who have not completed the above tasks will not be allowed to supervise a formal children's activity alone

### 3.2. Accountability

- Children's workers are accountable to the Youth/Children's work coordinator currently Anna Chamberlain, Assistant Pastor.
- Suitability for working with children is on constant review.
- If a person becomes unsuitable for a role they will be asked to stop.

### 3.3. Guide to children's work

- A guide outlining responsibilities is given to all staff and volunteers acting as children's workers.

### 3.4. Training

- On acceptance of role all staff will be sent the City Gates child safeguarding policy outlining goals, best practice, how to recognise signs of abuse and the procedure for reporting concerns.
- This document will be given to new staff and volunteers prior to commencing a voluntary role, and will be disseminated to all children's workers if there are any changes made following the annual review.
- Volunteers also have the opportunity to attend in house training sessions.

### 3.5. Procedural practice

- All children's workers are made aware of the City Gates Child Safeguarding policy.
- A register/log book is provided to record those who attended children's activities and record any relevant details of the session. Any concerns about abuse should not be written in the log book, but dealt with as 2.3/2.4 outlines above.
- Responsible adults (parents or guardians) are made aware of City Gates Church Child Safeguarding policy.
- Responsible adults' permission is required before taking children in any form of transport during an organised activity.
- City Gates Church is a member of CCPAS and both our safeguarding officers and children's work supervisors are encouraged to contact CCPAS for advice if any concern has been raised, ([www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)).

## 4. Pastoral care

### 4.1. Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support all those who have been affected by abuse, who have contact with or are part of City Gates Church.

### 4.2. Working with offenders

If someone attending City Gates Church is known to have abused children, the Leadership Team will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. Precautions will be put in place to minimise the risk to children.

## 5. Other safety issues

- A risk assessment has been carried out at all City Gates locations used for organised children's activities. A dynamic risk assessment is carried out at any new locations.
- This risk assessment covers risks associated with the building, activities and food provided. Children's workers will be advised of the risk assessment and encouraged to employ common sense e.g.:
  - Being aware of risks created by internal and external fixtures, fittings and equipment. All of these things should meet adequate safety standards.
  - Food should be prepared safely.
  - All leaders will know of the escape routes
- Details of accidents will be recorded in writing.

This policy was reviewed, updated and agreed by the City Gates Church Trustees and Leadership Team

Date: Sept 2017