



Youth and Children Ministry

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



This policy has been developed in accordance with the Home Office guidelines, *Safe From Harm*, and advice contained in the Baptist Union of Great Britain's *Safe To Grow* and the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service's *Facing the Unthinkable*.

1. Values

- a. Altrincham Baptist Church is called to be a place of safety in which all people and in particular, young people and children, can experience peace. However, being a church does not make it immune to abuse.
- b. Altrincham Baptist Church accepts that all children have a right to be protected from abuse or harm at all times and that child abuse occurs in all religions, all cultures and social classes.
- c. Responsibility for a child using the facilities of Altrincham Baptist Church always rests with the parent/carer— however, Childrens Church and Rock Solid teachers, Child Contact Centre workers, helpers and all church members are responsible for:
 - *Preventing the physical, sexual, emotional or neglectful abuse of children whilst attending the church.*
 - *Listening to concerns expressed by parents or children and advising them how to report any known or suspected abuse themselves by applying this Child Protection Policy.*
 - *Reporting abuse themselves, in certain circumstances directly to Social Services Child Protection.*

Where there is an allegation of or suspected child abuse, the interests and safety of the child/children involved must always come first. This means that if there is a conflict of interest between a parent and child, the interests of the child should always be put first.

- d. Potential volunteers and staff must first prove their suitability before being authorised to work with young people and children and will only be appointed in the method described in para.2. The Child Contact Centre (CCC) is affiliated to the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) and has agreed to abide by its Code of Practice and National Minimum Standards.
- e. Prevention is better than cure. All workers should be equipped to act upon possible signs of abuse, but hope they will never need to. It is the responsibility of all team members to be vigilant. All childrens' workers are required to attend the Altrincham Baptist Church Child Protection Awareness Course within 3 months of being approved for such work so they are aware of possible signs/symptoms of abuse.
- f. Altrincham Baptist Church should seek to demonstrate 'good practice', in accordance with statutory legislation and responsible self-regulation. The church will behave and expect childrens' workers to behave in accordance with the spirit of the Children Act 1989 which stresses that the welfare and safety of the child is of paramount importance. The church expects workers to be aware of Trafford Social Services Child Protection Procedures and the church will ensure to refer cases of suspected or known child abuse on the day such information becomes evident.



2. Appointment of workers

- a. All prospective Youth and Children's Ministry workers must first complete an application form. This applies to all people wanting to serve at least one session a month (or equivalent) or more. (Six weeks in connection with the CCC).
- b. Applicants must supply the names and addresses of at least two people willing to provide a written reference. All referees must have known the applicant for a minimum of one full year and, between them, include someone unconnected with Altrincham Baptist Church, a church leader and a person who has observed the applicant with children/ young people (not necessary for CCC). Written references must always be taken.
- c. Applicants must sign a declaration of past criminality and, when such facilities are available, consent to a criminal record/ investigations check. This must always be undertaken. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to those working with young people and children and, therefore all, including 'spent', convictions must be disclosed. The disclosure of an offence may be no bar to the appointment, but this will be at the discretion of the Child Protection co-ordinator /Church Leadership.
- d. Applicants must complete an informal probationary period prior to acceptance.
- e. Applicants must only be accepted as Youth and Children's Ministry workers upon successful completion of the above.

3. Supervision of workers

- a. All Workers should have clear and recognised roles, having been provided with a Ministry Description or CCC Guidelines for volunteers.
- b. Workers should, whenever possible, be placed in teams. The 'communication chain' ensures that all workers are supervised in their ministry with young people and children.
- c. As far as possible, no worker should need to be alone, or out of sight, with a young person or child *CCC – Never under any circumstances. This is especially true for male workers and when working with the opposite sex. Potentially ambiguous situations should be avoided, with extra thought given to the offering of lifts and use of worker's homes.

4. Training of workers

- a. All workers should be equipped in their ministry with young people and children. They must undertake internal training and where appropriate some may be able to attend external training opportunities as they arise. NACCC recommends 2 sessions per year minimum. If a worker has direct experience of child protection through their profession then the need to attend Altrincham Baptist Church Child Protection training will be discussed with the individual concerned by A.B.C's child protection co-ordinator
- b. Basic child protection training should equip workers to observe 'good practice' and will cover such things as the definitions and indicators of child abuse as provided in current guidance from the Dept. of Health (Working Together Doc.1999) as well as covering the implications of the referral and disclosure policy indicated below.

