

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STRATH & SLEAT

Church of Scotland Policy Statement

The Church of Scotland has a deep concern for the wholeness and well being of each individual and it seeks to safeguard the welfare of all people, regardless of age, who come into contact with the Church and its organisations.

Aims and arrangements for implementing this policy;

It is the responsibility of each individual within the fellowship of the Church to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people. To ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to provide a high standard of care to children and young people and that they are kept safe from harm while they are with staff or volunteers in this organisation we will:

- Adopt the Policy Statement agreed by the General Assembly on safeguarding the welfare of children and young people;
- Plan the work of the organisations so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children and young people may occur;
- Apply agreed procedures for protecting children and young people to all paid staff and volunteers;
- Give all staff and volunteers clear roles, and display in each church a list of appointed workers.
- Hold a register of every child involved with the group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand during the meeting times of the group in case of emergencies;
- Obtain parental consent for children to attend church groups and day visits using agreed forms.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised;

SELECTION

- All applicants, for paid and unpaid positions, will complete an application form, attend an interview and provide two references. These will always be taken up prior to confirmation of appointment. Appointments will be made conditional on the successful completion of a three month probationary period.

SCREENING

- Where relevant to the post, applicants will be asked to agree to an appropriate disclosure; we will make this clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.. Disclosures will be requested prior to the applicant taking up post.

TRAINING

- The successful applicant will receive induction training, which will give an overview of the organisation and ensure they know its purposes, values, services and structure;
- Relevant training and support will be provided on an ongoing basis, and will cover information about their role, and opportunities for practicing skills needed for the work;
- Training on specific areas such as health & safety procedures, identifying and reporting abuse, and confidentiality will be given as a priority to new staff and volunteers, and will be regularly reviewed;

SUPERVISION

- All staff and volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will provide regular feedback and support;
- Every member of staff and volunteer will attend an annual review, where their performance, skills, motivation and expectations will be discussed.

We believe that every child regardless of age has at all times and in all situations a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice that results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. In our group, if we have suspicions about a child's physical, sexual or emotional well being, we will take action.

All volunteers or staff are encouraged to share concerns with the child protection coordinator and/or advisory panel member. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the child is too frightened to go home or we have very serious doubts about the child's safety, we will contact Social Work Services or Police immediately. If our concerns are more general about a child's welfare, then we will discuss these with the child protection coordinator, who would then make a referral to Social Work who will make the necessary arrangements. It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately. To this end, volunteers and staff will follow the procedures below;

- 1) Upon the receipt of any information from a child or suspicion, it is necessary to record what they have seen, heard or know *accurately* at the time the event occurs;
- 2) Share their concerns with the child protection coordinator and agree action to take;
- 3) Always REFER **never** INVESTIGATE any suspicion or allegations about abuse.

We will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved in recruitment, training and supervision, are aware of this policy and have received appropriate training and support to ensure its full implementation.