

Youth with a Mission Scotland

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Helpful Tips

The points below represent some of the basic principles, which should underlie all work with children. Adherence to these principles will minimize the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse by staff:

Avoid one-to-one situations with children

Avoid any unnecessary physical contact

Do not rely on your "good name" nor believe that "it couldn't happen to me"

The use of suggestive language or the making of salacious or demeaning remarks is unacceptable in professional contexts and especially so in the presence of children

If you suspect a child or a young person is becoming inappropriately attracted to you, you should share your concerns with a senior colleague. Similarly, if your own feelings towards a child or young person are placing you at risk of unprofessional behaviour, you should immediately seek support and advice from a senior colleague

If personal circumstances arise (e.g. bereavement, family breakdown, ill health), which might adversely affect your judgement regarding professional relationships, you are strongly encouraged to seek support and advice from a senior colleague

In General

Other staff and volunteers

Concerns regarding YWAM Scotland staff or volunteers should be reported to the line leader and a CPAT member who will refer the matter on internally and investigate further.

The term 'children', when used in this document includes young people and young adults with learning disabilities.

Please note that this Child Protection Policy Guide is drawn from the full YWAM Scotland Child Protection Policy (CPP). The full CPP is available to anyone.

Any YWAM staff person working regularly with children or young people should be very familiar with the full CPP.



Child Protection Policy

A guide for volunteers and staff | Edition 1 | June 2008



YOUTH WITH A MISSION SCOTLAND

Children at risk - Recognising the Signs

Every day, YWAM Scotland works alongside many children - whether they are young people or children of staff – and cases of abuse are extremely rare. However, it's best to be prepared.

There are a number of reasons why volunteers and staff might have concern that a child is being abused. *These include:

A child "disclosing" abuse—telling someone that they are being or have been abused

A child having an injury for which there is no satisfactory explanation

A child becoming aggressive or showing sudden, unexplained changes of behaviour

A child demonstrating age inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour

A child having obvious signs of physical neglect (i.e. poor hygiene, consistent hunger, unattended medical needs, etc)

**It is important that these signs are not taken as proof that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.*

If you think a child is at risk - What to do

Volunteers and staff should remain alert to the potential signs of abuse. If you are concerned that a child is being abused, you should:

Listen carefully to what the child has to say

Allow the child to speak freely and at their own pace

Reassure the child that they were right to tell someone about abuse

Consider the welfare of other children—for example, siblings who might be at risk

Ask the child (according to age/understanding) what they would like to happen next

Keep the child informed as to what steps you will take

Helpful Things To Say or Show:

"I believe you" (or showing acceptance of what the child says)

"I am glad you have told me"

"It's not your fault"

"I will help you"

Remember, if you are worried about a child's welfare then it is best to share your concerns, regardless of whether or not you have 'proof'. Even if your concern turns out to be unfounded, no-one will blame you.

Avoid Saying or Asking:

"Why didn't you tell anyone before?"

"I can't believe it."

"Are you sure this is true?"

"Why? How? When? Who? Where?"

Never make false promises e.g. 'I promise to keep it a secret'. We are required to report the abuse for the good of the child and you don't want to have to break trust.

Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else".

Leading questions, e.g. "Did you feel bad?"

What you should not do

Panic—this will silence the child

Ask for details of the abuse

Push the child too hard to speak if they are reluctant to do so

Promise to keep secrets

Fail to report their concerns

Taking Action

Gathering information

It is important to record as much information as possible at the earliest opportunity. This should include the following:

Basic information (name, address, date of birth, etc)

Who the child lives with (if known)

Name of the child's school

The precise nature of the concern

Anything the child has said about their abuse

Volunteers and staff should report their child protection concerns to their line leader and a Child Protection Advisory Team (CPAT) member at the earliest opportunity—but in any event within the same working day. They should pass their written details to the CPAT member as a matter of urgency. (Contact details for CPAT members can be obtained from the line leader.)

If none of the CPAT members are available, contact Church's Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) at 0845 120 45 50 or National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) at 0808 800 5000.

Don't be afraid to speak out