

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 safeguarding, 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 Counties HRF DBS certificate, and/or are subscribed to the DBS Update Service, whereby regular reviews can be undertaken.
- 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.
- For swimming activities, a ratio of 1 worker for every 3 weak/non-swimmers will be required.

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 and signs of Child Abuse

- ◇ **Physical Abuse** [Identifying Child Physical Abuse & How to Prevent It | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Emotional Abuse** [What Is Emotional Abuse & Things You Should Know | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Sexual Abuse** [Sexual abuse | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Neglect** [Neglect is also Child Abuse: Know All About It | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Bullying and cyberbullying** [Helping Children Deal with Bullying & Cyberbullying | NSPCC](#)

- ◇ **Child sexual exploitation** [Child Sexual Exploitation & How to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Child Trafficking** [What You Need to Know About Child Trafficking | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Criminal exploitation & gangs** [Criminal exploitation and gangs | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Domestic abuse** [How to Protect Children From Domestic Abuse | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Female genital mutilation** [Female Genital Mutilation - Prevent & Protect | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Grooming** [What Parents Need to Know About Sexual Grooming | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Non-recent abuse** [Non-recent abuse | NSPCC](#)
- ◇ **Online abuse** [Online abuse | NSPCC](#)

3.4 Guidelines for responding to a disclosure or concern

When a child wants to make a disclosure, 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 Safeguarding Lead/ 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 make a disclosure, 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 Safeguarding 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. These must be given to the Safeguarding Lead or co-ordinator as soon as possible.
- You **MUST NOT** discuss any allegations or concerns with anyone other than the Safeguarding Co-ordinators.

Safeguarding Leads and Co-ordinators:

Onsite:

Lead: Rob Smith – 07825 907437

Co-ordinators:	Gordon Curley	07889 798636
	Naomi Bundy	07734 651743

Offsite:

Bryan Zillwood – 07940475314 / 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 Safeguarding Lead/Co-ordinator

In the event of allegations or suspicions of abuse, the role of the Safeguarding Lead/ Co-ordinators will be to:

- **(a).** Seek and follow advice from “Thirty One Eight” (Formerly CCPAS).
 - Helpline: 0303 003 11 11 Website: <https://thirtyoneeight.org/>
 - Thirty One Eight 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

Further guidelines:

- Safeguarding Lead/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 Safeguarding Lead/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.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead/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 Safeguarding Lead/ 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 carry out a risk assessment, including meeting with the individual and discussing 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).

02/10/2024

Review date: September/October 2025 and yearly thereafter.