

DORCHESTER COMMUNITY CHURCH.

Guidelines for Good Practice

- Protecting Children
- Protecting young People
- Protecting Workers

CARING FOR ALL

“Celebrating and sharing the love of God”

INTRODUCTION

This document has been written in recognition that Dorchester Community Church has a responsibility to protect our workers, children and our young people.

The Biblical Perspective

This policy is all about recognising children's needs and putting them first – just as Jesus himself did.

If we look at Mark 10 verses 13-16

“People were bringing little children... Jesus put his hands on them and blessed them.”

Children were so important to Jesus. He never wanted them to come to any harm.

Mark 9 verse 42

“If anyone causes one of these little one's who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.”

It is up to us within the church to love and protect children, just as Jesus loved and protected them, and keep them safe from harm.

We also have to remember that God can use and speak to young people as well as adults.

Looking at the Old Testament, we can see that God called Samuel and Jeremiah while they were still young.

We must never underestimate the spiritual value of a child

DORCHESTER COMMUNITY CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT.

Children and young people are a part of our church and our future. We understand that they are individuals in their own right and we will commit ourselves to listening to them and giving them opportunities whereby they can be actively involved and contribute.

The church recognises the commitment from workers and values their time and support that they give to our children and young people and is therefore committed to providing support, resources, training and supervision to those who serve God in this way.

The Church Elders and members of the church recognise the need to safeguard the wellbeing of the children and young people within our care. Every member of the church should commit themselves to the protection and safe keeping of all, especially children and young people, regardless of their background, gender or ability.

It is the responsibility of all to prevent the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse if discovered or suspected.

If abuse is discovered or suspected, the church has an obligation to co-operate with statutory services that have responsibility for child protection by law.

The church is committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice, "Safe from Harm" and adopts the guidelines and procedures published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain in its booklet, "Safe to Grow".

As part of Dorchester Community Church's commitment to this child protection policy, two church members will act as designated persons in matters of child protection. These members will have their names and contact numbers available and visible in church.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING SAFELY

Code of behaviour for adults working with children and young people

- Treat all children and young people with respect; provide an example for others to follow.
- Treat all children and young people equally regardless of their background, race, gender or ability.
- Be considerate when talking to children and young people. Be mindful of the language you use and tone of voice.
- Do not engage in any conversation with a child, or children, which involves the ridiculing, rejecting, or 'putting down' of another.
- Do not use any physical force towards a child.
- Respect a child's right to privacy. Ensure that there are two workers present when children are dressing / undressing e.g. Christmas play.
- Try to ensure that you are not alone with a child or young person where you cannot be seen. This may mean you need to leave doors open, or two groups in the same room.
- There should be a reasonable ratio of workers to children and young people to ensure the safety of all concerned.
- Try to plan activities in advance so that parents are aware of what their child or young person is doing e.g. Trips out.
- Try not to travel alone with a child or young person in your vehicle. If this situation is unavoidable, encourage them to sit in the rear of the car.
- Keep all access to emergency exits clear.
- The church has a responsibility to maintain fire extinguishers and to recognise any issues of health and safety.

These guidelines are practised for your own safety as well as the children and young people's safety.

SAFEGUARDS FOR HELPERS

Dorchester Community Church has put together this child protection policy as a safeguard for the children and young people that attend our church, junior church and youth groups. It is not meant to change things substantially or to worry helpers but to be a helpful guide to appropriate and inappropriate practice.

Good supportive practice for helpers

- Pray for the work that goes on with children / young people within our church, pray for the other helpers.
- Be supportive to all the other helpers; arrange to meet regularly to discuss things that are going well or things that you are concerned about, look after your spiritual self.
- Look out for other helpers, there may be ways that you can help them or ways they could help you (e.g. workload).
- Make sure that other helpers keep to the child protection policy. If you have concerns, raise them with the church's named person(s).
- Keep an eye on the children / young people whom you have contact with. If you feel they are being excluded, encourage them to join in. If you feel some are being treated more favourably than others, raise your concerns. Be prepared to speak with any other helper(s), child(ren) or young person(s) involved.
- Direct the attention of the children / young people to what's going on within the group. If you have problems with one or more members of a group, try separating disruptive or restless members by sitting them apart. If problems persist, talking to another helper may help or you may have to consider discussing the issue(s) with parents concerned.
- Do not leave your group unless it is necessary to do so. Tell another helper where you are going. Do not leave children / young people on their own without another helper close by.

All these guidelines are to support good practice within the church, help reassure parents and to help prevent false accusations from occurring.