

Safeguarding Policy

Name of group or organisation	
Name of overall Leader (eg: chairperson)	
Contact Address	
Contact Telephone	
Contact Email	

Our commitment to safeguarding

We recognise our responsibility to provide a safe environment for all people. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Specifically:

- We believe that they have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We believe that they should be empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- We recognise that it is our responsibility to help prevent the neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse of such people and to report any abuse that is discovered or suspected.

We are committed to:

- Recognising our responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures which are designed to prevent or highlight abuse.
- Ensuring that every adult working with children, young people or vulnerable adults has the relevant checks.
- Ensuring workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Endeavouring to keep up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory child and adult care authorities where needed.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator in their work, and any action they may need to take in order to protect individuals.
- Supporting parents and families.
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We recognise that:

- Children's Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

Procedures - what to do if...

These guidelines are only basic information and do not cover all situations. **If anything worries you - seek advice.**

You must ALWAYS pass the information on to your group's Safeguarding Coordinator.
You must **NEVER** carry out your own investigation.

What to do if a child or young person discloses to you abuse by someone else

- Allow the young person to speak without interruption, listen and do not ask leading questions. If you do, it could mean any court case might be "thrown out" on the technicality that you questioned the child / youth.
- It is important to take seriously what the young person says, to reassure them that they are RIGHT to tell you, and are NOT to blame for what has happened. Do not pass judgement on what the young person has told you. Remember that when young people are abused it is often by someone they trust and love.
- Do ask whether the young person has told anyone else - it could be that they have already reported this and are now finding it easier to tell others.
- Advise the young person that you will try and support them but that you must pass the information on, and that someone trained in listening to young people who have been abused will need to see them to hear more about what happened.
- Never promise to keep a secret. You need to keep the young person's situation confidential (which is not the same as keeping it secret), but other people will have to be informed on a "need to know" basis.
- Inform the group's nominated Safeguarding Officer.
- Record as many details as you can remember of what the young person said to you. Do this as soon as possible, certainly within 24 hours. Date and sign any notes you have made and keep a copy.
- **Do not** take any other action yourself. **Do not** contact those with parental authority for the young person (this will be done by the Child Services or Police) and **do not** contact the person alleged to have abused them, if the allegations are true then contacting them gives them a chance to try to cover their tracks, or to pressurize the child into changing their story.

What to do if you receive an allegation or have suspicions about someone else

- Make a written note of any facts which support this.
- If appropriate, and only on a need to know basis, agree with other children/youth workers what action, if any, to be taken, and record. Actions may be to contact Social Services or it may be agreed only to record the facts and keep an eye on the situation.

What to do if you suspect a child or young person is being abused physically, sexually, emotionally or by neglect.

Most people will know if something alarms them. For example:-

- Bruising - raises concerns if it is of an unusual kind, in an unusual place, or particularly bad, (and conversation with the young person leads to concern that it was not accidental.)

If something about the young person is worrying, for instance:-

- Sudden or persistent changes in behaviour (where there is no obvious reason such as resenting parents' divorce, death in the family etc).

ACTION

- Record any FACTS which support your suspicions.
- If appropriate, and only on a need to know basis, agree with other workers involved what action, if any, is to be taken, and keep a record of this.

What to do if you are concerned that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of abuse or know of a worrying situation: Do not ignore it!

Phone any of the agencies listed below. Adults Social Care - via Plymouth City Council. They may need to follow up the information you give and contact other agencies or services.

Reporting abuse

1. If you receive allegations or have suspicions of abuse you should report concerns as soon as possible to the group's Safeguarding Coordinator. The Safeguarding Coordinator should then contact Social Services or the Police.
2. In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Coordinator, then you should contact Social Services or the Police.

Statutory agencies and contacts are:-

Plymouth Adult Social Care	(via Plymouth City Council)	01752 668 000
Plymouth Child Services	(via Plymouth City Council)	01752 668 000
	Out of hours emergency number:	01752 346 984
Police Child Protection Team	(via main Police number)	101
NSPCC		0808 800 5000

YOU MUST REFER IN ALL CASES: YOU MUST NOT INVESTIGATE

Safeguarding Coordinator

Name of the group's appointed Safeguarding Coordinator

Telephone

The Safeguarding Coordinator is nominated by the Group to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

Agreement

On behalf of the Group/Organisation I confirm that we have appointed the above named Safeguarding Officer and that we agree to adhere to this Safeguarding Policy whilst operating within Plymstock United Church.

Signed

Name

Date