

# **Immanuel Parish Church Highters Heath, Birmingham**

## **Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**2009**



# Child Protection ~ Policy

## Introduction

The members of Immanuel Parish Church believe that working with children and young people is one of the most important tasks of the church. Children and young people are a crucial part of the life and health of any church community. They need to feel valued through participation in ways which reflect and which model the perfect relationship of the Trinity. Here relationships are based on mutual, right relations and exchange between partners. In this shared life, children and young people need to be able to build relationships of trust, to have space to be listened to, and to find a meaningful way to bring Christian faith and their experience together as part of the preparation for adulthood, family life and their role in future life, where their distinctive approach is valued.

The society we have is one which, on the whole, is created and shaped by adults. As a Church, we have to be prepared to play our part and share responsibility for the environment in which children and young people grow up and develop. Protection is about an adult responsibility towards young people, it is also enshrined in law. For Christian people it is greater than law, it is witness to Christ and to the value of each individual in the community.

## Accordingly we recognise:

**1. Our responsibility** to create a safe environment in which children and young people are safeguarded and nurtured physically and emotionally as well as spiritually, and where they feel confident to seek help and support and enabled to develop a sense of responsibility. We accept the principle enshrined in the Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount. [The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under eighteen for most purposes].

**2. The need to require** that all those working or who seek to work with children will be properly recruited, following Diocesan and Home Office [*Safe from Harm*] guidelines.

**3. The need to** ensure that policy and procedures are readily available, and that there are regular opportunities for discussion and awareness - raising.

**4. Our responsibility** to ensure awareness and implementation of any changes in legislation which affect Immanuel Parish Church's work with young people.

**5. We require** the highest professional standards to be maintained in all pastoral, counselling, education, worship and recreational situations. The PCC will therefore support ongoing training for all those who undertake work with children and young people on behalf of Immanuel Church.

**6. Our responsibility** to take all allegations of abuse seriously and to take appropriate action with regard to allegations reported. Our responsibility is to collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with child abuse, and not to conduct investigations on our own.

**7. The need to** minister to the needs of the abuser and their family as well as the abused. While such abuse disqualifies an abuser from working with children on behalf of Immanuel Church it should not preclude them from the support and fellowship afforded to others in the congregation.

**8. The need to** support adult survivors and abused children.

**9. Our responsibility** to inform all members of Immanuel Church about our Child Protection Policy and Procedures, so that they understand and can share responsibility for the care and protection of children and young people. A Child Protection coordinator will be appointed who will liaise with the incumbent and PCC to monitor and review the policy and procedures for child protection.

**10. The need to** review the policy and procedures for child protection on an annual basis.

**11. Require** all organisations working with children on Immanuel Church premises or elsewhere in the name of Immanuel Church to provide a Child Protection Policy and Procedures document to be approved by the PCC before such activities can be undertaken.

# Child Protection ~ Procedures

The PCC of Immanuel Church will follow the guidelines and recommendations set out in 'God's Children: Our Diocese' (2005) and all revisions to this document.

In all instances where the terms 'volunteers' and 'workers' are used this includes the church wardens and the incumbent.

## 1. Creating a safe environment

### a) Behaviour

Providing a safe environment for all children involves having clear guidelines concerning the standards of behaviour acceptable.

Volunteers and workers will at all times encourage positive attitudes towards all young people for whom they are responsible. Volunteers and workers will intervene with children's choice of behaviour when this causes problems for others or compromises health and safety for the child(ren) themselves. If the results of intervention are not successful, then parents will be included in order to seek a resolution.

Guidance for volunteers and workers on **dealing with unacceptable behaviour** includes:

- Take the child(ren) out of the immediate area where the poor behaviour has occurred
- Never shout, slap or shake your finger at a child
- Seek to reason with the child(ren), speak quietly and explain that they are very welcome, but their behaviour is not.
- Go to the adult with overall responsibility in the room and explain. They will monitor the situation and if there is no improvement, they will then decide whether further action is needed.
- If any child/ren's unacceptable behaviour is aimed at any of the volunteers and workers, this must be reported to the adult with overall responsibility immediately.

### b) Supervision

At all times children will be supervised by an appropriate adult. Wherever possible there will be two adults. In most circumstances there will be other adults elsewhere in the same room or close by. There will be a designated leader for each activity in addition to the appointed leader who will take overall responsibility.

### c) First Aid

Volunteers and workers do their utmost to protect all children involved in their activity and aim to keep them as safe as possible at all times.

Should an accident occur, however minor, which requires treatment of child or volunteer / worker, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Only those persons qualified as First Aiders will administer any treatment
- The designated leader of the activity will report any accident to the adult with overall responsibility as soon as possible.
- A person who has fallen will never be moved unless they are in further danger, as this may cause further injury.
- An ambulance will be called whenever there is the slightest doubt about the health of the person.

In the absence of a qualified First Aider, the appointed leader will take responsibility.

### d) Emergency procedure for off-site activities

When children are off site involved in an event organised by Immanuel Parish Church, volunteers and workers aim to keep them as safe as possible. When possible, a qualified First Aider will be present and the procedure outlined above will be followed. Copies of an activity form for each child will be taken by the volunteers and workers, and the original participants lists and registration forms will be left readily accessible in the Church. First Aid materials will accompany the activity, and volunteers and workers will have sufficient monies to enable them to manage in an emergency.

### The volunteer / worker off site with the child will:

- Administer First Aid and/or phone the emergency services as appropriate.
- Phone the adult with overall responsibility and give details of the child's name, nature of the injury and how it was sustained, action taken and by whom, name of any hospital where the child may be taken, the child's condition at the time of the phone call, the exact location of the group.
- Keep in regular contact with the adult with overall responsibility

- One Helper will stay with the injured child at all times; other volunteers and workers will take responsibility for the charges of a volunteer / worker who may have to stay with a child in hospital.
- **In addition the following procedure will be followed by the volunteers / workers off site and those back at base.**
- A nominated contact will be available by phone at all times
- The nominated adult at the church will note down in writing all information given about the child/injury, and keep in contact with parents until they are reunited with the child.
- Obtain any information/make any arrangements which the volunteer / worker and children off site may need e.g. bus/train times to return home

#### **e) Accident information to parent / carer**

As soon as an accident is reported parents/carers will be contacted and precise information given about the injury and location of the child. The parent/carers will be required to sign an accident form and record book on the same day as the accident, where possible.

#### **f) Evacuation of building following fire alarm**

Should a **fire warning** be given in the building, all volunteers and workers and children in the Church premises affected will leave the building immediately by the nearest available exit. They will gather on the grass in front of the Church and wait calmly while the volunteers and workers check that all children for whom they are responsible are present. A designated person will check that all volunteers and workers are present. Any missing persons should be reported immediately to the adult with overall responsibility.

People should leave without stopping to collect personal possessions, and in a calm manner.

If it is safe to do so, volunteers and workers should check each room and phone the emergency services. No one should re-enter the building until it is safe to do so.

#### **g) Smoking, alcohol and drugs**

Consistent with the current Birmingham Diocesan Policy on Child Protection from Drug Abuse (The Drug Abuse Policy), at no time and under no circumstances will **non prescription drugs** be permitted on site. Should a child need to be administered **prescription drugs**, this is to be discussed with the adult with overall responsibility, prior to them being accepted on the activity, and any such medication must be held by the adult with overall responsibility.

**Cigarettes and alcohol** are not permitted on or off site by children. If children are found with either cigarettes or alcohol in their possession their parent/carers will be immediately informed. Volunteers and workers should not smoke in the presence of children; a suitable area will be designated for this purpose should any volunteer or worker wish to smoke.

## **2. The recruitment and selection of volunteers and workers (including church wardens)**

It is important that anyone who works for the Church in a paid or voluntary capacity should be **chosen with care**. There are no procedures which can provide an absolute guard against appointing people who will abuse children. However it is possible and necessary to take measures which can act as deterrents to abusers.

The PCC of Immanuel Parish Church will follow the guidelines provided in the **House of Bishops Policy Document (HBPD) Annex 1, and the CRB**, with regard to the recruitment and selection of paid employees, volunteers and workers. This gives details of the following information which is required of a successful applicant before their appointment can be confirmed:

- **Birth certificate**
- **Confidential Declaration** from the person concerned about their past history so far as it is relevant to work with children, including whether they have previous convictions, whether certain orders of the civil courts have been made against them, and whether they have or have been alleged to have caused significant harm to a child or young person or put a child or young person at risk of significant harm. This declaration will give details of any name other than the present one by which the person concerned has been known since the age of eighteen, and any home address within the past five years. This is provided in Annex 1A of the HBPD. The Confidential Declaration will be seen by the incumbent only.
- **References** from those with a personal and/or professional knowledge of the person concerned and his or her previous work with children or young person

In addition, the following procedures will be followed with regard to the appointment of paid employees, volunteers and workers:

- **The church wardens** will write to any contact who expresses interest in a vacancy, requesting that they complete an application form and return it to the incumbent.
- The incumbent will carry out all interviews for paid and unpaid posts involving work with children.
- Successful applicants will be subject to a **probationary period**. This will be at the discretion of the incumbent, and in no case will be less than three months.
- Young persons **under the age of 18** may not take full responsibility for any activity, but may assist under the direct supervision of an approved helper or worker.
- During an **interregnum**, all child protection issues will be dealt with in conjunction with the Area Dean.
- The system will be the same for both **paid and unpaid workers**.
- **If anyone answers 'Yes'** to questions on the Declaration form, the Bishop's Advisor should be informed through Bishop's Croft, and advice sought.

A **job description** will be provided for all paid and unpaid employees of Immanuel Parish Church, which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The **church wardens** of Immanuel will be elected annually at the AGM. All members entitled to nominate and second people for the post of church warden will be reminded that issues relating to child protection should be considered when making their decision. The nomination and seconding of nominees will be taken in place of references, but all other requirements identified above are compulsory for the post of church warden.

### **3. Workers need to understand the policy and procedures**

Those appointed will be provided with a copy of this 'Policy and Procedures' document. During the probationary period planned opportunities will be made available to discuss this document with a nominated person.

### **4. Workers needs to understand the issues in working with children and young people**

All advice from the Bishop's representative to clergy, paid staff, PCCs and volunteers about good practice in order to protect children and to diminish the risks of wrongful accusations being made will be discussed and implemented.

Advice, information, support and training will be sought from the Bishop's representative where appropriate.

### **5. Training**

Reasonable opportunities will be made available to all paid employees, volunteers and workers to undertake further training. Staff will be encouraged to take advantage of such opportunities, which will be in addition to 'on the job' training.

### **6. Reporting abuse in any context, including church workers**

#### **Confidentiality**

All workers and volunteers recognise their responsibility to contribute towards the safety, health and growth of each child and a team approach to difficult and sensitive issues is in the children's best interests.

All workers and volunteers (including church wardens and incumbent) must treat any concerns they may have about individual children with sensitivity and respect.

When an issue arises, or a child makes a disclosure to a worker or volunteer, the issue should be discussed immediately with the leader who has overall responsibility, in strict confidence. The leader will then refer the situation to Social Services. The incumbent will also be informed should this contact be made. This and all subsequent incidents / discussion on the matter will be recorded and this record kept in a secure place; such records will be kept indefinitely.

Any worker or volunteer who has (in their opinion) any concern about a child, or another worker or volunteer, must first discuss the matter with the adult with overall responsibility.

Where there is any doubt, however minor it may seem, this must be discussed with the adult with overall responsibility at the earliest opportunity, in strict confidence.

**In the event of the incumbent of being accused**, it shall be the responsibility of the church wardens to inform the Archdeacon and then the Bishop, to follow all advice provided by the Archdeacon and Bishop, and to treat all information in strictest confidence.

**Under no circumstances** must anything be repeated to others, or be spoken of between workers and volunteers outside of the church premises and vicarage. If a helper is asked a direct question by another worker or volunteer, that person should be referred to the adult with overall responsibility.

**Any issue of concern** to the workers and volunteers may be discussed

#### **Creating a safe environment**

An environment that encourages children to share feelings will be fostered by:

- developing a caring, professional relationship with the children and
- engaging children in activities which encourage personal involvement, sharing of ideas and opinions, in a context where these are given value.

#### **Supporting the family**

Families will be supported in the first instance by reference to Social Services. The church will seek to follow any professional advice which may be offered by Social Services, and will maintain an offer of any pastoral support which the family may request.

#### **Making / maintaining contact**

All contact between the family and Immanuel church will be in the first instance made by the incumbent.

In the Diocesan Policy Folder 'God's children: our diocese', held by the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator, is a list of professional contacts and telephone numbers. Copies of this list will be distributed to the incumbent, church wardens and all adults with overall responsibility for children.

#### **When a worker is accused**

A worker against whom allegations are made will be asked to remove themselves from the activity immediately while the situation is investigated by the appropriate authorities. Any pastoral support requested will be provided as above. The same person who gives support to the worker who is accused, will not also give support to the abused and their family.

**There will be no discussion** of the incident other than between incumbent, church wardens, and other agencies involved (e.g. Social Services). The incumbent will automatically inform the Bishop of the situation. Records will be maintained in a secure location of all discussion and meetings with and about the abuser / abused. All records will be kept indefinitely. The church's insurers will be informed (Ecclesiastical Insurance Group).

**During an interregnum** or the long term sickness of the incumbent, any duties mentioned above as being the responsibility of the incumbent will be carried out in conjunction with the Area Dean.

### **7. The response to abusers and their place in the church**

**The incumbent** will be fully involved and will make all decisions in this delicate area.

**Where a convicted abuser** joins the church, or it becomes known that a **current church member is a convicted abuser**, the incumbent will inform the Bishop's Adviser.

The incumbent will have a frank and confidential discussion with the individual concerned. The Bishop's Policy on Child Protection (paragraphs 32, 33, and 34) will be followed.

**32.** When a priest receives confession from someone who has abused a child, the policy states: 'While the seal of the confessional remains absolute, the priest should always consider whether children may still be at risk, so that he or she should urge the person making the confession to report the abuse to social services or the police, and whether absolution should be withheld until the person concerned does so.'

**33.** When disclosure takes place in a pastoral setting outside formal confession, the policy states: ' While a person's right to confidentiality is of the highest importance, it is not absolute. There are occasions when confidentiality should not be maintained. If children may possibly be at risk from the person making the disclosure, a report must be made to social services or the police.'

**34.** 'It is therefore most important for the priest to make clear to the person concerned whether what is taking place is formal or sacramental confession on the one hand, or spiritual or other counsel on the other, In the latter case, the rules on confidentiality outside formal confession should be explained at the outset, together with an assurance that no matter what is disclosed the person will be helped, within the constraints imposed by the law and subject to the paramount need to safeguard the welfare of children. The priest should consult the bishop's representative in order to obtain expert professional advice about how the person concerned can best be helped.'

Should the disclosure take place in the presence of other members of the congregation (e.g. a study group) then the leadership will ensure that the incumbent is told and that s/he speaks with the person concerned in the terms outlined above.

It will be necessary to **establish clear boundaries** for both the protection of the young people and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse. The incumbent and Church wardens should:

- ensure that they **maintain close links** with a probation officer (if any be assigned)
- **be open** with the offender
- **prepare a contract** which includes:
  - attending designated meetings and functions only (i.e. where there are no children)
  - sitting apart from children
  - staying away from areas of the church premises where children meet
  - declining hospitality where there are children
  - never being alone with children
  - never working with children
- get the offender to **sign** the contract
- **enforce the contract** – do not allow him/her to manipulate the Church
- **consider** whether to tell the church adult congregation
- ensure **key leaders** know the situation (if the Church is not told)
- provide close **support and pastoral** care
- ban the offender from Church **if the contract is broken** and tell other Churches and the probation officer (if involved).

## **8. Supporting adult survivors and abused children**

Support for adult survivors and abused children will consist of a **range of initiatives** including:

- **making available** access to appropriate support agencies, and accompanying them should this be requested (e.g. Social Services, NSPCC)
- **listening** sympathetically and non judgementally
- **praying** for the person and their family

Where **specialised training** would enable more effective support to be made available, training from a suitable agency will be sought.

An **up to date list** of all local support agencies will be maintained in the Diocesan Policy Folder 'God's children: our diocese', held by the Parish Child Protection Co-ordinator.

## **9. Informing everyone about the policy and procedures**

The **congregation** of Immanuel Parish Church will be informed of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures initially by the incumbent e.g. in the context of a short presentation in place of the sermon. Discussion and highlighting of key issues to keep the congregation informed will also take place in this context. The congregation will be invited to raise any concerns and questions with the church wardens or members of the PCC.

There will be **occasional items** in the church's pew sheet e.g. when there is new legislation which the church has to take into account in respect of its work with children and young people.

The **congregation will be reminded** that a copy of the Policy & Procedures is available in the church.

The **PCC** (or a working group nominated by the PCC) **will take responsibility** for ensuring that the above is implemented.

**The Child Protection Policy and Procedures** will be available in the following places:

- Church web site (pdf document) – this is to be regarded as the master copy
- In a folder in church
- Leaders and helpers / volunteers of all church sponsored work with children
- Vicarage (along with supporting documents e.g. 'God's children: our diocese' folder)
- Church wardens

In addition, hard copies of Immanuel Church's Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be available on request.

#### **10. Reviewing and consulting about the policy and procedures**

The Policy and Procedures statements will be **reviewed annually**. This review will be completed by a sub-committee of the PCC and the results / recommendations reported to the full membership. A review other than the annual review may be prompted by a significant change in UK law.

It is recommended that the reviewing body call upon the advice of suitably qualified people to inform the reviewing process e.g. the bishop's representative, leaders of groups currently using church premises for work with young people.

#### **11. What we will expect of other organisations that use church premises**

All **organisations which use church premises** will be required to provide a child protection policy at the time of their request for use should their activities include children or young people under the age of eighteen years. It is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that any such policy is consistent with the Child Protection Policy of Immanuel Parish Church. If it is not, any application for use of church premises will be rejected. If an organisation is not able to produce a Child Protection Policy then they will not be permitted to use church premises until such documentation has been produced and approved by the PCC.

**Documents to be held in conjunction with Immanuel's Policy and Procedures Statements on Child Protection:**

**1. The Church of England House of Bishops' Policy on Child Abuse**

Church House Bookshop  
31 Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BN  
£2.75 (£3.50 by post)  
Cheque: 'The Central Board of Finance'

**2. Safe from Harm – A Code of Practice for Safeguarding the Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales (HMSO – ISBN 0862529-93-X)**

The Publications Unit Room 1024  
The Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
London SW1H 9AT  
£2.50 (including postage)  
Cheque: 'The Home Office Accounting Officer'

**3. CRB**