

Struthers

MEMORIAL CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Details of the place of worship / organisation

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation: Struthers Memorial Churches

Address:

Registered Office:

33 West Stewart Street, Greenock

PA15 1SH

Tel No:

Email address:

Membership of Denomination / Organisation:

Charity Number: 006960

Company Number: SC335480

The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children / vulnerable adults:

Struthers Memorial Church (SMC) Safeguarding Policy

SMC group of churches believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people. We aim to ensure that all children are protected and kept safe from harm (including physical, emotional and sexual harm) while they are with staff or volunteers in this organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage or religious belief, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents and carers is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who are in contact with SMC
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers or anyone working on behalf of SMC. The church executive has the overall responsibility for child protection within the group of churches. This responsibility is devolved to the individual ministers of each church who will liaise with youth workers in their church as necessary.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- ensuring that children and young people should never be left unsupervised whilst in our care
- ensuring that there are always at least two adults responsible for each activity involving children and young people unless specific prior consent from the minister of the church has been gained to do otherwise. Note that in some cases one (female) adult may take a group on their own, provided the children's parents, carers or guardians are church members, known to us, there are no more than 5 children in the group and the adult concerned is comfortable doing so. Another responsible adult should be aware that this situation is occurring.
- ensuring verbal permission is gained from both the church minister and the parents or guardians for any activity that involves children leaving church premises
- complying with all relevant health and safety policies regarding accommodation, transportation and activities
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made through the relevant body
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- We are also committed to reviewing our policy, good practice and training annually

(Adapted from *Firstcheck*, NSPCC 2006)

This policy was reviewed July 2016

Safe Recruitment

SMC will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment.

This involves ensuring that:

- There is a job description for the post
- No individual is appointed to work with children without the recommendation and a reference from their church minister
- Safeguarding has been discussed with each person before appointment is made
- Anyone who is working with children is a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act scheme, or the appropriate body for England and Wales, and the appropriate disclosure is obtained (we will comply with the Disclosure Scotland and Criminal Records Bureau Code of Practice concerning the handling of information).
- Suitable training is provided for the individual being appointed
- The individual has been given a copy of SMC Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns

(Adapted from CCPAS)

Code of Behaviour for Youth and Children's workers

This organisation is committed to creating a safe environment in which young people can feel comfortable and secure while engaged in any of SMC's events. Personnel should at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of SMC.

Guidelines for all SMC staff and volunteers

Attitudes

Staff and volunteers should be committed to:

- Treating children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Always listening to what a child or young person is saying
- Valuing each child and young person
- Recognising the unique contribution each individual can make
- Encouraging and praising each child or young person

By example

Staff and volunteers should endeavour to:

- Provide an example, which we would wish others to follow
- Use appropriate language with children and young people and
- Challenge any inappropriate language used by a young person or child or an adult working with young people.
- Respect a young person's right to privacy

One to one contact

Staff and volunteers should:

- Not spend time alone with children, away from others unless it is unavoidable
- In the unlikely event of having to meet with an individual child or young person make every effort to keep this meeting as open as possible.
- If privacy is needed, ensure that other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts

Physical Contact

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or a young person that they can do for themselves.

General

Staff and volunteers should:

- Be aware that someone might misinterpret our actions no matter how well intentioned
- Never draw any conclusions about others without checking the facts
- Never exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues

Relationships:

Staff and volunteers who are involved in relationships with other members of staff or volunteers should ensure that their personal relationships do not affect their role within SMC.

Procedure for Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

It is recognised that youth workers play an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse.

In this regard the church and its staff and volunteers have two main roles:

- Identification and response – identifying children who are at risk of, or who have suffered, any kind of abuse and taking appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children involved.
- Helping young people to develop skills, values and knowledge which will assist them to assert their rights, accept their responsibilities, build better relationships and be better placed to recognise or deal with hazards such as abuse or harassment and report them.

The church executive has the overall responsibility for child protection and will liaise with church ministers and with other youth workers in the church as necessary. However, it is also important that all those involved in youth work have the skills to recognise possible abuse and knowledge of the procedures to be followed in recording and reporting concerns. The church will ensure that all workers have appropriate knowledge of child protection procedures and their place within them. The church has a policy of developing partnerships between home and church, but with child abuse, or suspicion of abuse, our first and only responsibility is to the child. This may mean that in some instances parents are not informed or consulted immediately.

As of June 2016 there is an additional policy to be followed by Grace Gault/Alison Speirs in the event of any abuse being reported. This is contained in the folders sent out to each church along with other policies and relevant documents.

The guidelines indicate concerns about abuse must be referred to the appropriate agencies. Suspected cases of abuse will be reported, procedures adhered to and subsequent actions are left to the appropriate agencies.

We will seek to develop a trusting climate so that children feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings.

By following child protection procedures we:

- care for the child
- care for the community we serve
- respond to inter-agency guidelines.

Child Protection Procedures

These procedures are to be followed in reported abuse cases or suspicion of abuse. In reporting concern or suspicion, all adults in the church must follow the procedures set out in the guidelines below. In following the procedures we:

- remain observant and vigilant to possible signs of abuse
- protect the child to the best of our ability
- avoid delay
- provide consistency
- protect all youth workers
- ensure that, if further action is taken by another agency, then the church has followed the correct procedures

Youth workers in contact with children are in a position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concern they are necessarily initiating a full investigation. The criteria for reporting should be that they have '*reasonable suspicion*'. If a child discloses abuse or a worker is suspicious the worker should:

- Write down the exact information that the child has communicated to them straight away
- report this to the minister of their church within an hour (or the assistant minister if the minister is unavailable) who will contact the church executive as required
- not promise the child that it will be kept a secret
- not ask any questions which could hinder later investigations
- not speak to the parent until further advice has been gained from the minister

It is important that the correct procedures are followed so that the child is not put at risk of future harm. It is the responsibility of the minister to ensure that the correct procedures are followed and that workers are kept informed of the situation. The reporting worker will be told of any further action to be taken, e.g. further referral, monitoring the situation, etc.

All youth workers have an important role in listening to children and hearing what they have to say. The church will provide a neutral place where the child feels it is safe to talk if appropriate. Sensitivity to the disclosure is vital. Youth workers must listen carefully to what the child is saying, treat it seriously, and value what is said. Children may feel they will not be believed, or that they will be punished and will need reassurance that whatever has happened, it is not their fault.

Fear of the consequences of telling is very common. It can be very tempting to offer a promise of confidentiality to the child. This is not realistic. The child needs to hear the truth about what will happen, together with a commitment to support the child. It is crucial not to ask leading questions. Our role is to enable the child to speak and then know what to do next. In the event of the minister/assistant minister not being available to deal with an emergency involving child protection issues, then the youth worker should speak to a member of the church executive.

Code of Behaviour for those working with vulnerable adults

The code of behaviour for those working with children and young people reflect the same principles by which those working with vulnerable adults should abide. Clearly there are significant differences in the day-to-day outworking of these but in particular the following principles should be adhered to.

Volunteers should:

- Treat all individuals with respect and dignity.
- Respect every individual's right to privacy
- Ensure that if privacy is needed, other staff are informed of the meeting and its whereabouts
- Never engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind
- Provide an example, which we would wish others to follow

Allegations of Abuse Against Person who Works with Children in SMC

If an accusation is made against a worker whilst following the procedure outlined above, this should be reported to the minister of their church (or the assistant minister if the minister is unavailable) who will contact the church executive as required. The worker will be suspended from their post while investigations are ongoing and if deemed necessary we will report individual to the relevant bodies (including Disclosure Scotland) in compliance with current legislation.

Working with Offenders

Where someone attending a church in the SMC group is known to have abused children or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. However, in our commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults we will set clear boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

This Safeguarding Policy detailed above was agreed and minuted at a meeting of the Board of Directors on: 21/11/16