



## **Hope Church Goldthorpe Safeguarding Policy for Youth and Children's Work**

### **Statement of Aims in Safeguarding**

Our aims are:

- To offer young people opportunities to engage with, think and learn about the Christian faith in different contexts
- To encourage a strong Christian fellowship
- Help young people realise their full potential physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually
- To encourage young people to take a full part in the Church's life and worship
- To provide a safe meeting place for young people
- To encourage young people to become responsible adults
- To provide indoor and outdoor leisure activities for young people that are safe and risk assessed
- To uphold everyone's equality and worth in the sight of God

This document covers the work of the Hope Church, Goldthorpe with children and young people, in its services and in any groups meeting throughout the week.

### **Sunday Groups**

- Sunday School (0-11 years Sunday, during morning service)
- Youth Group (10-18 years Sunday afternoon)

### **Policy Statement**

The eldership expects all church workers to follow its Safeguarding Children Policy and will display it in a prominent place.

### **Introduction**

We are committed to pursuing high standards in caring for children entrusted to us. This document sets out general principles and guidelines for all those involved in working with children at Hope Church.

### **Ratios**

On no account should an adult be by themselves with any age group.

| <b>Age group</b> | <b>Staff</b>   | <b>Children</b> |
|------------------|--|-----------------|
| 0-2 years        | 1 for every  | 3               |
| 2-3 years        | 1 for every  | 4               |
| 3-5 years        | 1 for every  | 8               |
| 5-8 years        | 1 for every  | 8               |
| Over 8 years     | 1 for the first 8 children and then 1 for each additional 12 |                 |

## **General Guidelines for Relating to Children**

### **General Attitude to Children**

We want to treat the children in our care with respect and dignity. Therefore we will want to:

- Avoid ridiculing, scapegoating or humiliating children
- Avoid showing favouritism to any particular children

- Be aware of speech, tone of voice and body language and the effect that it has on the children
- Treat each child as an individual and don't make comparisons between children (whether peers or siblings)
- Work hard to encourage the children, highlighting their strengths and where appropriate giving them responsibilities

## **Physical Contact**

Physical contact is a normal part of many relationships. There is no reason to avoid appropriate physical contact with children in our care. However we need to ensure that such contact is neither inappropriate nor misunderstood. Therefore we will want to:

- Keep everything public – avoid physical contact in any place or context that isn't open and in sight of others
- Remember that you will be stronger than most children
- Avoid engaging in rough games or behaviour or in any activity that puts the child at unnecessary risk of injury
- Avoid engaging in any activity or game that could be considered sexually provocative or stimulating
- Avoid touch which is inappropriate to the age of the child – touch should be related to the child or young person's needs, not the worker's. Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child or young person, rather than the worker
- Respect the child – allow them to decide how much physical contact to have with others and in most cases allow them to initiate
- All children and young people are entitled to personal privacy and the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in circumstances such as a medical emergency
- Encourage each other to avoid behaviour that might be perceived to be inappropriate. This will usually mean raising our concerns with fellow leaders either on the spot (if urgent) or after the event. Where we have concerns that behaviour is inappropriate we may need to take further action – see below.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc), encourage the child or young person to do what they can themselves but, in their best interests giving appropriate help where necessary
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported

## **Toileting**

Only female volunteers are to take children to the toilet. Helpers should generally wait outside for the child. If the child needs help in the toilet the leader can go in with the child, but the door should be kept unlocked.

### **Sunday School**

Nappies may need to be changed during Sunday School. As a general principle, nappies must be changed by parents/carers, however, if you are female, the parents have given you permission, and you are comfortable doing so, then please follow these guidelines:

- Tell another leader you're about to change a nappy.
- Unless an older child expresses discomfort or unease about being changed in public, nappies should be changed in view of other leaders.
- Tell parents after the service that you had to change their child's nappy during crèche.
- Wash your hands afterwards.

Some of the younger children may ask for help when it comes to toileting – in these instances it is best to get parents from Church, as a Group leader it is not your responsibility to help the children use the toilet, that remains with their parents. If a parent has asked you to help their child, and you are comfortable doing so then that is acceptable, but do observe the guidelines above and remember that if you are uncomfortable helping a child use the toilet then you don't have to.

## Discipline

From time to time, children will engage in unacceptable behaviour and, as responsible leaders, we must be ready to discipline them. Our fundamental principle is to discipline out of a love and concern for the individual and group rather than just anger or irritation on our part.

### Dealing with unacceptable behaviour

- Act sooner rather than later – be observant and don't let situations get out of control
- Ensure that you understand the situation as fully as possible – give the children involved opportunity to explain
- Pinpoint the behaviour that you find unacceptable
- If appropriate, mention positive behaviour and encourage them to extend it
- Avoid raising past (and possibly unrelated) behaviour in general terms – e.g. 'What's wrong with you? You're always so selfish'
- Explain to the child the implications of their behaviour for other individuals and the group as a whole
- Ask them to respect other individuals and the group
- If they refuse, lay down clear and specific rules and explain what will happen if these rules are not kept
- Ensure that you carry out the action that you have indicated
- Judge your response accordingly and escalate your sanction if children continue to misbehave – for example:
  - General request to behave acceptably
  - Specific rules (e.g. 'please don't climb on the table')
  - Separate child from others
  - Have the child sit in a particular place (e.g. in front of you or next to another leader)
  - Speak to their parents later
  - Send them out / take them to their parents now

### After the Event

- Reflect on why the child may be behaving in this way
- Reflect on whether there is something that can be changed in the structure of the club that would help remove the opportunity or temptation for unacceptable behaviour (e.g. are the children bored?)
- Discuss persistent unacceptable behaviour with other leaders and decide on a consistent course of action
- Reflect on whether you should alert the child's parents and ask their advice

### General Guidelines

- As leaders take a collective approach to discipline – don't side with a child against another leader or allow children to play leaders off against each other
- If you have concerns about the approach taken by a leader do raise your concerns but don't do it in front of the children – either take them aside there and then (if it is urgent) or speak to them afterwards
- Be wise in deciding whether to discipline a child in front of others or whether to take them to one side
- DO NOT use physical punishment (e.g. smacking)
- DO NOT shout, use a change in tone instead
- Stop abusive peer activities (e.g. ridiculing, bullying, name-calling) at the earliest opportunity and make it clear that they will not be tolerated

## What to do if a child makes inappropriate advances or engages in inappropriate behaviour

- Tell the child that their language or behaviour is unacceptable, even if this is embarrassing for you or for them.
- Tell the Group Leader or Safeguarding Officer of the incident, again, however embarrassing the incident might be.
- Agree with the Group Leader or Safeguarding Officer what action should be taken to help the child and to minimise the chance of a recurrence.

- The Group Leader or Safeguarding Officer should file a brief written record of the incident ideally within an hour (and within 24-hours at the absolute most).

## Health & Safety

We must be careful to ensure the safety of the children in our care.

- Ensure that you have access to a telephone and first aid kit in the place where you are meeting
- Take special care with children when:
  - crossing the road
  - ascending and descending stairs
  - where hot liquids are present (e.g. kitchen)
- Ensure that after the group has finished, the children are supervised until they are picked up by their parents
- Ensure that you have an up to date copy of parent's contact details
- Ensure that you are familiar with any specific medical requirements of the children in your care – these are detailed on the Parent's Declaration forms stored in the Children's folder.
- Do not allow children with infectious illnesses to attend the group
- Ensure that there is a route of escape in event of a fire
- Ensure basic hygiene in the preparation of food and drink

## General Precautions for the Care of Children

We must take reasonable precautions to ensure the safety and comfort of the children who are entrusted to our care. Although the process can seem a little excessive it is designed for the benefit of all concerned and is not meant to be offensive.

## Selection of Leaders

All those who will be leading or helping with children's clubs will be asked for an enhanced DBS disclosure. This certificate must be obtained prior to commencement of the role.

Only once the Safeguarding Officer is satisfied that suitable scrutiny has taken place will the individual be able to take up a position involving work with children. In addition, it will be our general practice not to have a single individual alone with a group of children for a prolonged period of time.

Occasional helpers with the young children in Sunday School (including parents of children who may be uncomfortable being left) will not be expected to produce a DBS disclosure, but there will always be a Supervisor who has satisfied the Safeguarding Officer in this way. Occasional helpers will never be left in sole charge of a child or group of children.

**Church Safeguarding Officers: Simon Bradshaw and Andy Mills**  
**Alternative Safeguarding Contact: Lynda Milton-Thompson**

## Parental and Child Information

If an unaccompanied child would like to take part in a children's group we will ask those responsible for the child to complete a 'Parent/carers Declaration'. This form asks for information about the child (e.g. name, age, medical condition) and about the parent/carers (e.g. contact information). The form also requests the parent's consent for their child's involvement. This form must be completed at the beginning of the club/activity. Children whose carer is remaining on site for the duration of the activity remain under the supervision of their carer and do not require a declaration form to be completed.

## Registers

We need to keep accurate records of the attendance of children and adults. Registers will be provided for this purpose.

## Incident Record Forms

Should any out of the ordinary incident occur (e.g. accident, injury, allegation of abuse), an incident record sheet should be completed by those either involved or responsible for taking action. This form asks for information regarding the incident and what action was taken.

After completing an incident report form please return it to the Safeguarding Officer. An annual review will be completed by the Safeguarding Officer to determine where there are trends of incidents occurring.

## Maintaining Records

Information collected as detailed above will need to be carefully stored for possible referral in the future. Information stored securely in a lockable filing cabinet at 81 Parkgate, Goldthorpe includes:

- Completed Registers
- Completed Incident Record forms

Information stored in the Children's Folder includes:

- Completed Parent's Declaration forms - with the emergency contact details
- Registers currently in use
- A copy of this policy and guidelines

Registers will be kept indefinitely. Incident forms will be kept for 7 years, but for 10 years or until the child's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday if of relevance to a safeguarding issue (whichever is longer).

## Training

We want to be able offer children the best possible care. We are committed to improving the leadership we offer to them. Therefore we are committed to a continued pattern of safeguarding training in looking after children (including the areas described in this document). Leaders taking on new teaching responsibilities will be supported with training and feedback.

## Photography

Images count as personal data under the General Data Protection Rules 2018. Therefore before photographs of any kind are taken within children's groups the church requires consent in writing from a parent/guardian. If a photograph is taken by a Group Leader on their mobile phone for the purposes of a game/activity, this must be deleted immediately after use.

## Phone & Social Media Contact

If Social Media, e-mail or text messaging is used to contact children then the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- **Social Media:** Keep everything public and accessible to all users. Ensure that any social media is moderated and that there is appropriate access and password verification. If using Facebook, Twitter etc. ensure that the page you are using is one used for professional work purposes and not a personal page. Before sending any messages please think how it could be interpreted by the recipient.
- **Text messaging:** Take extra care when using text messaging. Ensure that you save text messages as text files so that a record exists.

Leaders should refrain from contacting children and young people via private messages.

## 1-to-1 Arrangements

1-to-1 bible studies are to be encouraged as a wonderful way of discipling young people, but leaders must be extra vigilant in these scenarios. The following guidance must be followed:

- Meetings must always take place in a public venue or with another leader present
- Young people must always feel comfortable with the leader and know they are freely able to leave
- These will only take place with the explicit consent of those with parental responsibility.

## Travel Arrangements

Parents must be reminded that it is their responsibility to transport children to and from groups. Leaders must never be left alone with a young person, including car trips or walking them home (unless parental consent has been explicitly granted). Where groups are being transported, the driver must ensure that suitable car seats are provided, and parental consent has been obtained.

## Abuse and Neglect

Sadly, abuse and neglect do occur. Without being paranoid we need to recognise this and to be alert to the possibility of abuse or neglect by either those within or without Hope Church. An explanation of abuse and neglect and some signs that might be associated with them are given at the back of this document. The following sections detail what action should be taken if abuse is alleged or suspected.

## What to do if a child begins a conversation regarding inappropriate behaviour

The aim is to ensure that the child is given the opportunity to make the statement they want to make, as clearly and as fully as possible. This is **not** the time to investigate or to judge the matter. If possible try to have another adult present whilst the child speaks (perhaps by delaying the conversation) However, don't prevent the child from speaking if this is not a possibility or if it would unduly inhibit the child.

### Things to Do

- **Provide an environment in which the child can explain clearly and fully the nature of their complaint**
  - Give the child time to talk freely and without fear of being overheard
  - Give the child your full attention
  - Try to be sympathetic and to reassure the child that it is right to speak with you, e.g. 'Thank you for telling me'
  - Stay with the child until you feel they have said everything they want to say
- **Explain**
  - Explain to the child what you will do next in a way that they can understand and assure them that you will let them know what happens.
  - Find out whether they would be happy to speak to another adult about what they have said.
  - Try not to leave them in a distressed state.
- **Follow Up the Incident**
  - Write down as fully as possible the content of the conversation (include what you said and any observations of how the child appeared). Do this as soon as possible (ideally within an hour)
  - Speak as soon as possible to a 'responsible person' as explained in the next section
  - Don't speak to anyone else about the matter at this stage
  - If the child needs urgent medical attention, ensure that they receive it as soon as possible
  - Ensure that the child is kept informed of what is happening
  - Until further action is taken, where there is continued contact with the child, try to ensure that this is as normal possible. Only discuss the issue further if the child raises it.
- **Remember**
  - that the child may want the abuse to stop but still love the abuser

- that the child may think that you are able to stop the abuse without anything else happening
- that the child may have been bribed or threatened not to talk
- **Pray**

### Things to Avoid

- **Promising secrecy or confidentiality:** If pressed, explain that you will need to tell other responsible adults for the benefit of the child.
- **Investigating:** Be very careful not to put words into the child's mouth and don't press for information. Avoid asking questions except where it is absolutely necessary to clarify a point of detail.
- **Judging the situation:** Don't pass judgment on the child or the matter being presented. Rather just collect information. Even if they appear to you to have acted unwisely or to have broken a rule, at this stage avoid anything in your words or manner that is reproachful towards the child, e.g. 'Why didn't you tell me earlier?'
- **Embellishing details:** When making a disclosure to a Responsible Person (see below) try to recount only the facts the child confirmed to you, not what you suspect to be the case, this is important for the report to be accurate.
- **Panic or shock:** Try to retain your composure. Avoid appearing shocked or saying anything that might make the child feel more embarrassed about talking to you, e.g. 'I can't believe it!' 'Are you sure that this is true?'

### What to do if you receive an allegation of, or suspect abuse of any kind

If you suspect, or any allegation is made to you (by a child or an adult), that some form of abuse has taken place (whether in the context of a Hope Church activity or elsewhere), please contact one of the 'responsible persons' listed below as soon as possible. In normal circumstances those nearer the top of the list should be approached first. However, if one or more of the individuals is implicated in the suspicion or allegation, please contact one of the other 'responsible persons'. If all are implicated, you will need to contact a responsible external agency (e.g. Social Services, NSPCC).

- |                                     |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ● The Safeguarding Officers:        | <b>Simon Bradshaw, Andrew Mills</b> |
| ● Alternative Safeguarding Contact: | <b>Lynda Milton-Thompson</b>        |
| ● A Hope Church Goldthorpe Trustee: | <b>Meera Mills, Carol Ogley</b>     |
| ● Children's group leader:          | <b>Merry Bradshaw</b>               |

The action the 'responsible person' will take depends on the exact nature of the suspicion or allegation. In all cases they will:

- Ascertain from you the precise details of the allegation or suspicion (they may ask you to fill out an 'incident report' form)
- Inform the other 'responsible persons' listed above
- Keep a written record of information collected and decisions made using the 'incident report' form
- Contact the AMiE (Anglican Mission in England) Safeguarding Trustee within 24 hours.

In addition, they will take the following action:

#### *In the case of a suspicion or allegation of sexual abuse:*

- Limit their investigation to clarifying specific details
- Refer it to a Safeguarding Officer, Alternative Safeguarding Contact, Trustee or children's group leader (named above).
- If it is urgent contact the Social Services Duty Worker or Police Child Protection for advice ensure that you then inform a Church elder and the Safeguarding Officer that this has been done.

#### *In the case of a suspicion or allegation of other serious forms of abuse:*

- Contact the Social Services Duty Worker or Police Child Protection Team for advice on the appropriate action to take

*In the case of physical assault:*

- Ensure that medical attention has been received
- Ensure that the police have been alerted

If, at any stage, you feel that the child is in imminent danger, you should contact the police or Social Services immediately.

**If you are not satisfied with the action that has been taken, then you retain a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department and should do so without hesitation.**

## **What are abuse and neglect?**

### **Abuse**

Abuse involves potentially or actually causing harm to a child. It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may also involve frequently frightening a child or making them feel in danger or persistent rejection or humiliation.
- Physical Abuse:** Causing physical harm to a child.
- Sexual Abuse:** Actual or potential involvement of a child in sexual activity or sexually inappropriate behaviour (including the production or use of pornographic material), whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes deliberately causing a child to look at such material or activity.
- Domestic abuse:** Domestic abuse is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse has an impact on children because: they are at an increased risk of physical injury (by accident or because they attempt to intervene); they are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent; exposure to parental conflict can lead to serious anxiety and distress; children in violent households are more likely to be exposed to other forms of abuse.
- Spiritual abuse:** Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice, including the misuse of leadership authority or discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive/healing and deliverance ministries (including abuse linked to belief in spiritual possession) or rituals, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.
- Group leaders should also be aware that other forms of abuse can occur:**
  - Stranger abuse
  - By electronic communication, including internet abuse, or texting
  - Bullying – including by electronic communication
  - Fabricated or induced illness
  - Abuse of disabled children
  - Deliberate self-harm
  - Allegations of possession by evil spirits
  - Child trafficking
  - Sexual exploitation
  - Forced marriage
  - Peer abuse

### **Neglect**

Neglect involves a persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs. This includes failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or appropriate medical care. It also includes failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child from potential or actual harm.

### General Observations

- Abuse may be spontaneous or organised. Organised abuse involves one or more abusers and a number of abused children.
- Most cases of abuse or neglect involve those already known to the child rather than complete strangers.
- Abuse may be inflicted by other children
- Children with special needs are especially vulnerable to abuse

### What signs are there of abuse?

Abuse and neglect of children can be difficult to spot. However, any of the following observations may be a sign of abuse or neglect. However, in many cases, there will be another explanation.

### General Indicators / Indicators of Emotional Abuse

In general, **changes** in a child's behaviour or mood, either suddenly or over a period of time, may be significant. Such changes may be particularly important where a child becomes more **withdrawn** or more **aggressive**. Examples of such changes are listed below.

#### Mood

- Anxiety or depression
- 'Frozen watchfulness'
- Loss of ability to learn or concentrate
- Obsessions, phobias or fears
- Loss of self-esteem

#### Behaviour towards others

- Excessive attention seeking
- Truancy, running away or withdrawal
- Aggression
- Stealing or Lying
- 'Clinginess'

#### Lifestyle

- Loss of appetite
- Eating disorders
- Severe sleep disturbances and persistent tiredness

### Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Reluctance to reveal parts of the body (e.g. remove a jumper when hot)
- Marks of injury, especially injuries which:
  - have not received medical attention
  - are not consistent with the explanation provided.
  - occur to the body in places not usually exposed to falls and other accidents.

### Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- Level of sexual knowledge inappropriate to the child's age
- Indication of sexual activity through words, stories, drawing, games or behaviour
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour towards adults or other children, especially where surprising given the age of the child
- Pre-occupation with sexual matters and requests for sexual advice

- Allusions to unusual practices (e.g. unusual bed-sharing arrangements at home)

**Neglect**

- Under-nourishment
- Failure to grow
- Constant hunger
- Stealing food
- Untreated illness



## Hope Church Goldthorpe Safeguarding Policy for Adults

### Statement of Aims in Safeguarding

Our aims are:

- To offer people opportunities to engage with, think and learn about the Christian faith in different contexts
- To encourage a strong Christian fellowship
- Help all people realise their full potential physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually
- To encourage all people to take a full part in the Church's life and worship
- To provide a safe meeting place for all people
- To encourage all people to become responsible adults
- To provide indoor and outdoor leisure activities for all people that are safe and risk assessed
- To uphold everyone's equality and worth in the sight of God

This document covers the work of Hope Church, in its services and in the groups meeting throughout the week.

### Regular Midweek Groups

- Life groups (Various times throughout the week)
- 121 Bible Study (Various times throughout the week)
- Cherry Tree Court Friday 10am

### Regular Sunday Groups

- Sunday Service (10.30am – 11.30am)

1. We recognize that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.
2. As members of this church we commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.
3. We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church community.
4. We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of responsibility.
5. The church commits itself to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
6. It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people, and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
7. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.
8. The church is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.
9. Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.
10. Each person who leads work with vulnerable adults or is likely to have contact with vulnerable adults outside of an open group context must have a current, enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate prior to commencing their role.

This church appoints **Simon Bradshaw and Andrew Mills** to represent the concerns and views of vulnerable people at our meetings and to outside bodies.

## What to do if you receive an allegation of, or suspect abuse of any kind

If you suspect, or any allegation is made to you (by a child or an adult), that some form of abuse has taken place (whether in the context of Hope Church or elsewhere), please contact one of the 'responsible persons' listed below as soon as possible. In normal circumstances those nearer the top of the list should be approached first. However, if one or more of the individuals is implicated in the suspicion or allegation, please contact one of the other 'responsible persons'. If all are implicated, you will need to contact a responsible external agency (e.g. Social Services).

- The Church Safeguarding Officers: **Simon Bradshaw and Andrew Mills**
- Alternative Safeguarding Contact: **Lynda Milton-Thompson**
- Hope Church Goldthorpe Trustees: **Carol Ogley and Meera Mills**

The action the 'responsible person' will take depends on the exact nature of the suspicion or allegation. In all cases they will:

- Ascertain from you the precise details of the allegation or suspicion (they may ask you to fill out an 'incident report' form)
- Inform the other 'responsible persons' listed above
- Keep a written record of information collected and decisions made using the 'incident report' form
- Report the incident to the Anglican Mission in England Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

In addition, they will take the following action:

*In the case of a suspicion or allegation of sexual abuse:*

- Limit their investigation to clarifying specific details
- Refer it to the eldership and/or Safeguarding Officer.
- If it is urgent contact the Social Services Duty Worker and/or Police for advice and ensure that you then inform an elder and the Safeguarding Officer that this has been done.

*In the case of a suspicion or allegation of other serious forms of abuse:*

- Contact the Social Services Duty Worker for advice on the appropriate action to take

*In the case of physical assault:*

- Ensure that medical attention has been received
- Ensure that the police have been alerted

If, at any stage, you feel that the individual is in imminent danger, you should contact the police or Social Services immediately.

Further advice in non-urgent situations may be sought from Hope Church's safeguarding provider, Christian Safeguarding Services.

**If you are not satisfied with the action that has been taken, then you retain a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department and should do so without hesitation.**

## What are abuse and neglect?

### Abuse

Abuse involves potentially or actually causing harm to a person. It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- i. **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional ill-treatment such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to someone that they are

worthless, unloved or inadequate. It may also involve frequently frightening them or making them feel in danger or persistent rejection or humiliation.

- ii. **Physical Abuse:** Causing physical harm to someone.
- iii. **Sexual Abuse:** Actual or potential unwilling involvement of someone in sexual activity or sexually inappropriate behaviour (including the production or use of pornographic material), or where someone lacks capacity to consent to such activity.
- iv. **Domestic abuse:** Domestic abuse is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality.
- v. **Spiritual abuse:** Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice, including the misuse of leadership authority or discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive/ healing and deliverance ministries (including abuse linked to belief in spiritual possession) or rituals, any of which may result in people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm.
- vi. **Group leaders should also be aware that other forms of abuse can occur:**
  - Stranger abuse
  - By electronic communication, including internet abuse, or texting
  - Bullying – including by electronic communication
  - Fabricated or induced illness
  - Abuse of disabled people
  - Deliberate self-harm
  - Allegations of possession by evil spirits
  - Trafficking
  - Sexual exploitation
  - Forced marriage
  - Peer abuse

### Neglect

Neglect involves a persistent failure to meet someone's basic needs. This includes failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or appropriate medical care.

### General Observations

- Abuse may be spontaneous or organised. Organised abuse involves one or more.
- Most cases of abuse or neglect involve those already known to the person rather than complete strangers.
- Adults with special needs are especially vulnerable to abuse

### What signs are there of abuse?

Abuse and neglect can be difficult to spot. However, any of the following observations may be a sign of abuse or neglect. However, in many cases, there will be another explanation.

### General Indicators / Indicators of Emotional Abuse

In general, **changes** in a someone's behaviour or mood, either suddenly or over a period of time, may be significant. Such changes may be particularly important where someone becomes more **withdrawn** or more **aggressive**. Examples of such changes are listed below.

### Mood

- Anxiety or depression
- 'Frozen watchfulness'
- Loss of ability to learn or concentrate
- Obsessions, phobias or fears

- Loss of self-esteem

### **Behaviour towards others**

- Excessive attention seeking
- Running away or withdrawal
- Aggression
- Stealing or Lying
- 'Clinginess'

### **Lifestyle**

- Loss of appetite
- Eating disorders
- Severe sleep disturbances and persistent tiredness

### **Indicators of Physical Abuse**

- Reluctance to reveal parts of the body (e.g. remove a jumper when hot)
- Repeated urinary infections or tummy pains
- Marks of injury, especially injuries which:
  - have not received medical attention
  - are not consistent with the explanation provided.
  - occur to the body in places not usually exposed to falls and other accidents.

### **Guide to Injuries**

- Bruises, especially:
  - those in or around the mouth
  - those from fingertips, especially on arms, chest or face indicating tight gripping or shaking
  - those from belt, implement, hand
  - those around ear-lobes (also signs of tears)
  - those to head or soft tissue areas of the body
- Bite-marks
- Burns and scalds, especially:
  - those with a clear outline – in particular circular (e.g. cigarette burn) or linear (e.g. from hot metal rod)
  - those of a uniform depth over a large area
  - those caused by friction (e.g. from being pulled across a carpet)
  - those surrounded by a clear water line (e.g. from immersion or pouring of hot water)
  - those surrounded by splash marks (e.g. where hot liquid has been thrown)
  - those that have caused scars (indicating previous burns)
- Fractures:
- Cuts, scratches

### **Indicators of Sexual Abuse**

- Inappropriate sexual behaviour towards adults or children
- Pre-occupation with sexual matters and requests for sexual advice
- Allusions to unusual practices (e.g. unusual bed-sharing arrangements at home)

### **Neglect**

- Under-nourishment
- Constant hunger
- Stealing food
- Untreated illness