

Grace Community Church
Torpoint Community Church
Bodmin Community Church

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Church Details:

Name of church: Grace Community Church, Torpoint Community Church, Bodmin Community Church (hereafter 'the church')

Address: Oaktrees, Morval, Looe, Cornwall

Church Statement:

The church has a thriving children's and young people's ministry. The church leadership (hereafter 'the CL') takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care.

The church has 2 appointed Child Protection Officers who are responsible for carrying out the policy and providing training. All children's and youth workers are made aware of their identity. A named Elder has specific responsibility for this area and will liaise with and support Child Protection Officers.

Church Mission:

As part of the mission, the CL is committed to:

- Listening to, relating effectively and valuing children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within church activities.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Ensuring that children's/youth workers are given support and training.
- Having a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Maintaining links with the statutory child care authorities.

Areas Of Policy:

The CL recognises that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly the CL has adopted this policy (hereafter 'the policy'). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Responding to allegations of abuse, including those made against leaders or members of the church.
- Appointing children's/youth workers.
- Supervision of activities and practice issues.

Definitions Of Abuse:

The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria for registration by the Department of Health, "Working together under the Children Act 1989" are as follows:

Physical Injury:

Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy.

Sexual Abuse:

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

Neglect:

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Emotional Abuse:

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

The following additional category has been proposed by the Department of Health in a consultation paper issued in February 1998.

Organised Abuse

Organised abuse is sexual abuse where there is more than a single abuser and the adults concerned appear to act in concert to abuse children and/or where an adult uses an institutional framework of position of authority to recruit children for sexual abuse.

What To Do If You Suspect That Abuse May Have Occurred:

1. You must report concerns as soon as possible to Child Protection Officers (see attachment for details) who are nominated by the CL to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. He or she may also be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company.
2. If the suspicions in any way involve one of the Child Protection Officers then the report should be made to the other Child Protection Officer. If the suspicions in any way implicate both Child Protection Officers then report should be made in the first instance to the Elder in charge of Child Protection or the PCCA Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, B487UQ. Alternatively contact the local Social Services.
3. Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.
4. It is, of course, the right of any individual citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although we hope that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, you feel that the Child Protection Officers has not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is open to you to contact the relevant agencies direct. We hope by making this statement that we demonstrate the commitment of the church to effective child protection.

Allegations Of Physical Injury Or Neglect:

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Child Protection Officer will:

1. Contact Social Services (or CCPAS) for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where there are concerns about the child's safety. The parents should not be informed by the church in these circumstances.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Child Protection Officer will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer and suggest medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor (or health visitor) will then initiate further action, if necessary.

4. If appropriate the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from Social Services.
5. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate the child Protection Officer will offer to go with them. If they still fail to act, the Child Protection Office should, in cases of real concern, contact Social Services for advice.
6. Where the Child Protection Officer is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then advice from the CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

Allegations Of Sexual Abuse:

In the event of allegations of suspicions of sexual abuse, the child protection officer will:

1. Contact the Social Services duty social worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly. The Child Protection Officer will **NOT** speak to the parent (or anyone else).
2. If, for any reason, the Child Protection Officer is unsure whether or to follow the above, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
3. Under no circumstances will the Child Protection Officer attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Child Protection Officer is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Social Services, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Child Protection Officers, the absence of the officers should not delay referral to Social Services.
5. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Child Protection Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral to Social Services, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to Social Services, and should do so without hesitation.
6. The CL will support the Child Protection Officers in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

How To Respond To Abuse:

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may help:

General Points:

- Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely it may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – **don't promise confidentiality.**
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful Things You May Say or Show:

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me.
- It's not your fault.

- I will help you.

Don't Say:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises.
- Never make statements such as 'I am shocked, don't tell anyone else'.

Concluding:

- Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring them to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Contact the person in your church responsible for co-ordination child protection concerns or contact an agency such as CCPAS for advice or go directly to Social Services/Police/NSPCC.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

What To Do Once A Child Has Talked To You About Abuse:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you), writing down exactly what the child said and when s/he said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (eg a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite periods.
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to the Child Protection Officer. If Child Protection Officers are implicated report to CCPAS.
- You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in the above point.
- Once a child has talked about abuse the worker/child protection officer should consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and/or Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

Recruitment of Volunteers Procedure:

The following procedure is based on the CCPAS's recruiting workers safely advice. It has been necessary to formalise this process a little but has been designed to be as easy to carry out as possible, whilst still protecting the children, the church and the volunteer.

It is to be stated that no-one has an automatic right to work with children and young people. Operating a safe recruitment policy sends a powerful message to parents, children, visitors, as well as those intent on harm, that safeguarding children and young people is taken seriously in the organisation.

Before the church seeks to fill a position, paid or voluntary, it is important to have decided on the following:

- Their role and responsibilities
- Skills and qualities needed

- Who will be involved in the process i.e. responsible for ensuring volunteering procedure carried out correctly and in full, and following up on how things are going on a regular basis.

The first thing for a potential volunteer thinking of joining a child related area of the church to do, is to fill in an information form which provides us with their personal details, their skills and qualities and their motivation for volunteering (this form is included in the policy) There is also a requirement for them to read the FIEC's statement of Beliefs and sign to say they understand, believe and agree to them.

This will be followed by a brief informal chat with one of the leaders from the chosen area and one officer of the church (a guideline framework of this chat is included in this policy). If, after the chat, both parties wish to continue then the church will request references from the given referees (reference form included in this policy), the Child Protection officers will give out the CRB form and a master copy of the Child Protection Policy. The Child Protection Policy will need to be read and returned to the CP officers within a month and a declaration signed that it has been read and accepted. They will need to agree to attend the next available CP training session

The volunteer will not be able to start in their role until all parts of this process are carried out and their CRB check is complete. There should then follow a period of informal monitoring and support. If any leaders feel at any time concerns about the volunteer they need to be prepared to say something and stop the person from continuing. At all times the safety and wellbeing of the children is paramount.

A decision as to whether or not to allow a volunteer to work in the church should be based on all the information gathered. It should not be based on external factors such as the immediate availability of the applicant, or the urgency of need. If there are legitimate concerns about the applicant, it is best not to appoint. This minimises the risk of placing children and young people at risk of significant harm,

Every parent or carer has the right to expect the same standards of recruitment and professionalism irrespective of whether an individual is paid or works voluntarily. A potential volunteer's willingness to complete the above procedure shows they are valued both as a person and for the role for which they are volunteering. Generally people will not be put off by paperwork where its importance is shown.

Criminal Records Checks:

All workers over 16 years old are required to undertake a CRB check every 3 years. The church will not accept CRB checks undertaken by other agencies.

Child Protection Training:

Child protection training sessions will be held once or twice a year by the child protection officers. These training sessions are compulsory for everyone over the age of 16 working with children and youth in the church. Workers should attend the first available session following their appointment and should attend a training session every 2 years thereafter. **Please note that child protection training is compulsory for everyone working with children and young people within our church.**

Arrangements For Supervision Of Group/Children's Activities:

- Risk assessments should be completed and regularly reviewed and updated by those leading activities involving anyone under 18.
- Consent forms signed by parent/guardian should be obtained for extracurricular activities involving children and young people.

- Parental consent should be sought before taking any pictures or video of children particularly during Grace Family Bible Week due to many visiting children.

Trips & Sleepovers:

This section refers to all trips (including day trips) and sleepovers organised by the church for a group of children or young people.

- All adults should be CRB checked in advance and should be familiar with the Child Protection Policy.
- Leader should ensure venue and trips are covered by the Church's insurance policy.
- Make sure cars/drivers used for trips are covered by the Church's insurance policy.
- For adventure trips make sure there is adequate insurance cover and qualified instructors in charge of activities.
- For young people over 11 years old there should be maximum 10 children/young people per adult. This is an absolute maximum and consideration should be made as to whether the ratio of children per adult should be smaller.
- Children under 11 should not be allowed on Youth trips and sleepovers unless it is unavoidable. Adults in charge of children under 11 cannot be counted as responsible adults for the purpose of child/adult ratios. Maximum 2 children between 5 and 10 per adult and 1 child under 5 per adult. This applies to all Youth trips and sleepovers.
- Ensure all children/young people present know the rules in advance or at the start of the trip/sleepover.
- For trips please assign groups of children/young people to a specific adult who is in charge of that group for the duration of the trip. This applies to day trips as well as longer trips.
- Headcounts on trips should be carried out by group leaders regularly.
- Make sure that all the adults and children/young people on trips know what to do if a child/young person gets lost.
- Written permission from parents/carers should be sought before a child/young person is allowed on a trip or sleepover.
- Make sure at least one adult in the group has adequate First Aid training.
- Consider whether there should be an adult assigned to stay awake during the night. Take extra care of night time supervision of children/young people particularly if using camp sites or other venues where there is access to the general public.
- Make sure risk assessments are carried out for each activity planned.

Grace Family Bible Week:

- All volunteers over 16 years old working in the Children's and Youth Ministries will be CRB checked by the church and are required to undertake child protection training prior to Bible Week.
- Children and youth will be pre-registered and all children (up to and including Key Stage 2) will be signed in and out by parent/guardian every day. Youth will sign themselves in and out.
- Risk assessments will be carried out each year for all activities.
- All organised activities outside normal morning sessions should be supervised by at least 2 CRB checked adults who will remain responsible until the activity is finished and the children/young people have left the activity site.
- Ensure children/young people know the rules and who is in charge.
- Be considerate to campers.

Discipline:

There is a Discipline Policy (see below) which is made available to all children's and youth workers. It is the responsibility of youth and Sunday school leaders to ensure all their workers are aware of this policy and that it is followed.

Guidelines For Discipline:

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character, prepares for life and is an expression of God's love for an individual. (Hebrews 12:5-12 & Proverbs 22:6)

- Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding for the children in your care.
- Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare a child with another, but encourage and affirm them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.
- Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect children to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
- Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and resist allowing demanding children to take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulations.
- If children are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly.
- **NEVER** smack or hit a child and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary.
- Discipline out of love, NEVER in anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely).
- Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if not kept.
- Every child is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore, each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Some children have a tendency to be disruptive in a group. Give them a chance, warn them and only separate if they are disruptive as a last resort.

- Have a disruptive child sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
- Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take a disruptive child to one side and engage with them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging their strengths.
- Remedial action can be taken against a constantly disruptive child. They can be warned that you may speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour, they may be taken back to their parents/carers in the church service, or after consultation with a church leader and advising parents/carers, be banned from attending the group for a period of time.
- If a child's behaviour continues to be disruptive despite measures taken above, seek advice and guidance from a leader.
- Pray with other workers before the session and take time to debrief before you leave.

This policy is based on a model policy supplied by the CCPAS and was reviewed April 2008.

Child Protection Officers:

Anniken Allis, Telephone 01579 340558,
E-mail ahallis@hotmail.co.uk

Jo Atack, Telephone 01579 345133
E-mail jo@liskeard2002.fsnet.co.uk

Elder in Charge of Child Protection:

Christopher Delbridge, Telephone 01579 342976
E-mail del.torr@btconnect.com

Other useful details:

PCCA Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), PO Box 133, Swanley,
Kent, B487UQ

GRACE FAMILY OF CHURCHES

Statement of Faith

1. God. There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in His holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to His sovereign will for His own glory.

2. The Bible. God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible, as originally given is in its entirety the word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practise.

3. The Human Race. All men and women, being created in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please Him.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross He died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their. Sin, redeeming them by His blood. He rose from the dead, and in His resurrection body ascended into heaven where He is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5. Salvation. Is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in His love forgives sinners whom He calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in

Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6. The Holy Spirit. Has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply His work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7. The Church. The universal church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the word, the administering of baptism and the Lord's supper, for pastoral care and discipline, and for evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the Gospel.

8. Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into His church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. The Future. The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified for ever.

Fellowship of Independent Churches



Referee Form for Volunteers at Grace Family of Churches

Name and Address of Volunteer

The above named person has volunteered to work with children in _____ Church and has given your name as one of their referees. Please fill in this form to the best of your knowledge and return it in the enclosed SAE. Thank you for your time.

Name of Referee

In what capacity have you known this person and for how long?

In what ways would you say this person is suited to this nature of work?

(cont. overleaf if necessary)

Is there any other information you feel is relevant? E.g. experience, character. Would you be happy for a follow up telephone conversation if necessary?

Are you aware of anything that might give rise to concern with regards this person working with children?

Signed _____ date _____



Guidelines for informal chat with potential volunteer (10-15mins)

- Why they want to help (motivations)
- What experience do they have
- Their Christian views and attitudes in general e.g. FIEC statement of belief
- Explain about importance of safeguarding children, child protection training, reading and understanding the Child Protection Policy and following of Risk Assessments
- Explain their potential role and responsibilities and expectations

This should be carried out by one church official (Elder, pastor, deacon, member of church leadership team) and one leader from the relevant area enquired about

If all parties happy to proceed then let Child Protection officers know so that CRB check can begin; and a copy of CP Policy can be given to volunteer to read and then hand back with signed form declaring their understanding and acceptance.

