

Child Protection Policy

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A General Policy Statement

1. Words of Life has a moral duty to ensure that it functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Throughout these policies and procedures, reference is made to “children and young people”. This term is used to mean “those under the age of 18”. The governing body recognise that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse, accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults.

The trustees are committed to ensuring that the organisation is committed to child protection and to that end will review this child protection policy as necessary.

2. Words of Life has nominated Paul Jackson as lead person with special responsibility for child protection issues. He has undertaken appropriate training as part of his employment. He will be the main contact point for Child Protection issues and will have contact details for relevant organisations available for employees and volunteers. In the event of a second contact being needed Jonathan Gibson has been nominated. Paul can be contacted at jackson@wordsoflife.org.uk, 01423505678 or 07890794863. Jonathan Gibson can be contacted on 07961228320.

3. Volunteers working with children will receive a copy of this policy in order to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and Words of Life’s procedures and policies.

4. The governing body recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

i. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse causes harm to a child’s person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.

ii Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or young person’s basic physical and/or psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of the child’s health or development.

iii Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant.

iv Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child's or young person's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

B Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse and Procedure for Reporting Concerns

If a child or young person tells a WOL volunteer about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interview the child, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the child is telling you.
- Do not put words into the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- Inform the child that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter.
- Note the main points carefully.
- Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said, did and your questions etc.
- Volunteers should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to the Designated Person.

C. Regulated Activity and obtaining Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks

1. Given the nature of the main work of Words of Life (Postal Bible School) the trustees do not believe that teachers are working unsupervised with children within the meaning of the Vulnerable Groups act 2006 and the contact between volunteer and children being regulated through this policy.

D. Contact Between Volunteers and Children

The role of teachers is to mark Bible-Time lessons, and this may include writing notes on the lessons, or writing letters to students for onward transmission with those lessons, in this event communications will be directed through the office. In addition teachers may send Christmas cards, holiday post cards and birthday cards directly to their students if they wish to, but must not arrange any meeting with a student by such means unless this is with the knowledge and consent of the child's parent or guardian. It is normally expected that any request initiated by a teacher to meet a student must be arranged through (or notified to) the office. It is acknowledged that in some instances that pupils may already be known to the teacher socially through a church connection and this policy does not seek to interfere with this relationship.

If a teacher plans any electronic communication with a student that is not a relative it should be reported to the office in advance in order that consent can be obtained from the child's parent or guardian. For the avoidance of doubt this includes social media and email.

E. Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against a Words of Life Volunteer.

The procedures apply to all trustees and to volunteers. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

1. In rare instances, staff of Christian organisations have been found responsible for child abuse. Because of their frequent contact with children and young people, staff may have allegations of child abuse made against them. Due to the nature of Words of Life PBS, contact is much less frequent than in a church situation. Words of Life recognises that an allegation of child abuse made against a volunteer may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and those investigations are thorough and not subject to delay.

2. The Organisation recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the organisation will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.
3. Any such allegation must be reported as soon as possible to Paul Jackson, who will refer the matter to Social Services or the Police as appropriate in accordance with his training.

F. Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Teachers are to be people of good character and repute in fellowship in their local church, either known personally to at least one of trustees or recommended by the elders of their local church (or other responsible person deemed as such by the trustees).

Each teacher shall complete an information form provided by the trustees to include a declaration of any previous convictions and that they have not been barred from working with children by the DBS (or its predecessors).

Date of last review 02.02.2017

Date of next review Trustee's Metting 2018