

NETHERSEAL BAPTIST CHURCH

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

August 2017 - Version 2.0

Netherseal Baptist Church, Clifton Road, Netherseal,
Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE12 8BP.

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INTRODUCTION

Netherseal Baptist Church is committed to reaching out to children and young people and to teaching them the message of salvation as contained in the Bible, the Word of God. We also seek to promote the general welfare, health and full development of every child and young person, recognising the privilege and responsibility this brings to our church.

In today's society child abuse and child abuse accusations are occurring daily as a sad fact of life. Therefore, we believe it is important that we take every measure to protect the children/young people to whom we minister.

The Children's Act 1989 brings together child protection legislation. It is based on the principles of a partnership approach and family support. The foundational principle is that 'the welfare of the child is paramount'. The Protection of Children Act 1999 added to this by placing a duty of care on all childcare organisations to check prospective employees and volunteers for criminal records against a register of people prohibited from working with children. In light of current legislation, it is required of us to be doing everything we can to ensure the protection of the children/young people with whom we come into contact. In so doing, we will be giving parents confidence in our ministries, knowing that, if it is at all possible, their children/young people will be protected from harm whilst in our care.

All leaders in our children/youth programmes are required to read this policy and sign a declaration confirming they have done so. Child protection training will be carried out as necessary. Helpers will be given child protection guidance as appropriate by the leader.

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Throughout scripture, we are reminded about the importance of children and young people in the eyes of God. Christ himself reminded us that all must come to Him as 'little children'. He was always willing to make time for children and young people (*Mark 10 v 13-16*)

We are often instructed in scripture to remember to teach children (*Deut 6 v 7, Prov 22 v 6*) and to care for them as gifts from God (*Gen 33 v 5, Psalm 127 v 3-5*). We are also reminded of the seriousness of offending 'one of these little ones' (*Matt 18 v 1-6*). This only goes to highlight the love and concern that God has for children/young people.

With all this in mind, we as Christians, have a duty bestowed upon us by Christ to do all in our power to protect children/young people from harm.

DEFINITIONS

- CHILD:** any person under the age of 18 years
- ADULT:** any person aged 18 years or over
- LEADER:** any person with overall responsibility for the running of an event/activity
- HELPER:** any person who assists with an event/activity on a one-off or occasional basis
- EVENT:** A form of ministry of the church. It may be a regular event or an annual one. E.g. Explorers, Rock Solid, Sunday School or Holiday Bible Club.
- ACTIVITY:** this takes place within an event, e.g. crafts, sports, outdoor activities.
- CONCERN:** a leader/helper has a concern (anxiety, worry, unease) over the welfare of a child
- COMPLAINT:** a child makes a complaint/allegation (grievance, criticism, accusation) to a leader or helper.
This may be in relation to another leader/helper or may be unrelated to Netherseal Baptist Church.
- DESIGNATED PERSONS:** A designated person (DP) is the individual to whom all concerns and disclosures should be brought. The DPs are the only people, apart from the one filing the report, who should be made aware of any concerns or disclosures. It is not necessary for the DP to hear any disclosures first hand. This eliminates the need for a child to recount a traumatic experience more than once.
DP's must be members of Netherseal Baptist Church as they act on behalf of the church.
The current designated persons are:
- Pastor / Elder
- Child Safeguarding Coordinator
See the poster within the church for the current designated persons.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Netherseal Baptist Church will endeavour to follow the example set by Christ by carefully and diligently following established procedures and maintaining good practice in order to protect children/young people from harm. We will take every appropriate step to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children/young people with whom we work without discrimination.

Netherseal Baptist Church leaders and helpers accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop an awareness of the issues that cause children/young people harm.

We will endeavour to safeguard the children/young people by:

- Adopting child protection procedures through a code of behaviour for leaders and helpers
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children/young people, parents, carers, leaders and helpers
- Sharing concerns with agencies, who need to know and involving parents, carers and children appropriately
- Following carefully the procedures for selection of leaders
- Providing training and support for leaders and guidance for helpers

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at least annually or if a major development/incident takes place that warrants it.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

a) General Principles

- All children/young people should be valued and respected as individuals
- Children/Young people should be given appropriate time to express their opinions. Not necessarily during an event or activity
- Leaders and helpers should seek to encourage children/young people e.g. praise for good behaviour and assistance with a difficult task
- Leaders should be available to listen to the children/young people when they need to talk

b) Guidelines for the Protection of Children/Young People, Leaders and Helpers

It doesn't make sense.....

- To spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child/young person away from others
- Or to take a child/young person on a car journey alone. If a child needs to be dropped off or picked up, it should be with two helpers/leaders ideally. A male helper/leader should never take a child in a car alone

We should NEVER.....

- Engage in sexually provocative games, including horseplay, allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any sort
- Make unnecessary physical contact with children/young people
- Make sexually suggestive comments to, or about a child/young person – even in fun
- Let allegations a child/young person makes go without being challenged or recorded
- Do things of a personal nature for children/young people that they can do for themselves
- Physical punishment must never be used as a form of discipline

c) Contact with a Child/Young Person

- Be mindful of how and where you touch a child
- There may be contact during sports and games, but remember your size and strength and restrict your involvement accordingly
- Physical contact of a comforting and reassuring nature is a valid way of expressing your concern and care. However, it is only appropriate *if it is in meeting with the need of the child/young person*

- Physical contact should only take place with the consent of the child and in the presence of others, except:
 - Reasonable physical restraint, which should only be used if a child/young person is endangering themselves or others – and only as a last resort
 - Physical contact may be permitted in the absence of others e.g. in a medical emergency or other dangerous situation
 - Use of technology/social media

d) Meeting with individual Children/Young People

- leaders are positively encouraged to develop wholesome relationships with children/young people and their families
- Meeting with individual children/young people should take place openly. In counselling situations where privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other helpers/leaders informed of the meeting. Ensure there is someone else on the premises for the duration of the counselling or guidance session
- Helpers/leaders should not have children/young people in their homes without the knowledge and consent of their parents
- Sunday School classes should have a minimum of 2 children/young people. Where there is only one child/young person they should join another class and not be taught on an individual basis

e) Personal Relationships

- leaders involved in a relationship with another leader or helper should ensure that their relationships do not affect their role within the ministry or any event/activity
- All helpers and leaders are to be aware that they should act as a good example to those in their care
- A leader or helper is not prohibited from forming a personal relationship with a young person aged 16 years or over but it should never come about through undue influence of the leader or helper. In addition the consent of the young person's parent or carer should be sought and discussion with the leader of the event to which they are party, to determine if it will affect the way that leader or helper can continue to be involved in the event or activity

f) Discipline

- Good behaviour should be rewarded positively and verbally encouraged
- All children/young people should be treated with respect and dignity befitting their age

- Children/young people should not be scapegoated, ridiculed or rejected. Children/young people who continually break the rules, disrupt activities and/or put themselves or others at risk may be asked to leave and returned to their parents/carers
- Be consistent and keep your word
- Don't ask children/young people to do something that you would not be willing to do yourself

g) Supervision

- Leaders must be satisfied that those supervising the group parties are fully competent to do so
- When only two adults are present, *as far as possible* they should be one male and female
- Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision
- Dangerous behaviour by children/young people should not be allowed
- Ratios of adults to children vary with age - seek local authority or Department for Education guidance. Leaders should know at all times where children are within the group and what they are doing

h) Supervision on journeys/outings

- Parents should be given information about a trip, including the activities in which the children/young people will be engaged
- Leaders are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children/young people for the whole time they are away from their parents, save that this responsibility ceases at the end of certain events e.g. some children are permitted by their parents to make their own way home
- Where special activities are undertaken e.g. paintballing, horse riding, go-karting the leader should ensure that the activity is run by appropriately qualified and/or experienced people and that valid insurance is in place, either through the church or the activity organisation
- Any vehicles in which children/young people are transported must be insured and have a valid MOT certificate. All drivers shall have full valid licences appropriate to the vehicle. Children/young people must wear seatbelts and if required have an appropriate booster seat
- At swimming activities there should be at least one male and one female leader throughout the activity for mixed groups

i) Practical matters

It is good practice to...

- Ensure a consent form detailing any medical issues and emergency contact numbers is obtained for every child when they first attend the event and thereafter annually, at the start of a new session e.g. September
- Ensure that no child/young person is allowed to leave an event unless they have express written permission from their parent/carer or they have been collected
- Ensure that all leaders are notified if a child has a particular medical, physical or learning difficulties that could affect their safety and welfare at an event and relevant emergency treatment e.g. use of an *epipen* for a child with allergies or an inhaler for asthma
- Keep an accident book. Any incidents involving injury or risk of injury should be noted and relevant information passed on to the parents/carers
- Ensure risk assessments have been done for all regular events and activities. Leaders should be familiar with these
- It is the leader's responsibility to keep these records secure.

SELECTION OF LEADERS AND HELPERS

There are practical and spiritual parts to the selection of leaders.

LEADERS who, being church members, will be appointed by the elder(s) of the church. They will have responsibility in teaching the Bible to children/young people. They will also have organisational and practical ability suitable to the events for which they are responsible. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance will be obtained.

HELPERS include any other person not a LEADER who assists with events and activities involving children/young people. They should be at least 16 years of age and be people known to the leader. They will have limited involvement with the children and not be left alone with a child. They should be sympathetic to the work and ministry of the church. They will volunteer or be asked to help on an ad hoc basis.

SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Once recruited leaders will be well informed, trained, supervised where necessary and supported and will receive a copy of this policy.

Training will be provided by the elder and one or other of the leaders. Further training will be undertaken when necessary.

The leader is responsible for overseeing the work carried out in relation to the event. They should designate tasks according to capability. They are to be a source of encouragement to helpers acknowledging good work when it is done and ensuring the welfare of the children/ young people is maintained.

Helpers should feel free to approach the leader in order to share anxieties or concerns especially about the work in which they are involved.

SHARING INFORMATION

Children should be given information that makes life better and safer for them:

- They should be informed of the rules and regulations of the event that they are attending, and our expectations of them in terms of their behaviour.
- They should be informed of the fire safety procedures at the venue which the event is held
- They should be informed of the facilities e.g. toilets
- They should be informed about how and with whom they can share their complaints or concerns.

Parents are responsible for their children's welfare and so they need to be aware that we are a credible organisation. They should be informed:

- About our events and safety matters
- At the commencement of their child's involvement with the church, they should be given a registration form to record relevant details and emergency contacts, give informed consent to activities and to notify us of any medical, physical or learning difficulties that their child has. They should inform us of any changes in the child's condition. The form will be reissued at the start of a new session.
- They should be made aware of this policy
- Of whom they should contact if they have any concerns or complaints.

If appropriate, other bodies, e.g. church groups attending/assisting in a joint venture will be provided with a copy of this policy / child protection procedures.

CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

For definitions of "concerns", "complaints" and "Designated Persons" (DPs) see Section 5: Definitions.

CHECKING CONCERNS – see appendix 1

If a leader or helper has concerns, they should follow the procedure set out in Appendix 1. If the leader may be the source of the concern, the leader or helper should speak to a DP instead.

The leader may do any of the following:

- Talk to other leaders or helpers. They may have an insight into the situation which would alleviate the concern or they may have noticed something which reinforces the concern.
- Talk to the child. Not leading questions but for example, if the child is upset you can ask “What’s wrong?” and give the child an opportunity to open up.
- Talk to parents. It is possible, for example, “I noticed she wasn’t herself tonight. Is she alright?” The parent may put your mind at ease. The child’s hamster may have died! The parent’s response will guide you what to do next.

Do not investigate. You are to report to the leader.

If the leader believes that the concern requires further action he should:

- Fill in a Reporting Concerns of Abuse form (see appendix 3) with the person having the concern. Try to include detail and document your reasons for concern e.g. inappropriate sexual conversation for the age of the child, bruising, etc.
- Report the concern to a DP.
- Quietly monitor the situation and report and record any developments to the DP
- Not discuss the concerns with other helpers or leaders, unless they could shed some light on the matter. Be discreet!
- The DP will then securely file away the concern or contact South Derbyshire Social Services with the concern

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS/ALLEGATIONS

If a child approaches a leader or helper and begins to make an allegation that person should:

- NEVER promise to keep a secret. All allegations must be reported and recorded.
- Stay calm – the child looks for support.
- Listen to the child rather than question him/her directly. Do not ask leading questions.
- Offer the child reassurance without making promises.
- Believe what the child is saying is serious. But never say to the child “I believe what you are saying”.
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling events.
- Not overreact.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Do not investigate or interrogate. Just report it.

PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING COMPLAINTS/ALLEGATIONS

– see *appendix 2*

- Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after it has taken place. Even if you don't understand it all. Use the form at appendix 3.
- Record any discussion or actions taken within 24 hours.
- Report the complaint or allegation to the leader or one of the DP's. That is the end of the helper's job.
- Remember "need to know". Concerns and disclosures need to remain as confidential as possible.

On receiving a report the DP will consider the need for immediate action. Where it is deemed that there are serious grounds for concern about the individual, Social Services must be informed immediately. The individual under suspicion should be notified of the cause for concern. However the timing of that notification and any action regarding suspicion should be decided in discussion with Social Services and the police. The leader should report it to a DP.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Procedure for dealing with concerns

Appendix 2 – Procedure for dealing with complaints and allegations

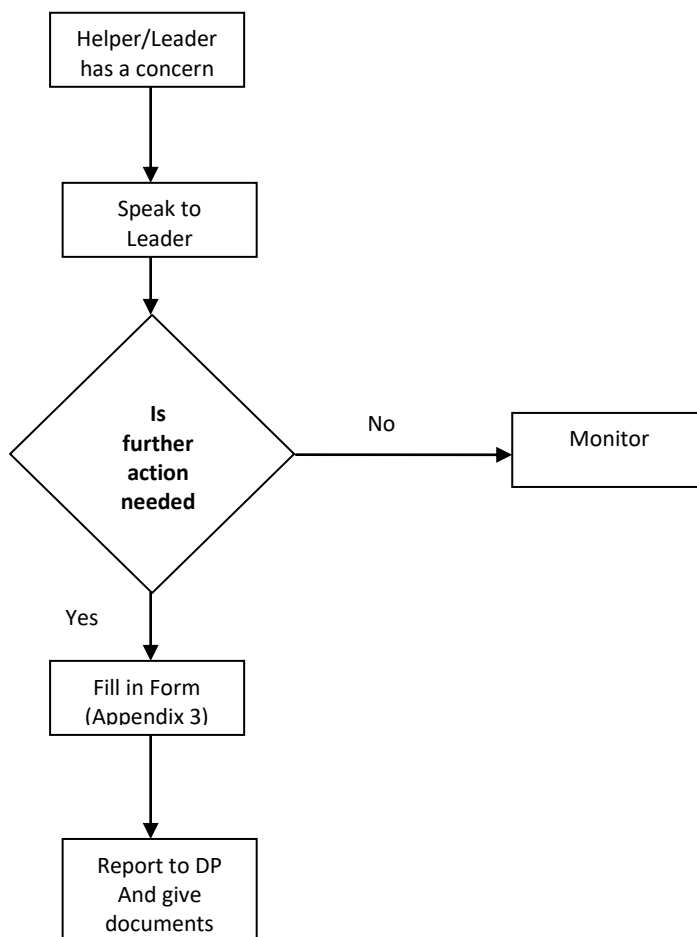
Appendix 3 – Record of concerns, complaints and allegations of abuse

Appendix 4 – Guidance on child protection

Appendix 5 – Declaration Form

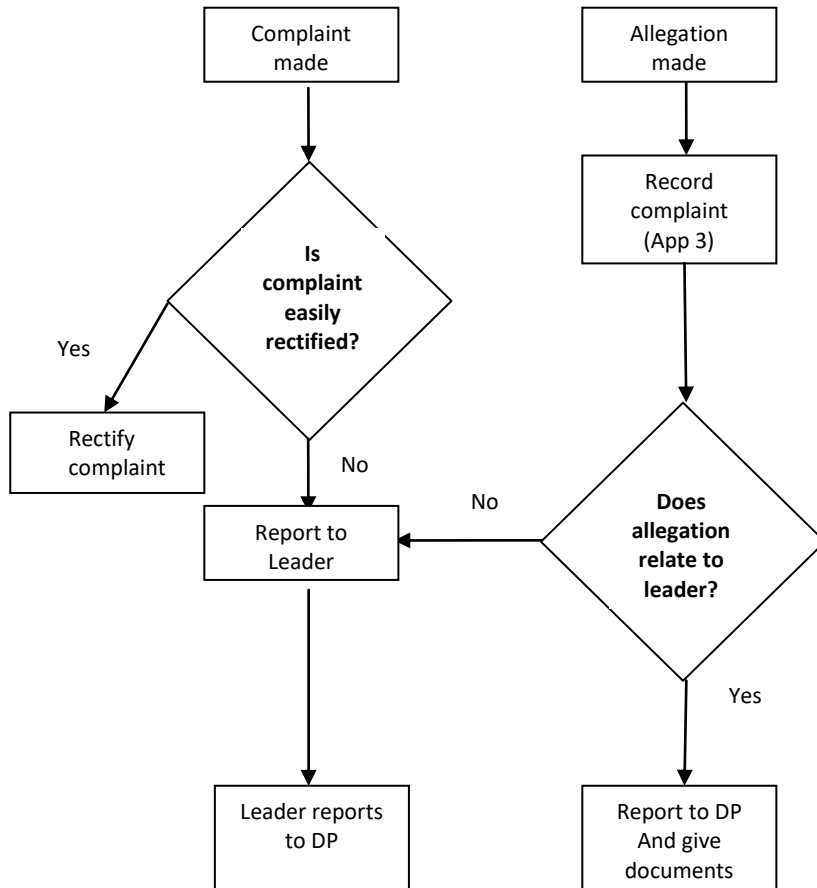
APPENDIX 1

Procedure for dealing with concerns



APPENDIX 2

Procedure for dealing with complaints and allegations



APPENDIX 3

Record of Concern or Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

Personal Details of Child

Name of Child Age

Address of Child.....

.....

Any Special factors (e.g. disability; CP register.....

.....

.....

Name of Parent(s).....

Home Address.....

.....

Tel. No. (home).....(work).....

Person Making the Report

Name of Leader/Helper.....

I am reporting my own concerns/I am passing on someone else's concerns*
(*delete as appropriate)

Please record details of specific incidents or observations that have prompted your concern (include any physical, behavioural or indirect signs with dates, times etc.) Feel free to attach extra sheets if necessary:

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Has the child received any medical attention? If so, give details:

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Has the child been spoken to? If so, by whom and what was said?

(Be as accurate and comprehensive as possible):

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.....

Have person(s) with parental responsibility been contacted? Yes/No

Give details on information given:

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.....

If an allegation has been made, against whom has this allegation been made?

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Give details of the allegation made:

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.....

Who else has been consulted? Record who, when and where and what was said:

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.....
.....

Signed.....Date.....

APPENDIX 4

Guidance on Child Protection

Our responsibility as Christians is to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to our care.

We should therefore:

- Listen to, relate effectively and value them whilst ensuring their protection within our activities.
- Encourage and support parents and carers.
- Ensure that all leaders and helpers are supported and trained appropriately.
- Have systems in place for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Ensure leaders and helpers are aware of and act according to good practice.

Photographs:

- Leaders and helpers should not take photographs of individual children, unless parental permission has been obtained. It is preferable to take photographs of children in groups.
- Avoid taking photographs in swimwear.
- Take photographs in place where other adults/leaders/helpers can see you.
- Photographs should not be taken on a personal device (and any existing ones should be deleted)

Physical Contact

- Be careful of physical contact, especially in the more boisterous games.
- Physical contact should only ever be initiated by the child and only used when appropriate, e.g. arm around a shoulder when a child is hurt.
- Physical punishment must NEVER be used.

Psychological Harm

- All children and young people should be treated with respect and dignity as befitting their age.
- Children and young people should not be scapegoated, ridiculed or rejected, subject to Discipline below.

Discipline

- Good behaviour should be rewarded positively and verbally encouraged.
- Children, who continually break the rules, disrupt activities and/or put themselves and other at risk may be asked to leave and returned to their parents/guardians.
- Don't ask the children to do something that you wouldn't be willing to do yourself.

Accidents and Medical Conditions

- Accidents must be recorded in the accidents book and reported to the leader.
- The First Aider should be informed.
- Except for the First Aider, leaders and helpers should avoid administering first aid unless absolutely necessary or if the leader or helper has a current first aid card.
- Parents should be contacted if any medical treatment is required.
- The leader should check for any medical conditions and the consent form should be taken to the doctor's surgery or hospital at which the child is to be treated.
- All leaders and helpers should be informed of any potentially serious medical conditions e.g. allergies.

APPENDIX 5

Declaration Form

I have read and understood the document *Child Protection Policy* dated August 2017 and agree to work within Netherseal Baptist Church in accordance with its contents. I have undergone training in accordance with this policy.

Name.....

Role within Netherseal Baptist Church.....

.....

Signature.....

Date.....