

Counties Hampshire

Safeguarding Children and Young People - Policy and Guidelines

(1). Introduction

'Counties Hampshire' are a partnership of self-employed Evangelists who are supported by a Link Group, which is made up of representatives from churches within Hampshire.

'Counties Hampshire' comes under the umbrella of 'Counties', which is a national organization consisting of over forty evangelists working in the UK. This organisation is guided by an Executive Oversight, but none of the evangelists are employed by 'Counties' but work as God's free agents; they plan their own activities in keeping with the needs of the area and their own God-given gifts.

There is no central supervision but in view of the importance of child protection, Counties Evangelists agree to adhere to the guidelines in their 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' policy, a copy of which is available from the Counties office. 30 Haynes Road. Westbury. Wilts. BA13 3HD. Telephone: 01373 823013. Email: enquiries@countiesuk.org 'Counties Hampshire' agrees to adhere to the policies and guidelines outlined in this paper, implementing procedure as and when appropriate.

The following definitions and explanation should be noted –

- **Children** - All those under 18 years of age, this may include helpers.
- **Workers** - A generic word that includes Evangelists, Link Group Officers and any appointed leaders and helpers in any children's or young people's activities.
- **Leaders** - anyone with responsibility for running a youth event.
- **Helpers** - anyone assisting or helping at a youth event.
- **Youth Events** - any event involving children where Counties Hampshire has overall responsibility. This includes Camps, Houseparties, Holiday Clubs, Weekly and Monthly events and 'one-off' activities.

(2). Counties Hampshire Policy

'Counties Hampshire' takes seriously their responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people entrusted to their care. Counties Hampshire Evangelists and Link Group Officers and all volunteers working with us, will be required to adhere to the following policies to ensure the best possible safety –

- We commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all children at youth events.

- We accept our responsibility to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect of children and to report any abuse suspected, discovered or disclosed in accordance with the guidelines and procedures in this paper.
- We will, when involved with children, ensure that effective Safeguarding procedures are in place, and that any workers are given a copy of these guidelines and required to adhere to them.
- Any visitor at a youth event will be supervised whenever they are with children. Visitors will be asked to sign in and out (Camps, Houseparties & Holiday Clubs) when entering premises or sites on each visit and to wear a visitors badge at all times.

2.1 The selection of workers

- Leaders will be asked to complete a declaration indicating that they have read and will adhere to the policies and guidelines in this document.
- Helpers will be asked to complete a declaration indicating that they have read and will adhere to the guidelines in section 3.
- We will require all new workers previously unknown to Counties Hampshire to provide contact details for a Church Leader who can act as a referee.
- We will ensure that those workers in the required roles hold a current DBS certificate.
- The application form for camps and house parties will include a question asking whether the worker has any criminal convictions. Any positive disclosures will be followed up and an appropriate decision will be made.

Other points in selecting workers:

- All situations which involve work with children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be asked to disclose information about criminal convictions. It is recognised that unfortunately there is nothing to stop an applicant filling in a false declaration.
- Information collected on an applicant should remain confidential and be kept in a secure place. It should not be discussed outside the application procedure.

2.2 Staffing levels

There should be 'adequate supervision'.

Suggested ratios (excluding helpers) are –

0-2 years	1 worker for every 3 children
2-3 years	1 worker for every 4 children
3-8 years	1 worker for every 8 children
8+ years	1 worker for every 10 children

- Each group should have at least 2 workers and it is recommended that a gender balance be maintained wherever possible.

2.3 Parent/Guardian consent form

A Parent/Guardian Consent Form should be completed for events such as camps, houseparties and trips.

This is for all events/programmes that differ to the normal weekly/monthly clubs. The aim is to give parents some detail of the event(s) and to obtain emergency phone contact numbers. It is also to note details of any medication or medical problems and to give consent for any emergency medical treatment relating to their child and to ask parents/guardians to sign and give permission for their child to attend said event.

3. Guidelines for those working with Children

3.1 Good practice

Workers will –

- recognise that discipline is important and provides a safe and secure environment for children to learn in. Such discipline will be verbal except where a child is in immediate danger and needs to be physically removed from that danger - see section 3.2 for more detail on handling inappropriate behaviour.
- never smack or hit a child.
- be firm, consistent, persistent and patient.
- recognise that encouragement and praise can often calm volatile situations.

- walk away and seek help from others if they feel they are losing control or are unable to cope.
- avoid being alone with a child.
- not leave children unattended.
- reinforce and praise good behaviour.
- avoid inappropriate physical contact with children.
- ensure any discussion with a child which is on a one-to-one basis takes place in a public area and within sight of other adults.
- take care over verbal communication, recognising that threatening, abusive or suggestive expressions are unacceptable.
- always seek to learn as they go along, asking themselves questions about how they could have handled any situation better.

3.2 Handling inappropriate behaviour

Examples of inappropriate behaviour

- **Physical:**
Kicking, biting, hitting, abuse of property or equipment, graffiti etc.
- **Verbal:**
Swearing, racial abuse, name calling, constant talking etc.
- **Other:**
Consistent lack of attention that leads to distraction of others, e.g. running around wildly, running out of the doors etc.

Procedures

- Step 1
Verbal warning to child when the incident occurs.
- Step 2
A second verbal warning to the child followed by moving that child to a different part of the room or seating them next to a leader.

- **Step 3**

A third and final verbal warning after which, whenever possible the parents/guardians will be contacted and informed of their child's behaviour and asked to come and collect their child. When this is not possible the child will be removed from the situation with two workers supervising.

If appropriate the child may be excluded from the group for a length of time agreed by the leaders.

If necessary, it may be required for one or more steps to be omitted in order that the situation is dealt with appropriately.

3.3 Child Abuse

It is important to understand that child abuse is a major social issue and happens in all sorts of homes. Workers need to know that there are various types of child abuse, such as physical, emotional, sexual and wilful neglect.

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; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Signs of child abuse can be difficult to identify and respond to.

Definitions of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

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 causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as may cause severe, adverse effects on the child's emotional development, and could involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

- Causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact acts, such as involving the children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

It may involve a parent or carer:

- failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing.
- failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger.
- failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic educational, intellectual or emotional needs.

Recognising possible signs of child abuse

The following may or may not be signs that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered. A child may show signs of more than one category of abuse.

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Instances where children are kept away from the group inexplicably.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, bumps, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts, scratches or substance abuse.

Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes 'clingy'.

- Depression / aggression / extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationship with peers and / or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia.

Signs of Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow and constant hunger.
- Stealing or gorging food.
- Untreated illnesses.
- Inadequate care.

3.4 Guidelines for responding to child abuse.

When a child wants to talk about abuse, it is important for the worker to firstly **listen and keep on listening without prompting** or using leading questions, and to then refer to the guidelines below.

However, if a child has a physical injury, ask the child how the injury was sustained, then, if appropriate, speak to the parent/guardian and suggest medical attention. If the parent/guardian does not seek medical attention for their child, then speak to the Child Protection Co-ordinator who will decide on a further course of action.

In an emergency or where a child is afraid to return home, seek help immediately (see section 4).

If a child wants to talk about abuse, follow the guidance given below:

- Listen to what is being said.
- Keep Calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- DO NOT fill in words, finish sentences or make suggestions.
- Never push for information.
- Do not ask leading questions e.g. “So did your uncle do this?”
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else – DO NOT promise confidentiality.
- (Even if a child feels they have broken a rule assure them they are not to blame for their abuse).
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened.

Helpful things to say or show:

- I am listening to you.
- I am glad you have told me.
- It’s not your fault.
- I will help you.

Avoid saying:

- Why didn’t you tell someone before?
- I can’t believe it.
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Where? Who?
- Never make promises.
- Never make statements such as “I am shocked, don’t tell anyone else.”

What you need to do:

- Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Immediately refer to one of the Child Protection Coordinators, Gordon Curley or Naomi Bundy.
- If an accusation is made against either of the coordinators, speak to Bryan Zillwood (details below).
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of talking), write down what was said and when he/she said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity). Record dates and times of these events and conversations and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes, even if these have subsequently been typed up.
- You **MUST NOT** discuss any allegations or suspicions of abuse with anyone other than the Child Protection Co-ordinators.

Child Protection Co-ordinators:

Onsite:

Gordon Curley - 07889 798636

Naomi Bundy - 07734 651743

1. Offsite:

Bryan Zillwood – 075921 93946 / 023 80 692 800

If you notice a worker acting in a way that you think is unsuitable or could be misinterpreted, speak to one of the Leadership Team.

Section 4. Guidelines for Child Protection Co-ordinator

In the event of allegations or suspicions of abuse, the role of the Child Protection Co-ordinators will be to:

(a). Seek and follow advice from CCPAS.

Helpline: 0303 003 11 11

- CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference in the future.
- Our account name is: - HAMPSHIRE REGIONAL FELLOWSHIP

(b). If necessary, contact Hampshire Children's Services: 0300 555 1384

(c). In an emergency, call the Hampshire Constabulary Safeguarding Teams

- 999
- 101 non-emergency number

Further guidelines:

- Child Protection Co-ordinator should only speak to the parent if advised to do so.
- Under no circumstances attempt to carry out any personal investigation into the allegation or suspicions of abuse. The role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Children's Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of The Children Act 1989.

- Make clear notes of all conversations and actions taken, including dates and times. Keep original documentation in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Child Protection Co-ordinator, if they are unavailable this should not delay immediate referral to the Children's Services Department. If sexual intercourse is alleged to have occurred very recently, then contact the police immediately so that evidence is preserved. Where sexual abuse is suspected, never speak to the parents; refer the case to Children's Services.
- The Child Protection Co-ordinator should only share any information in a strictly limited way, on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Where a known offender is attending any event, the Leadership Team will meet with the individual and discuss the boundaries that they will be expected to keep to (i.e. not being alone with a child, agreeing to a formal contract, not working in any of the children's groups etc).

12/04/24

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