

# **DUNDONALD BAPTIST CHURCH**



## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

## Church and Contact Details

**Name:** Dundonald Baptist Church (hereafter, "The Church")  
**Address:** 927 Upper Newtownards Road  
Dundonald, Belfast, Co. Down BT16 1RQ  
**Tel:** 028 90480190  
**E- Mail:** dp@dundonaldbaptistchurch.org

The Church is Baptistic in belief, and is affiliated to the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland.

**Designated Person:** Karen Morrow Telephone 028 9048 5387 or 0777 9248 589  
**Deputy Designated Person:** Rodney Campbell Telephone: 028 9087 7917 or 07782 166020

**Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)** PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.  
Telephone **0845 120 4550** or 01322517817

**Local Social Services** Belfast Health and Social Care Trust  
Gateway to Children's Social Work Service:  
Office telephone number between 9.00am and 5.00pm is **028 9050 7000**.  
Out of hour's emergency number is **028 9056 5444**.

**NSPCC** Telephone **028 9035 1135**.  
**Police Care Unit** Telephone **028 9025 9831** for criminal offences.  
**Police exchange** Telephone **028 9065 0222** asking for the duty care officer

**Church Insurance Company:** Oval James Ltd, Metropolitan Building, 29/31 Alfred Street,  
Belfast, BT2 8ED, Telephone 028 9024 1651

## Mission Statement

The Office Bearers recognise the importance of the church's ministry to children, young people and vulnerable adults and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of those entrusted to the church's care.

As part of its mission, the Church is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children, young people and vulnerable adults as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all the workers and formal volunteers within the church who have responsibility for and access to children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected by abuse in the church.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations.

## Church Policy

The Office Bearers recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It also acknowledges that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The Office Bearers have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document (hereafter "the policy"). It also recognises the need to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary child protection agencies.

The Office Bearers are committed to on-going safeguarding training for all workers and formal volunteers and will regularly review the policy and guidelines.

The Office Bearers also undertake to follow the principles found within the Abuse Of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office and Northern Ireland Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour that might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

# Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Abuse

Under **no** circumstances should a church worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse will do the following:

- Report their concerns as soon as possible to the church Child Protection Designated Person who is nominated by the Office Bearers 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.
- The Designated Person may also be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company.
- In the absence of the Designated Person, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Designated Person then the report should be made to the Deputy Designated Person.
- If the suspicions implicate the Designated Person and/or the Deputy Designated Person, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Church Office Bearers or CCPAS or alternatively contact Social Services the NSPCC or the police directly.
- Suspicions **must not** be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with church procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Designated Person, the absence of the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person should not delay referral to the Social Services Department.
- The Office Bearers will support the Designated Person and Deputy Designated Person 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.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although the Office Bearers hope that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Designated Person(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Office Bearers demonstrate the commitment of the church to effective safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The role of the Designated Person / deputy Designated Person is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. It is Social Services task to investigate the matter.

For clarity reference to child in the remaining document also implies young person or vulnerable adult.

## Allegations Of Physical Injury Or Neglect

If a child or has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person will:

- Contact Social Services or CCPAS for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so having contacted Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of injury.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by CCPAS (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Social Services.

## Allegations of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Designated Person or Deputy Designated Person will:

- Contact the Social Services Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly. They will **NOT** speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

- If for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Social Services/Police they should seek and **follow** the advice given by CCPAS. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

## Appointment, Support, Supervision & Training of Leaders & Workers

The Office Bearers will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the principles set out in any government guidelines with help from CCPAS. The same principles will be applied to those appointed to work with vulnerable adults.

### Volunteers - formal and occasional

"Formal volunteers" are taken to be any person who has a clearly-defined role, e.g. Pathfinders Leader, Amplify Leader, Youth Leader, Crèche/Children's Church Organiser, etc and all those working with any organisation within the church on a regular basis. All these posts will have gone through the Office Bearers screening procedures. Formal volunteers will be aware of, and receive copies of the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy which contains guidelines to be followed in the event of disclosure or if suspicious of abuse.

Volunteers aged 16/17 will always work alongside an adult who will be responsible for the activity and the young volunteer. Their appointment will follow the same screening process as adult volunteers.

"Occasional volunteers" are people who help out in times of crisis, for example when insufficient team leaders are present for a session or help out at one off events. These people will be in a position of trust and will come into close contact with children and young people for a limited period. They will work under supervision of a formal volunteer or an employee, and will work within the church's' Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

### Support to those Affected by Abuse

The Office Bearers are committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to those attending the church that have been affected by abuse.

### Working With Offenders

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, the Office Bearers will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its commitment to the protection of children, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

This policy will be reviewed annually on (date) _____	
Signed _____	Date _____
Print Name _____	Appointment _____
Signed _____	Date _____
Print Name _____	Appointment _____

# Guidelines for working with Children and Young People

Dundonald Baptist Church seeks to embrace the good practice outlined in the Children Act and will work towards meeting these recommendations.

The church should ensure that access to the building is safe and well lit.

## As the worker, you should:-

1. Except in very exceptional circumstances, not be alone as the only worker with a group of children or young people where the activity cannot be seen. This applies to activities on Church premises, on a residential or any other event off the premises including during travel.

Recommended leaders to children ratio according to their age:

For 0 to 2 years 1 leader to every 3 children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years 1 leader to every 4 children (1:4)

For 3 to 8 years 1 leader to every 8 children (1:8)

For over 8 years 1 leader for the first 8 children followed by 1:12

In addition to these ratios, there should be at least two leaders for a group of any size, of any age. If possible, have at least one male and one female if the group is mixed.

2. In a situation with a child where privacy and confidentiality are important, such as counselling, ensure that this meeting does not take place on your own, that at least one other adult is aware of the situation who is in the building and the young person is aware of their presence.
3. Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age.
4. Watch your own language, tone of voice, body language and dress.
5. Never use physical punishment in dealing with children and young people.
6. Where possible, make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed, or needs medical attention. If available the parent/guardian should be called for.
7. Try to avoid where possible being left alone with a child in a car. Take steps when giving lifts to drop 2 children off at the last point, involve parents if necessary.
8. Consider carefully whether it is appropriate to share sleeping accommodation with children if you take a group away for a residential event. Normally workers should sleep in a separate room.
9. Actively intervene to stop any sexually provocative games.

## As the Worker, you should NOT:

1. Engage in any of the following:-
  - a. participate in rough, physical or sexually provocative games – your role should be to supervise for example a game of football, rugby etc.
  - b. inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form;
  - c. any scape-goating, intimidating, ridiculing, or rejecting of a child or young person.
2. Invade the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting.
3. Make sexually suggestive comments to or about a young person, even in “fun”.
4. Let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking, especially that which is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
5. Invite a child or young person to your home alone or run groups in your home on your own.
6. Interact with children on social websites
7. Take private photographs of the children

## **Signs which might arouse your suspicions would include:**

- Bruising, cuts or burns on the child's body, especially if these are in a place where you would not expect a child to accidentally injure itself.
- Sudden changes in behaviour, for example the child becoming very quiet or withdrawn.
- Aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums, an air of detachment or don't care attitude.
- Loss of weight
- The child being inappropriately dressed or ill-kempt
- The child being dirty or smelly
- Sexually explicit behaviour, for example playing games or showing an awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age
- The child only seems happy with you
- The child having few friends
- The child does not trust adults especially those who are closest.
- "Tummy Pains" with no medical cause
- Eating problems, including over eating or loss of appetite
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares and bedwetting
- Signs of depression or emotional withdrawal
- Relationships with adults which appear to be secretive and exclude others
- Comments that the child has made about a relationship or action of an adult that seem inappropriate

As you can see given the general nature of these signs and symptoms of abuse it would be very difficult for a children's worker to decide if a child is being abused. Some of these signs may appear in children who are not being abused but are ill or under stress. Most, though not all, abused children will exhibit a cluster of these symptoms. The key thing to remember is to seek help at the earliest possible stage. If you are at all concerned about a child in your care please turn to the section in this guide on "Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Abuse".

## **Good Practice with Colleagues**

Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour. If you see another member of staff acting in ways that might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your team leader about your concerns.

## **Good Practice in Supervision**

### **A. The Youth and Children's leaders should ensure:-**

1. They meet with leaders and workers regularly to review and plan the work.
2. Workers are asked about working and personal relationships with the children.
3. Opportunities are created to observe the worker with the children.
4. Brief records are made of the facts of any incident, accident or anything else of note, which is observed or brought to their attention at a meeting/event.
5. Never txt or make personal calls during a meeting.

### **B. If the Youth or Children's leaders have any doubts about a worker's relationships, they should explore further by talking:-**

1. To the worker,
2. Confidentially, with other workers,
3. If necessary, with the child concerned,
4. With the Child Protection Designated Person / deputy Designated Person or Office Bearers.

This issue should not be dropped until the team leader is sure there is no further cause for concern.

### **C. The Youth and Children's leaders should watch for any child receiving exceptional treatment, being highly favoured or treated unduly harshly.**

# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Rationale

Everyone at Dundonald Baptist Church has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the church community be able to achieve to their maximum potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this being able to happen and prevents equality of opportunity. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent this happening and this policy contains guidelines to support this ethos.

Where bullying exists the victims must feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems within the church to end the bullying. It is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied children/young people and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the church.

This document outlines how we make this possible at Dundonald Baptist Church.

## Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the person concerned to defend themselves. This can take the form of name-calling, threatened violence, violence, isolation, ridicule or indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories about someone.

The church works hard to ensure that all children/young people know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out".

## Actions to Tackle Bullying

Prevention is better than cure so at Dundonald Baptist Church we will be vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously. We will use the curriculum whenever possible to reinforce the ethos of the church and help children/young people to develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour.

Children/young people are told that they must report any incidence of bullying to an adult within group/church, and that when another child/young person tells them that they are being bullied or if they see bullying taking place it is their responsibility to report it to a member of staff. Children and Young people can report incidents anonymously by placing a note in any of the collection boxes on the wall.

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and taken seriously by the leaders. A record will be kept of incidents. The group leader of the victim will be responsible for this and will be required to give a copy of the report and the action taken to the Designated Person. Older children/young people may be asked to write a report themselves. In order to ensure effective monitoring of such occurrences, and to facilitate co-ordinated action, all proven incidences of bullying should be reported to the Office-Bearers. If bullying includes racist abuse then it should be reported to the child protection Designated Person to be recorded.

Upon discovery of an incident of bullying, we will discuss with the children the issues appropriate to the incident and to their age and level of understanding. If the incident is not too serious, a problem-solving approach may help. The adult will try to remain neutral and deliberately avoid direct, closed questioning which may be interpreted as accusatory or interrogational in style. Each child/young person must be given an opportunity to talk and the discussion should remain focused on finding a solution to the problem and stopping the bullying reoccurring.

There are various strategies that can be applied if more than one pupil is involved in bullying another. Role-play and other drama techniques can be used. If held regularly, this can be an effective way of sharing information and provide a forum for discussing important issues such as equal rights, relationships, justice and acceptable behaviour. It can also be used just within the affected group to confront bullying that already exists.

Victims who are worried about openly discussing an incident when the aggressors are present (e.g. taunting during a meeting) can be encouraged to go to the leader during open times (e.g. during craft/games). Victims need to feel secure in the knowledge that assertive behaviour and even walking away can be effective ways of dealing with bullying.

## Parental Involvement

The parents of bullies and their victims will be informed of an incident and the action that has taken place and asked to support strategies proposed to tackle the problem. The bully will also be reminded of the possible consequences of

bullying and the sanctions for repeated incidents will be clearly explained to him/her. Persistent bullies may be excluded from the group.

Parents can be reminded regularly through letters to inform their children that they must tell someone should they ever be bullied. Keeping information from the group/church, or from their parents, will never help a problem to be solved, and will prolong the period a victim has to suffer. Whilst there is little history of bullying at Dundonald Baptist Church, we believe that one case is one case too many and we believe it is essential to constantly review this policy to ensure we are in a position to strengthen our approach to this issue. Where necessary we will call on outside resources such as the CCPAS.



# Flow Chart of Action if you have concerns

