



Shaftesbury Avenue, Leeds LS8  
[www.standre](http://www.standre)

## **Safeguarding Guidelines for those working with Children and Young People at St Andrew's - how to respond to allegations or suspicions of Child Abuse**

### **Introduction**

These guidelines have been prepared to provide you with some assistance when confronted with the sensitive subject of child abuse. It is to be hoped that the advice within it will not need to be used but we are increasingly aware of the prevalence of child abuse in all communities. It is therefore important to be prepared and to be reassured by the advice that is available to you.

It is the responsibility of all those involved with children, that is children and young people up to the age of 18 years, in St Andrew's to promote their welfare. In some instances it may come to your notice that a child is or has been abused in some way. Children may be subject to **physical** abuse, **sexual** abuse, **emotional** abuse and **neglect**. If you act appropriately you may be able to protect a child from future harm.

## **Church Safeguarding Officers**

Elaine Weston has been appointed by the Elders as Safeguarding officer and Eileen Belverstone as deputy, to provide advice and support in relation to 'safeguarding'. All cases of alleged or suspected child abuse should be reported immediately to Elaine or Eileen who will advise on action and provide support to you. Contact Elaine on 07565807907 or [emweston@live.com](mailto:emweston@live.com) : or Eileen on 0113 2664814 or [richardbelverstone@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:richardbelverstone@hotmail.co.uk)

## **WHAT TO DO**

### **When a child has been physically abused**

A child may have an injury that they tell you has been caused deliberately by someone. You may see bruising or there may be an obvious injury.

In an **emergency seek medical attention immediately** but make sure you tell the medical services what the child has told you or of any suspicions you may have.

If you suspect a child is being physically abused or a child tells you that they have been hurt the authorities need to be informed immediately. **Tell the safeguarding officer what has happened as soon as possible and seek her support for yourself. You should not deal with this alone.** The local Social Services or the police need to be told what you have seen and what the child has told you. Do not delay as any signs of injury may disappear quickly. Keep the information confidential in order to respect the child and his/her family. If you believe other children may be at risk make sure you pass on your concerns to the link person. Record what has happened in writing, date and sign and keep securely.

### **When a child discloses sexual abuse to you**

**Why tell me?** If a child chooses to tell you that they have been sexually abused they have chosen you because they trust you and they think you will know what to do. One of their major reasons for deciding to tell you at this point is that they want the abuse to stop. They think that you will be able to hear what they have to tell you without being shocked and believe that you will be able to help. All too often children's attempts to tell of their abuse are thwarted by adults who dismiss what they are saying without listening properly or those who do not believe them. So, if a child chooses you they have done so for a reason.

**Listen** carefully to what the child tells you **without** prompting or using any leading questions such as 'Did he say...?' 'Were you at her house?' If you have to ask any questions use open questions such as where, when, who, what? But only as much as will clarify the general picture for you to understand that the child believes s/he has been abused. Do not interrupt the child and do not ask for additional detail.

**Remember** the child's own words and make notes at the first opportunity of what the child has told you using the child's words. Try to remember as much of the detail as possible, so that you can pass it on appropriately. Date and sign any notes you have, and keep a copy securely.

**Do not pass judgement** on what the child has told you. Remember that children who are abused are often abused by someone they trust and love. Try not to sound shocked by what the child is telling you, however awful it may sound to you, as this may stop the child from telling any more.

**Reassure** the child and discuss with him/her what will happen next. Say that you will need to inform someone else and that someone trained in listening to children who have been abused will need to see him/her to hear more about what has happened. Children often feel responsible for what has happened. Explain that it is the adult who is responsible and he/she has done the right thing to tell you, and it is not their fault.

**Immediately inform** Barbara Mary or Elaine Weston St Andrew's Safeguarding Officers. It is important that child abuse is investigated where appropriate without delay and that the proper authorities are informed. If the link person or any other member of the Safeguarding Group is not available inform the Social Services or the Police Child Protection Unit immediately. This may be particularly relevant if a child approaches you at the end of a session and the parent or carer is waiting to collect the child. You **cannot** prevent the child being taken home by his/her legal guardian, but you can inform the police and leave them to take appropriate action. **Do not contact the person alleged by the child to have abused them.**

The Social Services will ask you what the child has told you and will need information about the child's family, address and age etc. It is important that you give as much information as possible as this will assist them in any possible investigation. If you have made notes let Social Services have them, and keep a copy securely yourself.

**Seek support** from the safeguarding officers and/or the minister. It can be distressing to hear of child abuse for perhaps the first time. It is important that you do **not** keep this to yourself. You will need support and comfort yourself and assurance – **let us help you.** Do not share this information beyond those who need to know and respect that confidentiality for the sake of the child and his/her family.

**Support** the child as you can through what may be a difficult and disruptive time in their life. Your care and prayers will be valuable for the child and his/her family.

### **Neglect and emotional abuse**

Over time you may become concerned about the long-term welfare of a child because you suspect they may be suffering from neglect and emotional problems. Such concerns should be discussed with the link person.

### **Allegations against volunteer leaders and paid employees**

Any allegations will be taken seriously. The safeguarding officers, and/or Ian Douthwaite, the chair of STACY (St Andrew's Children and Youth group) must be informed immediately and they will determine the action to be taken which may necessitate that the volunteer's or paid employee's contact with children and young people ceases until the allegation is fully investigated. The Social Services will be immediately informed of the allegation.

### **Allegations against the minister**

If an allegation is made against the minister all the procedures outlined above still apply but, in addition, the link person will inform the Synod Clerk and the Synod Moderator who will determine the action to be taken which may involve the disciplinary procedures of the denomination.

**Reminder** Please complete, sign and return **St Andrew's Children & Youth Leaders Registration Form** as quickly as possible. The form and copies of these guidelines may be obtained from Elaine Weston. Failure to complete the form will put into question your appointment to work with children and young people at St Andrew's.

Responsibility for child protection procedures for the uniformed organisations meeting at St. Andrew's, is with Jane Murray for the Guide Association and Stephen Welburn for the Scout Association. Both uniformed Associations have their own guidelines which would additionally need to be followed. Any subsequent advice issued by a Uniformed Organisation cannot alter these guidelines unless the Elders Meeting of St Andrew's approves such amendments.

### Useful Telephone Numbers

Safeguarding Officer: Elaine Weston Deputy: Eileen Belverstone	07565807907 Safeguarding Group 0113 2664814 Safeguarding Group
Minister: Rev. Tim Lowe Church Secretary. Sheila Telfer Guides Jane Murray Scouts Stephen Welburn Ian Douthwaite Youth Elder & Chair Stacy Beverley Gilbert Children & Family Worker	(0113) 2607002 Safeguarding Group <a href="mailto:churchsecretary@standrews.cc">churchsecretary@standrews.cc</a> (0113) 2120279 (0113) 2664677 07954184521 01937 574843 07584 137698 Safeguarding Group
Leeds Social Services, Roundhay Road	(0113) 249 5787, ask for the duty officer
Emergency Number after hours (EDT)	(0113) 240 9536
Child Protection Co-ordinator	(0113) 2618069
Child Protection Unit, West Yorkshire Police	(0113) 243 5353 ext 5475 – state locality (e.g. Roundhay) or ring 101
NSPCC	(Tel:0808 800 5000: Text 88858)
Childline	0800 1111