

Child Protection Policy

The Home Office has produced a set of recommendations and guidelines to give all voluntary groups a framework for action to promote the welfare of children and young people, in particular to prevent abuse taking place. Called "Safe from Harm", the recommendations and guidelines do not have the force of law but recommend the steps that should be taken to safeguard everyone under the age of 18. These Government recommendations came as a result of the Children Act 1989:

Below is the policy statement for SYFC. Please also refer to the SYFC Safe from Harm & Pastoral Care Guidelines for working with young people.

A policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children

SYFC is committed to following the Home Office code of practice "Safe from Harm", and adopts guidelines and procedures based on it. Every staff member and volunteer shall be given a copy of this statement and SYFC's agreed procedures and good practice guidelines.

This statement will be reviewed on a regular basis and applies at any event or where ministry is undertaken in the name of SYFC.

SYFC is committed to good practice through our core values of professionalism and being person centred. We therefore make the following statement in response to Government guidelines:

As a Christian organisation committed to presenting the reality of God to young people, we affirm our belief in the God given value of each young person with whom we work or have contact. In recognition of God's wholehearted commitment to them, we will also treat each individual with value and dignity and aim that none suffers physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual¹ abuse of any kind. If at all possible it is the responsibility of each one of us to safeguard young people against physical, sexual, spiritual¹ and emotional abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

SYFC is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with young people and to providing supervision.

All staff and volunteers will be expected to sign a declaration stating whether or not they have ever accepted an official caution from the police, been convicted or are currently the subject of criminal charges. (Disclosing such information may not bar an individual from being appointed.)

Procedures for the pastoral care of and work with young people

All activities should avoid any situation where abuse could result. All young people should be treated with respect and dignity.

- Any form of work undertaken by SYFC staff and volunteers is to take place in the public arena. Both public and personal conversations with young people are to be within the guidelines laid out in (Appendix 1).

¹ "Spiritual abuse happens when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower, thus causing spiritual wounds." Ken Blue: Healing Spiritual Abuse. IVP 1993.

- When giving lifts to young people, please refer to our Driving and Travelling in Cars Policy. In the case of a staff member, lifts must only be given where the driver is insured for use of the car for business purposes.
- Initiating physical contact with young people is to be avoided. If physical abuse is threatened, then workers should seek assistance in the first instance and if physical violence is used against you then you may defend yourself using the minimum of force.
- In school lessons and assemblies a member of the school staff should be present. For after school or lunchtime events, an agreement is to be negotiated with the school as to whether or not they wish a staff member to be present (although a member of staff should always be on call). The recommended minimum is that two SYFC/school staff members or volunteers to be present during such events.
- In youth work settings ensure there are always two staff members or volunteers present and if young people need to be escorted off the premises that this is done wherever possible through verbal encouragement. If this fails then the police should be called immediately and the recognised supervisor should be made aware as soon as possible.
- Workers should not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in "fun", scapegoat, ridicule, or reject a young person or make comments about a young person's attributes or attractiveness.
- Hugging is to be discouraged among the staff and volunteers when young people are present. Although physical contact should not be initiated by the worker it is important that young people if they initiate and choose to have any contact are responded to appropriately, e.g. a side arm hug.
- Parental/guardian consent must be obtained for any trips or special activities which happen outside of the normal meeting times and locations for any group. Communication of what is happening should always be made available to parents/guardians.
- An agreed system of recording activities and conversations with young people should be implemented. These should be completed as agreed with your Line Manager.
- Avoid favoritism and special friendships. Do not develop an exclusive relationship with a group member if you are a leader, however small the age gap. Do not be over eager to befriend particular young people. Crushes with group members are strongly discouraged and an intermediary should be involved if necessary.

Procedures for protecting children and young people for all staff and volunteers

In cases where face-to-face work with children and young people is part of their normal role then SYFC will initiate CRB (Criminal records bureau) checks on all staff and volunteers including those with responsibility for the management of any persons who have direct contact with young people and the trustees of the charity. Where face-to-face work with children and young people is part of their normal role then work can not start until the CRB disclosure has been received and is

considered satisfactory. CRB checks on staff, volunteers and trustees shall be renewed every 3 years.

The Centre Manager shall keep an up to date list of all staff and volunteers who have an SYFC CRB check. This list shall include the date that the check was completed and the CRB Number. The Centre Manager shall be responsible for keeping this list accurate and up to date and initiating the renewal of checks after 3 years.

Everyone shall be given and have explained this policy statement. All staff and volunteers will receive training according to these guidelines when they join SYFC and every volunteer and staff member is to revisit the policy annually.

SYFC recognise that when its staff are visiting churches or running conferences, events or training events, those attending may reasonably assume that such staff have been subject to checks relating to protection of young people. Therefore all staff visiting groups on behalf of SYFC and all those running or assisting at SYFC events or training events where they could have unsupervised access to young people must be subject to checks as set out in these guidelines.

One-off volunteers undertaking tasks for SYFC will be subject to the same procedure as staff. This requirement may be waived if the person is known to SYFC and will not have unsupervised access to young people in the course of the task. 'Known to SYFC' means that at least two people who are Executive members, staff workers or people who have significant connections with SYFC could, if asked provide references for the person. One-off applies to volunteers giving not more than one days time for their volunteering. One-off volunteers will include those who accompany staff on a speaking engagement, help at a SYFC day or evening event. Once someone is volunteering with SYFC on a regular basis, 'regular' meaning more than three times a year, then they will be subject to the SYFC guidelines for volunteers in this document.

SYFC is not responsible for the selection, approval or appointment of those working with children or young people in any affiliated church or group. These groups and churches are responsible for appointing people to work with children and young people according to their own policies for protecting children and young people.

Appointment of staff and volunteers

The appointment of staff and volunteers will follow the relevant SYFC recruitment and selection and probationary procedures. All staff and volunteers will have a written job description.

Those recruiting staff or volunteers from overseas should follow the guidance on the CRB website <http://www.crb.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2243>. Where the country of origin is not listed you should contact that country's representative in this country, see the list on the FCO website: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/london-diplomatic-list-june>. If there is any difficulty contact a member of the Safe From Harm Committee for advice. Volunteers from overseas that come to work with us must register with the local Police.

A record of those staff for whom CRB checks have been made will be kept securely in a lockable, non-portable storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their role within SYFC.

Where a CRB disclosure has any information on it a risk assessment should be completed prior to the worker coming into contact with young people through YFC activities

Management/Supervision

There shall be a system of line management within SYFC to provide supervision and accountability. This will include monitoring ongoing work with young people and for staff, line management in accordance with SYFC policies and guidelines.

Line management practice will normally involve regular meetings with the appropriate line manager in order to review and plan their work. The supervisor should be aware of each staff members working and personal relationships with the young people in their care.

It is expected that each supervisor will take time to observe the member of staff or volunteer whilst he/she is working with young people.

Ideally, supervisors should keep a brief written record of each supervision meeting and of any things of note which are observed.

It is expected that records of contact with young people would be kept by the worker in accordance with those requested by the line manager. These records do not need to include personal details of young people but a general account of the work. The record should cover the number of young people in attendance; the activities done or the issues covered in conversation; and unusual events such as fire alarms or young people escorted off the premises.

Training

SYFC will run a training course each year for new staff and volunteers which will endorse the guidelines and equip staff and volunteers in the guidelines spelt out in this document.

Accusations of abuse against SYFC staff or volunteers

If any member of staff or volunteer is accused of abuse then SYFC will co-operate with other agencies in the enquiry.

During the course of the enquiry it is recommended that the staff or volunteer concerned is not involved in face to face youth work and that they take a period of special leave during which salary continues to be paid. If the enquiry is not concluded within two months then this action may need to be reassessed.

SYFC staff and volunteers must report any allegation made about themselves or others to their supervisor or his/her delegated representative.

Internet and the web

All SYFC staff and volunteers should have read and understood the guidelines about interacting with young people on the internet, including the use of social networking as written in our I.T. Policy and abide by its practices for the safeguarding of young people in this context.

Safe From Harm

Guidelines for work with and the pastoral care of young people (under 18's)

Procedures for the pastoral care of and work with young people

All activities should avoid any situation where abuse could result. All young people should be treated with respect and dignity.

Any form of work undertaken by SYFC staff and volunteers is to take place in the public arena. Both public and personal conversations with young people are to be within the guidelines laid out in Appendix 1.

Identifying Abuse - signs, symptoms and how to respond

Types of abuse

Physical	is when an adult kicks, beats, or punches and young people's bodies are hurt or injured.
Emotional	is where young people don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years.
Sexual	is where an adult (and sometimes other young people) use young people to satisfy sexual desires; touches a young person's private parts in a way that makes the young person feel worried or unhappy; showing the young person rude pictures or videos. Sexual abuse can be anywhere in the range from visual contact to sexual penetration.
Neglect	is where adults fail to care for young people and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development; when an adult leaves a young person alone for long periods of time.
Spiritual	is when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower causing spiritual wounds.

Signs of Abuse

It is important to note that these signs are only indicators of possible abuse. These indicators of abuse are only ways of helping us uncover abuse, they are not necessarily evidence.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries, such as bruising, cuts and burns; especially if on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Injuries which have not received appropriate medical attention.
- A young person describing what appears to be an abusive act involving him/herself.
- A young person disclosing or making an allegation of abuse.
- Someone else expressing concern about the welfare of a child or young person.
- Changes in behaviour or mood/depression/aggression/lack of concentration.
- Self Harming
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters.

- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour or sexual activity expressed through words, play or drawings.
- Nervousness and/or watchfulness.
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams, nightmares or persistent tiredness.
- Running away, stealing or lying.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming.
- Inappropriate relationships with other children or adults.
- Signs of neglect, such as under-nourishment, untreated illness, inadequate physical or emotional care.

How to react when a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

- Accept what the young person says, no matter how unlikely it seems.
- Stay calm – try not to look shocked.
- Look at the young person directly.
- Be honest with the young person about what you need to do.
- Ask the young person what they would like you to do and ask how you can help them. Let the young person know you will need to tell someone else. Never get into a situation where you tell a young person that whatever they say will remain between you and them.
- Even when a young person has done something wrong it does not mean they are to blame for the abuse.
- Do not fill in words, finish their sentences or make assumptions
- Never push for information or ask leading questions.
- Be aware that the young person may have been threatened.

Helpful things to say:

“You have been brave for telling me”.

“Thank you for telling me”.

“It’s not your fault”.

“I will help you”.

“I believe you”.

“It is OK to tell”.

“I am sorry that happened”.

Avoid saying

“Why didn’t you tell anyone before?”

“I can’t believe it”.

“Are you sure you are telling the truth?”

“Why? How? When? Who? Where? Don’t barrage them with questions.”

Never make false promises. E.g. you won’t have to live there anymore, or that you won’t tell anyone.

“I’m shocked. Don’t tell anyone else. This is awful”.

Procedures if abuse is suspected discovered or disclosed

The most important thing to remember is that when a young person discloses that abuse of any nature is taking, or has taken place, they are divulging a secret. It is not the place for this document to provide guidance for counseling in this scenario, but please make sure that the young

person knows that you believe them. Many situations have arisen where the first person to be told of such events failed to demonstrate that they believed the young person in the first instance and this led to the abuse being covered up for years.

In the work of SYFC it is our duty to work to prevent abuse taking place.

If any young person comes to you and talks about past or present abuse situations, keep a handwritten narrative of the conversation immediately after you have spoken with that person. You should then complete a Safe from Harm Disclosure Form and speak to your line manager or the Centre Director.

If you suspect that a young person may be the victim of such abuse the following procedure must be followed:

- The disclosure should be reported to the designated person at SYFC, usually the Centre Director or Chair/designated member of the Executive Committee.
- It is important to keep reporting channels as short as possible and this should not prevent or delay any reporting to relevant authorities. If the person to whom the abuse was disclosed believes that the designated person has not taken appropriate action they may speak to the authorities themselves.
- After you have made the handwritten notes you should fill in the Safe from Harm Disclosure form and refer to the Safe from Harm Flow Chart (Appendix 3).
- The young person must be kept informed at all times of what is being done, what is likely to happen, and should be informed about the process that you will have to initiate before they disclose such information. Where the abuse is current this will need to be reported to the authorities normally by the designated person. However, it is also important that the young person is aware that no action is likely to be taken by the authorities without the young person being listened to and all decisions reached will take account of the wishes and feelings of the young person. (1989 Children Act).

When the situation is reported to the authorities then it is likely that the following may be included:

- A strategy discussion involving Social Services, Police Child protection team, other significant professionals and the person suspecting abuse or to whom the young person has talked.
- A decision will be taken as to whether an investigation is warranted; if so, it will then be planned. If the Social Services decide to pursue this the investigation is likely to include:
 - An informal talk with the young person.
 - A formal police (+/- social services) video recorded interview
 - Medical examination
 - Preliminary family assessment.

The authorities are likely to be more proactive in situations where other young people could also be at risk.

If there is sufficient concern, a child protection conference will be held to decide the best course

of action to protect the young person and help the family. There may be criminal prosecution of the abuser.

You should ensure that records of action taken are recorded on the Safe from Harm Disclosure form.

Information

Useful phone numbers: SYFC Office - 01793 829795
 Local Social Services - 01793 463000
 Police - 01793 528111



APPENDIX 1

Guidelines for talking and praying with young people.

These are not a set of rules just for the sake of it. There is a good reason why they are there, for your own protection and the person you are dealing with. Please therefore read and familiarise yourself with these guidelines.

1. Always talk and pray with someone in a group of more than two if at all possible. One to one contact may take place only in a public place and should let your line manager or supervisor know that the meeting is taking place.
2. Always same sex - i.e. male - male, female - female, when involved in praying with young people. If for any reason this is impossible then it should be agreed with your line manager or supervisor and happen in a public place.
3. Always pray and talk in an open space where others are around, privacy is a consideration, but don't go alone.
4. Confidentiality is vital - they will need to know that you will not go to others and talk about their problems. However, do not promise to keep a secret as you may need to tell someone in authority. If that is so, tell them who it will be and what you will say - in order to build trust. In British law the responsibility for any investigation is with the Social Services, Police or the NSPCC and it is not for workers to carry out these preliminary investigations.
5. Keep calm and be honest. Don't feel you have to know all the answers. If you don't know, find someone who does and ask them.
6. Don't be afraid to ask for advice we are not out to prove anything to anyone, we want the best for them. If you feel out of your depth or unsure, ask someone to help you.
7. Don't keep bringing it round to your own experience, i.e. 'yes, I remember when that happened to me and ...' testimony is good, but be a good listener.
8. Don't make promises you can't keep.
9. Don't appear shocked or appalled.
10. Be sensitive, don't say things like - 'I can't believe it, why didn't you tell anyone before?' or - 'no, you didn't, did you?'
11. Don't laugh at them.
12. Don't minimise or trivialise the issue, even if it may not seem important to you. If they need to talk about it, it is important.
13. Be aware of your body language, the way you are reacting. Always encourage and affirm, don't judge or condemn.
14. Don't feel you have to wrap it up straight away, some things need talking through more.
15. If you are told about anything illegal you must tell your line manager or supervisor straight away. There is no general legal duty to report an offence to the Police.
16. Don't take on board other people's problems as if they were your own. Remember, empathy is standing in someone else's shoes, with your feet firmly in your own.
17. Do not under any circumstances touch someone inappropriately when praying or talking with them. Do not initiate hugging - whether same sex or opposite sex. Remember we need to be above reproach. If it is appropriate to place a hand on someone's shoulder whilst praying for them then always ask their permission first.
19. Follow up, check how they are doing the following week.
20. If it is appropriate to do so make a brief record of the conversation or issue discussed afterwards which can be referred back to if necessary at a later date. This should be passed to your line manager or supervisor and stored securely by SYFC.

APPENDIX 2

Residential Work

The following are guidelines based on respect for the individual and legal requirements. They are not intended to restrict the diverse opportunities presented by residential work, merely safeguard all concerned from the potential of abuse.

In residential work, do not invade the privacy of young people unnecessarily. Leaders are to knock before entering dormitory accommodation and except for emergencies to enter the accommodation of young people of the same sex only.

Separate accommodation for young people of each sex and for leaders.

Allow young people privacy when going to the toilet or changing.

Keep age groups together in dormitories/rooms/tents.

In residential work there must be same sex leaders as the young people attending.

Nominated person : A nominated person who is not attending the residential should be left with copies of the consent forms for each of the young people attending the residential and should have access to the SYFC staff files which include details of staff Next of Kin. The most senior member of staff attending the residential shall be responsible for contacting the nominated member of staff at the end of every day to report on the activity and confirm the safety of each member of SYFC team at the residential.

Disclosures during a residential: If there is an incident on site it should be reported to the local police. If the disclosure is of current or past incident which has not taken place at the residential then it should be reported to the local social services of the young person concerned and the procedures laid out in this policy should be followed.

Where minibuses are used it is expected that all drivers and leaders will adhere to the legal (and where appropriate, local authority) regulations.

APPENDIX 3

Child Protection Flow Chart

