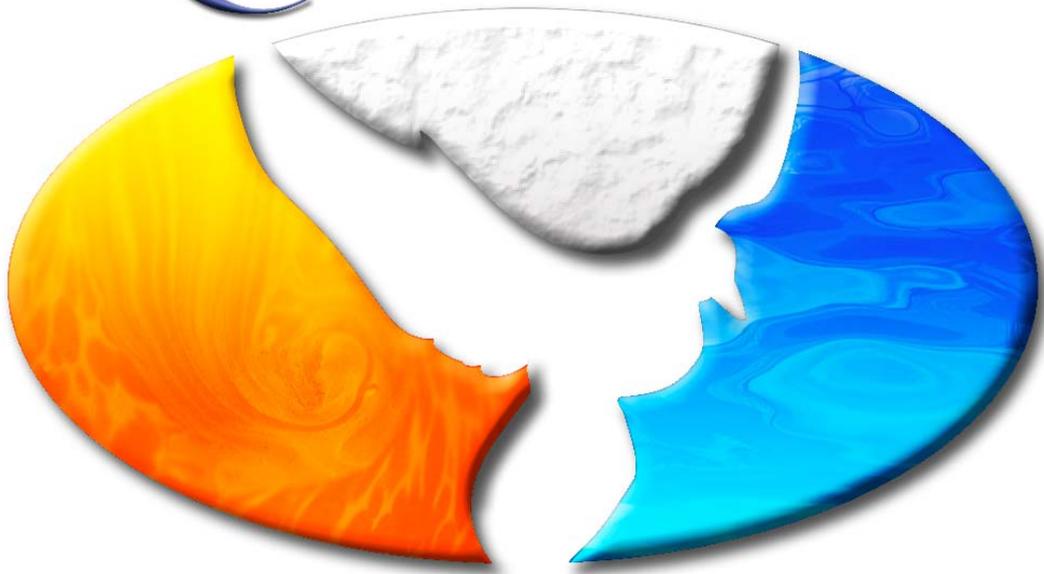


Riverside



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Policy on Child Protection
January 2008

PROTECT THE CHILDREN

Riverside Christian Fellowship

CHILDREN'S WORK

About Protect the Children

Protect the Children is a document designed to help Riverside Christian Fellowship and any of the organisations that operate under the covering of Riverside Christian Fellowship to provide a safe environment for children to be able to develop physically, intellectually and spiritually. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages and it is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people.

The policy is also used as part of the training for Church leaders and Children's workers and a copy is available for anyone to read.

Protect the Children uses the Home office code of practice for working with young people 'Safe from Harm' as a cornerstone for the work with Children.

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Riverside Christian Fellowship CHILDREN'S WORK

Safe from Harm - the Home Office Code of Practice

Safe from Harm was prepared to provide voluntary organisations with guidelines for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people in their care.

It applies to all workers in voluntary organisations, including the churches, whether they are paid or volunteers.

It encourages the development of good policies and practice to prevent the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children and young people while they are in their care.

At the same time it protects those who work with children and young people from unfounded accusations or from behaving in ways, which may be well intentioned but inadvisable.

The Home Office guidelines are a challenge to every church: -

- to shoulder responsibilities in caring for children and young people and those who work with them
- to be committed to good practice in work with children and young people
- to recognise that safeguarding the young is the responsibility of everyone, not just those who work with children and young people
- to be prepared to work in different ways, where necessary, seeing this as a new opportunity for service and mission

THE GUIDELINES

Guideline 1

Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.

Church response:

This is the responsibility of the church leadership. Please see the statement on page 8 - Church statement of protection of children.

Guideline 2

Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur.

Please see the Children's work policy documents, children at risk, discipline in children's work and Recruitment of Children's Workers.

Guideline 3

Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person.

Please see the Children's work policy documents, 'children at risk'.

Guideline 4

Apply agreed procedures for children to all paid staff and volunteers.

All new helpers and leaders will be expected to show that they have knowledge of the procedures agreed by the church leadership.

Guideline 5

Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles.

All leaders and helpers will be expected to work within the roles agreed.

Guideline 6

Use supervision as a means to protecting children.

Leaders should regularly review with the helper's ways and means of implementing these guidelines. Please see the Children's work policy documents, 'children at risk'

Guideline 7

Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.

All leaders and helpers will be expected to complete the approved application form before an interview is conducted (see Recruitment of Children's Workers Policy)

Guideline 8

Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children.

All applicants will be expected to provide a personal referee before an appointment is made (see Recruitment of Children's Workers Policy).

Guideline 9

Explore the applicant's experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment.

All applicants will be interviewed by a church leader or by another person nominated by the church leadership (see Recruitment of Children's Workers Policy).

Guideline 10

Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children.

All situations that involve work with children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions, which relate to children and young people, however old, must

be declared. Information about other convictions must also be given, as these may be relevant to the suitability of the person. The Church leadership will also undertake to have an applicant Police checked before an appointment is made (see Recruitment of Children's Workers Policy)

Guideline 11

Make paid and volunteer appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period.

Applicants for paid or volunteer work with children or young people must have the appointment confirmed by the church leadership and then begin a probationary period, which shall normally be for three months, but may be extended or reduced as required (see Recruitment of Children's Workers Policy)

Guideline 12

Issue guidelines on how to deal with disclosure or discovery of abuse.

Please see the Children's work policy document "children at risk"

Guideline 13

Train paid staff and volunteers, leaders and trustees in the prevention of child abuse.

All workers with children whether paid or volunteers shall agree to undertake training as preparation for the service applicable to the work they wish to do (see Recruitment of Children's Workers Policy)

Please do not see "protect the children" as a threat to existing work, rather it is a way of making even more effective the care and love which inspires both the work and the workers.

Riverside Christian Fellowship CHILDREN'S WORK

Statement of Riverside Christian Fellowship on the protection of Children

As the people of Riverside Christian Fellowship we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people. It is the duty of a person working with children and young people to prevent abuse and report any abuse discovered or suspected.

Riverside Christian Fellowship CHILDREN'S WORK

POLICY DOCUMENT - CHILDREN AT RISK (CHILD ABUSE)

Purpose of Document:-

The purpose of this document is to inform those working with children about child abuse, and to advise them of the procedure to be carried out if abuse is disclosed to them, or if abuse is suspected. This will assist us in providing a secure environment to children.

First and most important - Whether it is your first contact with suspected child abuse or not:-

- a. Ensure the welfare of the child.
- b. Talk to someone.

Should you encounter any situation involving a child which gives you cause for concern; make a written note of the conversation, observation, dates, times, names, etc. Pass on this information immediately to your church leader, (in the case of Riverside Christian Fellowship this is usually the Senior Leader or Children's Leader).

Do not be afraid to be wrong.

1 What is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

2 What is abuse?

- **Physical abuse** - includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, administering poisonous substances, suffocating/drowning, excessive force.
- **Neglect** - a failure to meet basic essential needs of a child, or if a child is left unsupervised at a young age.
- **Emotional abuse** - children harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.
- **Sexual abuse** - involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children or adolescents, in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

(A child may suffer more than one category of abuse)

3. Who abuses children?

- Very rarely a stranger.
- Often someone close to a child, e.g. parent, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative or friend of the family.
- Sometimes, someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker, or, very sadly, a church worker/leader.
- Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children.

4. How might we recognise abuse?

Warning signs: They are only a guide, they are not necessarily proof of abuse, but may be an indication of:-

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.

- Nervousness/watchfulness.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Changed or inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

Other areas where leaders should be vigilant are:-

- a) Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them, or where differing explanations have been received.
- b) Injuries, which occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- c) Injuries and illnesses, which have not received medical attention.
- d) Instances where children are kept away from the group or school inappropriately.
- e) Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- f) Any signs of neglect, under nourishment or inadequate care.
- g) Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- h) Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play.
- i) Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- j) Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- k) Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home.
- l) Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotation.

One or more warning signs may be evident.

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This (together with conflicting medical opinion) has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of sexual abuse. **It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be considered far more than in the past. They should make us stop and think - not jump to conclusions inappropriately!**

5 What to do if abuse is suspected.

- a) **We have a responsibility: The children's Act 1989 was brought out as a means to promote and protect the welfare of all children, and within the working together framework states that**

"The community as a whole has a responsibility for the well-being of children. This means that all citizens should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed. Individuals can assist the statutory authorities by bringing cases to their attention. Relatives, friends and neighbours of children are particularly well placed to do so, but they must know what to do if they are concerned, in addition to providing support for the family and child, which may include help caring for the child. They must also be confident, because of the difficult and sensitive nature of the situation, that any information they provide will be treated in a confidential way and used only to protect the interests of the child. They should know too that early action on their part is often the best way of helping a family stay together as well as protecting their child".

- b) **The local Social Services note the following in their preamble when dealing with voluntary social work agencies involved in childcare.**

(i) Voluntary agency staff involved with families and children are likely to receive referrals/information/allegations or witness concerns suggestive of the need for a child protection investigation under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. It is the responsibility of the voluntary agency to refer concerns to the Social Services department.

(ii) The role of the voluntary agency in these circumstances, except in the case of medical emergency, is essentially to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation, and provide information to the Social Services department, whose task it is to investigate under section 47 of the 1989 Children's Act. The role of the voluntary agency is not an investigative one.

6. Responding to abuse

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect:

- Contact your church leader immediately, (in children's work at Riverside Christian Fellowship this will be a member of the church leadership team.
- Speak with the parent and suggest medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor will then initiate further action, if necessary. Alternatively, encourage the parent to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- If a parent is unwilling to seek help, then offer to go with them. If they still fail to act you may need to seek help yourself.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctor of any suspicions you may have.

If there are allegations of sexual abuse:

Contact your line manager/church leader immediately. Do not speak to the parent (or anyone else) if there is a possibility that they could be involved. The fact that you may feel the child's story is unlikely must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that he/she has been abused by an older young person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

It is the responsibility of the church leader to pass on the possibility of abuse to the Social Services Department. The role of the church is essentially collecting and clarifying the precise details of the allegation and providing the information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the allegation.

Further guidance in responding to abuse:

Whilst the church worker will normally consult with their church leader before reporting incidents/suspicions of child abuse to the Social Services Department, the absence of the line managers should not delay referral to the Social Services Department. Exceptionally, should there be any

disagreement between the worker and church leader as to the appropriateness of such a referral, the church worker nevertheless retains the right as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services Department.

All children's workers should be aware that any allegations or suspicions are covered by pastoral confidentiality, and that therefore other church members have no rights to this information. **The sharing of information is therefore limited to a need to know basis.** This will protect the interests of all the parties concerned.

N.B. - Church leaders will often experience difficulty in making appropriate judgments. Professionals (e.g. Family doctors) are advised that they should discuss their suspicions with a specialist colleague first, with a view to then informing the statutory agencies. Similarly, Riverside Christian Fellowship leaders will seek the advice of an umbrella organisation.

7 Third party /anonymous referrals / allegations:

Families not known to the church:

In cases where allegations are made by a third party, the role of the church worker is to elicit as much information as possible from the referrer. Unless the person wishes to remain anonymous this should include the referrer's details (name, address, telephone number) and as much factual detail as possible about the child and family concerned (names of family members, address, name /date of birth of subject child, ethnic origin, etc). Information as to the cause of concern/nature of injuries/observations should be included.

The church worker must inform the referrer that information relating to any child at risk, will be shared with their church leader and may result in referral to the Social Services Department, and in this event the Social Services Department may wish to interview the referrer (if known) as part of the child protection investigation.

The church worker will then report the above information to the church leader and the latter will then seek advice from the umbrella organisation and then if there are sufficient concerns to make a referral to the Social Service Department, will do so.

Families known to the church:

In cases known to the church where the church suspects from either direct observation, third party, from the child or from a parent/carer, that the child is/has suffered **sexual abuse**, the matter must be reported immediately to the line manager/church leaders (in the case of Riverside Christian Fellowship it is Church Leadership Team) with a view to referral to Social Services Department or directly to the authorities if the church leaders are implicated.

Should a child allege sexual abuse, the parents should not under any circumstances be informed. Where a parent/carer alleges sexual abuse by another person of their child, the parent/carer should be advised not to inform the alleged perpetrator. Should the church worker by direct observation suspect sexual abuse, they should discuss this immediately with the church leader, with a view to discussion with Social Services as to how the matter will be dealt with.

In cases of **physical, emotional abuse or neglect** where the church worker, by observation considers that such concerns exist. The church worker should suggest to a parent that they should seek medical help. Approaching the doctor is less threatening and it's then up to the medical practitioner to decide whether there is a question of abuse, which needs to be referred to Social Services. If a parent is reluctant, then the worker could consider going with them or, if they fail to co-operate, then the matter should be immediately discussed with the line manager/church leader, who will refer to Social Services Department if appropriate. Of course, in cases of serious injury the church worker should summon medical help immediately.

8 How should we react if a child tells us he/she has been abused?

Children's workers are in a unique position and your relationship with children cannot be underestimated. Your group may be providing a safe haven, and perhaps the only place where a child feels comfortable and able to talk to adults. It is therefore possible that a child may approach you to talk about abuse.

The following guidance may be of help:-

a. General points:-

- Accept what the child says.
- Keep calm, do not appear to be shocked.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality.
- Even when a child has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware the child may have been threatened.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the child said, including the child's name, age, address, relevant family information, and details of the situation and the activity that preceded disclosure
- Never push for information or question the child.

b. Helpful things to say:-

- I believe you.
- I am glad you have told me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will try to help you.

c Avoid saying:-

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

d Concluding:-

- Again reassure the child they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens.
- Immediately refer to pastor or children's leader.

(Even if abuse is no longer happening it is still important to report the matter, as the adult may be abusing other children. Also it may be that the child will need guidance and help in overcoming the effects of the abuse, plus the police may wish to prosecute).

9. Practicalities for mutual protection of leaders and children involved in children's work.

i) Guidance

- **Avoid being on your own with any child.** This may mean groups working in one large room, or adjoining rooms.
- Never take a child home on your own - preferably have another helper with you, or else ensure that the last two children are dropped off together.

(Remember an allegation could also be made against you!)

- Be wise in your physical contact with children.
- Be wise with your relationship with the children - do not be over friendly with some at the expense of others. No favourites.
- Male helpers need to be particularly careful in what they say, and in being around forward young females. Female helpers similarly need

to be careful with forward young male children.

- Never smack, hit or physically discipline a child except by "holding" which may be used if there is an immediate danger of personal injury to the child or another person. (See policy document – discipline in children's work)
- If you feel that a child may have a "crush" on you, pray about it and talk to the senior leader or children's leader for advice and guidance.
- In order to help children, we need to develop healthy relationships by listening to them and respecting them.
- We must be mindful of the safety of the children at all times, and in all circumstances.
- Whenever possible have two or more adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the church premises. A parent may want to accompany their child, however, because of our policy they should either act as observers or only help their own child
- Children should not be taken on trips or away from the premises without permission of parents and church leadership.
- Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling a young person) ensure that others know that the interview is taking place and that someone else is around in the building.

Prayer works and helps in each and every circumstance.

ii) Boundaries

- The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) appropriate and related to the age of the child - accepting that some children have special needs
- Guidance on touch (see guidance on touch notes). For example, physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy and to be encouraged in public places, but should be discouraged in circumstances where an adult/child are on their own.
- Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and

respect in attitude, language used and actions.

- Respect the privacy of children, avoid questionable activity (e.g. rough/sexually provocative games or comments)
- If you invite a child to your home, ensure another adult is present and the parent is aware
- If transporting a child on their own, then it is better that the young person is seated in the back seat.

iii) Feedback

- It should be accepted that anyone seeing another worker acting in a way which could be misinterpreted should be able to speak to the individual or the line manager about the concern.
- Attend regular worker's meetings to review procedures to ensure common approach, sharing concerns and identifying other matters that may need clarification and guidance.
- Encourage report back to such a meeting when departure from guidelines becomes necessary - this provides protection to the individual and draws the leadership's attention to shortcomings and problem areas.
- Keep brief records of issues/decisions discussed at workers meetings.

iv) Helping children to protect themselves by:

- teaching safety generally/strangers/good and bad secrets and touches, etc.
- help children develop common sense rules.
- talk about suspicions or situations where they feel uncomfortable.
- examine the way in which we present Christian truths, eg children obeying parents. This can be a real problem for a child who is being abused - are we telling the child to accept the abuse? Tell children that if they feel uncomfortable or that something maybe wrong, they can always check things out with another adult.

10 Confidentiality:-

No children's worker is permitted to divulge any information concerning a child, or his/her family or anything a child may tell them to anyone other than the designated people previously mentioned. This is in order to protect the interests of the child. This confidentiality is a continuing requirement at all times and is required when workers are "off duty" or no longer involved in the work.

Riverside Christian Fellowship has a Confidentiality Policy that is included in the Protect the Children document to provide help in the way Children's Workers should treat any confidence entrusted to them.

Riverside Christian Fellowship CHILDREN'S WORK

POLICY DOCUMENT - DISCIPLINE IN CHILDREN'S WORK

1 What is discipline?

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.

2 Why discipline?

It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart. Hebrews 12:6 and Proverbs 22:6.

3 Do's and don'ts of discipline in children's work:-

- We need to be insistent, consistent and persistent.
- **NEVER** smack, or hit a child.
- Discipline out of love **NEVER** anger. (It is better to let a matter pass than discipline in anger - you may say something you regret, and that damage cannot be repaired).
- Do not shout in anger or put down a child.
- Lay down ground rules e.g., no swearing, racism, or calling each other names, a respect for property.
- Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what procedure will be taken if they are not kept.
- Talk to a child away from the 'group', not publicly. (Explain what they have done wrong, encourage remorse and leave them on a positive note).
- Never reject a child, just the behaviour. (Encourage the child that you want them, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour).
- Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with.

We therefore need to ask ourselves:-

(i) Why is the child behaving like that?

(ii) Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding.

(iii) What is the best method for disciplining and encouraging that child?

(iv) What encourages and builds children up?

(v) Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them to each other.

(vi) Work on relationships.

(vii) Be a good role model and set a good example. (Don't expect children to do what you don't do and vice-versa).

(viii) Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and don't allow some children to take all your time and energy.

(ix) Don't say something you don't mean, and do stick to what you say, (otherwise we are implying negative teaching to the children).

(Think before you speak).

(x) Pray for the children and with the children.

5 Some practical ideas for discipline:-

- **Change voice tone.**
- **Separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. (These children are often friends, don't separate them straight away, give them a chance, perhaps warn them and only separate if they are disruptive).**
- **Have the child sit right in front of you.**
- **Get a helper to sit next to the child.**
- **Pay no attention to them.**
- **Be proactive and encourage helpers to be proactive and not wait to be told to deal with a situation.**
- **Take the child aside and talk to them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging them on their strengths.**
- **Warn a child that you will speak to their parents and do so if necessary. (With some non-churched children we need to be wise in this, as speaking to parents may incur parent's wrath on the child and a ban from attending).**

- If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, seek advice and guidance from senior leader or children's leader.
- Don't be afraid of discipline.
- Warn them, send them outside the room (care re supervision), back into the service or ban them for a week. (Never a total ban without reference to your line manager and ensure parents are advised in case of banning).
- Encourage good behaviour.
- Remember each child is individual and unique. We need God's wisdom and love to encourage each one to reach their potential and to recognise their needs.
- **Pray before you meet.**

Guidelines on touch

These notes should be read in conjunction with the policy for discipline in children's work.

Touch is not only normal, but also an essential part of life for children. Most of us will have seen the positive and loving aspects of physical touch, but many will have seen and heard how something good can become twisted into something ugly.

Physical contact between adults and children can be healthy and can be encouraged in public places, but should be discouraged in circumstances where an adult/child are on their own.

Dos and don'ts of physical contact

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs – not the children's worker.
- Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as sexually stimulating for the adult or child.

- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others, except in exceptional circumstances, such as when they need medical attention.
- Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to constructively challenge a colleague if necessary.

Riverside Christian Fellowship

POLICY ON CONFIDENTIALITY

Proverbs 11: 13 -"A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy man keeps a secret. "

The definition of confidentiality is, "the act of keeping private or secret, information or material entrusted", whether this is spoken or written. Information entrusted does not become the property of the confidant, but remains the property of the one who confides. However, the practice of confidentiality in a truly caring community is more complicated and requires explanation.

Riverside Christian Fellowship Leadership Team and the Pastoral Ministry Team will seek to provide a private, warm and caring environment for people, who may need to speak about things that are sensitive and/or personal. Riverside Christian Fellowship believes that those in the ministry have a duty of confidentiality to the confider. The confider who seeks advice or counsel has, in the act of asking, given their implicit consent for any information to be shared within the team structures of the church.

The different ministry teams working in Riverside Christian Fellowship will only share confidential information on a "need to know" basis. On receiving confidential information, team members are required to "debrief" with one of the leadership. Any information shared with a leader will be discussed with other leaders on a need to know basis. The leadership will act as one for the well being of the church and to promote effective prayer.

If any written information is kept it must be stored in a locked file in a secure church office and the confider shall be allowed access to any such information, upon request.

The duty of the church to preserve a confidence is a prima facie duty but

one that can be overridden by other more compelling duties which the confidant should recognise within the principle of "paramountcy". In these cases a confidence may be shared with others, including outside agencies.

Grounds for overriding the duty of confidentiality:

1. The protection of the confider from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
2. The protection of an identified second party from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
3. The protection of non-identified individuals or society at large from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.
4. The protection of the church community from harm, whether emotional, physical or spiritual.

The confidant should believe that there are reasonable grounds to override the duty of confidentiality but he or she is not required to be certain, or provide proof or evidence that the belief is justified. Before such a sharing of information takes place, it may be appropriate to discuss the matter with a leader of the church. This would apply only where the information is shared outside of the normal debriefing policy operated by the church.

It is important to clearly state how this policy statement will work within the church. Two of the pillars of the policy are "paramountcy" and "need to know", and these are explained below, together with the necessity of "debriefing".

a) Paramountcy

This is the basis by which it may be decided whose interest is of paramount importance. For instance, a client of the Pastoral Ministry Team may, in confidence, share that they are abusing a child. By the simple application of the rules for overriding the duty of confidentiality, one can see that the duty to the child is paramount to the duty of confidentiality.

b) Need to know

This is the basis for deciding the detail of the information that is being shared, either through the usual debriefing requirements or where it is believed that there are reasonable grounds to override the duty of confidentiality (paramountcy). The question one should ask is: does this person need to know this detail of the situation?

However, when dealing with statutory agencies, every assistance should be given.

c) Debriefing

The confider should be aware that debriefing to the leadership of the church is in their best interest. It means that the leadership is able to offer their experience, and provide the ministry team members with the means of discharging their responsibility within the jurisdiction of the church.

This policy is in place for the protection of everyone in the church environment. If the policy guidelines are not followed in a given situation, it should be understood that this falls outside the covering and responsibility of the church.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be addressed to the church leadership.

Riverside Christian Fellowship CHILDREN'S WORK

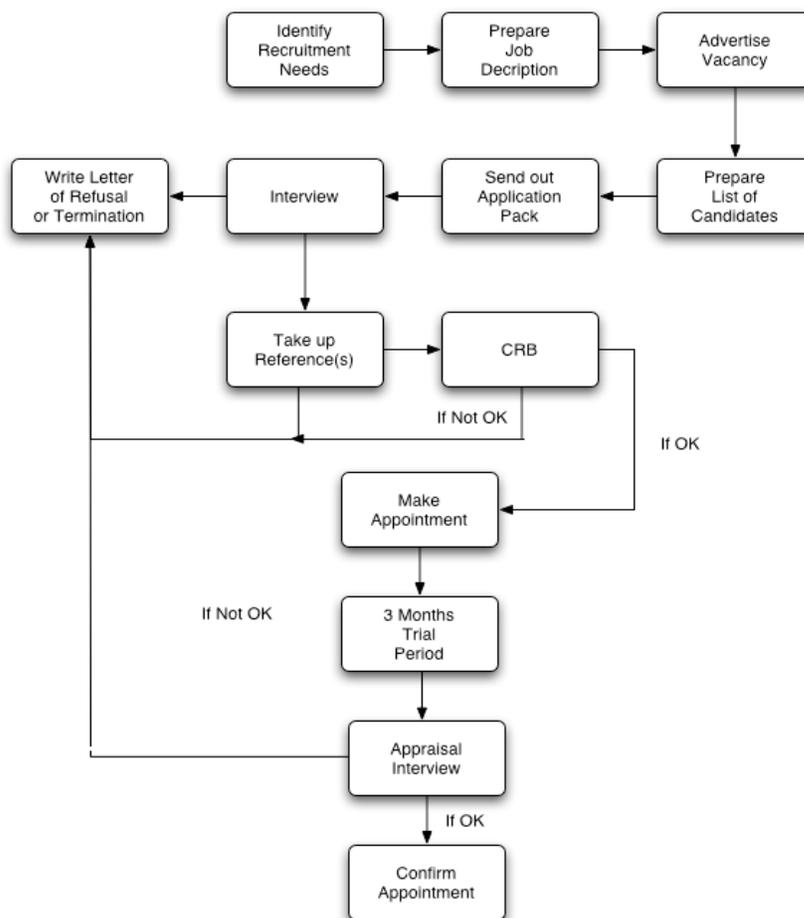
POLICY DOCUMENT – Recruitment of Children’s and Youth Workers

The recruitment procedures and the appointing of Children’s Workers is an essential part of protecting children, therefore Riverside Christian Fellowship has developed a policy to cover the process.

Recruitment Procedure

An important part of recruiting Children’s Workers is forward planning as appointing such workers will take up to three months. Therefore it is important that no steps are taken to short circuit the process.

Recruitment Process



Job Description

It is important that the recruitment needs are clearly identified and that the approved job description is used in the preparation work. If none of the approved job description is suitable or adequately describes the recruitment needs, then it is important the Church leadership approve a new job description that does meet the needs of the position.

Church Diary

All voluntary positions will be advertised in the Church diary, thereby giving people the opportunity to make application. Other positions will be advertised appropriately.

Application Pack

The Application Pack should be issued to the candidate at least one week before the first interview to enable them to read through all the documents. The Application Pack consists of the following:

Protect the Children, which includes:

1. About Protect the Children
2. Safe from Harm Introduction
3. Policy Statement
4. Children at Risk Policy
5. Discipline in Children's work Policy
6. Confidentiality Policy
7. Recruitment of Children's Workers Policy
8. The Policy in relation to the use of Criminal Records Information

Application Form

Job Description

Interview

Before starting work, volunteers/staff will be asked to attend an interview. The level of formality and the person(s) responsible for the interview will depend on the role, and the work involved in that role.

Interviews are an important tool to find the best person for the job described in the job description.

During the interview the interviewer will go through the persons application form and explain the responsibilities of the job. It is important at this interview to ask direct question to discover any history that would

assist the decision making process

It is also important to discover any personal information that would be relevant to the decision-making process including referees etc.

There should be a minimum of two people responsible for the interview with each interviewer keeping notes that should be collated afterwards.

The Disclosure request form (the form required for Police checks with the Criminal Records Bureau) should be completed and checked as being correct at this interview.

Make Appointment

The appointment is usually decided at the interview.

The appointment is for a three-month probationary period and will include at least one appraisal interview before the review interview at the end of the probationary period.

If the candidate was successful during the probationary period then a one-year appointment is made and this is to be reviewed before the end of that appointment.

References and Training

Before starting work as a children's worker at least one reference may be sought. For the appointment of staff it is important that at least two references are obtained for any candidate.

It is important that any decision about a candidate is fair and will be based on the candidate's skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values of the organisation.

Appropriate training regarding child protection, policy and procedure at Riverside Christian Fellowship will be provided upon appointment to a role.

Police Checks

Whilst police checks have a value they are no substitute for a working policies, and best practice followed in the operation of any policies to protect the children. Although a disclosure notice will provide some information, the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) does not contain all information.

Therefore it is important that the Disclosure notice is not seen as a complete check but rather as one of many tools that should be used by any voluntary organisation, such as a church.

Riverside Christian Fellowship has a Policy in relation to the use of Criminal Records Information to ensure that we comply with the CRB code of practice.

Appointments

All appointments made by Riverside Christian Fellowship for the position of Children's and Youth Workers will in the first instance be for a probationary period of three months and thereafter for fixed terms of one year. However, once someone has been accepted as a worker for Riverside Christian Fellowship and has been in continuous fellowship with in the church, then there will be no requirement to follow the recruitment process.

Riverside Christian Fellowship

CHILDREN'S WORK

The Policy in relation to the use of Criminal Records Information

Riverside Christian Fellowship is committed to recruit all staff and volunteers in accordance with "Safe from Harm" principles, the Criminal Records Bureau "Code of Practice", legislative requirements and the policies expressed in "PROTECT THE CHILDREN"

In particular, Riverside Christian Fellowship seeks to treat all people equally and with respect. We are committed to a fair system for the selection of volunteers. We are also committed to the safety and protection of children in our care and for this reason there are some appointments within the church for which it is necessary that an Enhanced Disclosure check is carried out. Enhanced Disclosures will be carried out for the following positions:

- Anyone working with children as defined in Work with children policy document.
- Sunday School Teachers
- Children's and Youth Club workers

The people responsible for the recruitment and selection of Children's workers are:

- The children's work Leader together with the Senior Leader, and
- The Church Leadership Team

These people will assist the prospective worker in the Disclosure Application form from a registered body, the umbrella organisation and assist the prospective worker in the completion of the form and then return the form to the registered body. All recruitment decisions involving the disclosure process will be made sensitively and fairly. In the event of a problem / query / complaint – these will in the first instance be dealt with by the church leadership but may also be referred to the registered body for advice

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Riverside Christian Fellowship

APPLICATION FORM FOR VOLUNTARY WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Church Leadership is responsible for the appointment of all workers with children and young people. Every worker should fill in a copy of this form, which should be retained by the secretary of the church council.

Full Name

Maiden or Former Name

Home Address

.....

Telephone day.....evening.....

Date of Birth

How long have you lived at the above address?

if less than 12 months please give the following information:

Previous address

.....

How long there?

Name of church attended

.....

Name of minister

Please give details of previous experience of looking after or working with children and/or young people, including details of training received. (use the reverse side if necessary)

Reference please give the name, address, telephone number and position or relationship of two people who know you.

Declaration. (see note below *)

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or are you at present the subject of criminal charges?

Yes / No

(N.B. The disclosure of an offence may be no bar to your appointment)

Nature of Offence

Date of Offence

Signed date

* Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this post is exempt from the provision of section 4 (ii) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975, and you are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the Act and in the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children and / or young people within the church.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE WORKER WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE
I have understood the nature of the work I am to do with children / young people. I have read the guidelines produced by the church for the protection of children and young people called **PROTECT THE CHILDREN**. I understand that it is my duty to protect children and young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or suspected.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 2

Riverside Christian Fellowship

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Under Home Office Guidelines this form should be completed for all workers with children and young people. Volunteers and staff should have knowledge and understanding of the churches purpose, values and structure.

Name of worker

Name of Group (e.g. kidzone)

Where/when they meet

Age range

Person to whom immediately responsible (e.g. Youth Group Leader

.....

Work to be undertaken:

1. To encourage emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical growth and well being, in accordance with meaningful partnership/ membership of Riverside Christian Fellowship
2. To undertake such duties that advance the work and vision of Riverside Christian Fellowship as decided by your church leaders.
3. To provide pastoral support in accordance with the church's child protection policy and vision.
4. To keep within the guidelines laid down in the child protection policy and with particular regard to confidentiality, both on and off duty.
5. To ensure that you listen to the ministry of the Sundays that you are on duty, in the week following that Sunday or as soon as is possible after that week.
6. To ensure that NO unauthorised person, except a parent, is allowed to

remain in any children's group

7. To ensure that prior permission is granted by the church council for any activities outside a normal Sunday group.

Group to whom responsible (e.g. Church Leadership)

.....

Signed on behalf of the Church Leadership

.....

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE WORKER WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE
I have understood the nature of the work I am to do with children / young people. I have read the guidelines produced by the church for the protection of children and young people called **PROTECT THE CHILDREN**. I understand that it is my duty to protect children and young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or suspected.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 3

CRB Code of Practice for Disclosure Information

INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice is published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997 ("the Act") in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons ("Disclosure information") under Part V of that Act.

Disclosure information is information:

- contained in criminal record certificates under section 113 of the Act (which are referred to in this Code as "Standard Disclosures"); or
- contained in enhanced criminal record certificates under section 115 of the Act (referred to in this Code as "Enhanced Disclosures"); or
- provided by the police under section 115(8) of the Act.

Except where indicated otherwise, the Code of Practice applies to all recipients of Disclosure information -that is to say:

- registered persons;
- those countersigning Disclosure applications on behalf of registered persons; and
- others receiving such information.

Where reference is made to "employers", this should be read as including any person at whose request a registered person has countersigned an application, including:

- voluntary organisations and others engaging, or using the services of, volunteers; and
- regulatory and licensing bodies.

Further information in relation to the Code, and other matters relating to registered persons and others having an involvement with Disclosure information, is contained in an Explanatory Guide.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE CODE

These are as follows :

1 Fair use of Disclosure information

Recipients of Disclosure information shall:

observe guidance issued or supported by the Criminal Records Bureau ("the Bureau") on the use of Disclosure information -and, in particular, recipients of Disclosure information shall not unfairly discriminate against the subject of Disclosure information on the basis of conviction or other details revealed.

In the interest of the proper use of Disclosure information and for the reassurance of persons who are the subject of Disclosure information, registered persons shall:

have a written policy on the recruitment of ex- offenders, so that a copy can be given to all applicants for positions where a Disclosure will be requested;

ensure that a body or individual at whose request applications for Disclosures are countersigned has such a written policy and, if necessary, provide a model for that body or individual to use.

In order that persons who are, or who may be, the subject of Disclosure information are made aware of the use of such information, and be reassured Employers shall:

- ensure that application forms for positions where Disclosures will be requested contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of a successful application, so that applicants are aware of the situation;
- include in application forms or accompanying material a statement to the effect that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position, in order to reassure applicants that Disclosure information will not be used unfairly;
- discuss any matters revealed in Disclosure information with the person seeking the position before withdrawing an offer of employment;

- make every subject of a Disclosure aware of the existence of this Code of Practice, and make a copy available on request; and in order to assist staff to make appropriate use of Disclosure information in reaching decisions, make available guidance in relation to the employment and fair treatment of ex-offenders and to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

2 Handling of Disclosure information

Recipients of Disclosure information:

- must ensure that Disclosure information is not passed to persons not authorised to receive it under section 124 of the Act. Under section 124, unauthorised disclosure is an offence;
- must ensure that Disclosures and the information they contain are available only to those who need to have access in the course of their duties;
- must securely store Disclosures and the information that they contain;
- should retain neither Disclosures nor a record of Disclosure information contained within them for longer than is required for the particular purpose. In general, this should be no later than six months after the date on which recruitment or other relevant decisions have been taken, or after the date on which any dispute about the accuracy of the Disclosure information has been resolved. This period should be exceeded only in very exceptional circumstances, which justify retention for a longer period.

Registered persons shall:

- have a written security policy covering the correct handling and safekeeping of Disclosure information; and
- ensure that a body or individual at whose request applications for Disclosures are countersigned has such a written policy, and, if necessary, provide a model for that body or individual to adopt.

3 Assurance

Registered persons shall:

- co-operate with requests from the Bureau to undertake assurance checks as to the proper use and safekeeping of Disclosure information;
- report to the Bureau any suspected malpractice in relation to this Code of Practice or any suspected offences in relation to the misuse of Disclosures.

4 Umbrella Bodies

An Umbrella Body is one which has registered with the Bureau on the basis that it will countersign applications on behalf of others who are not registered.

Umbrella Bodies must satisfy themselves that those on whose behalf they intend to countersign applications are likely to ask exempted questions under the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Umbrella Bodies must take reasonable steps to ensure that those to whom they pass Disclosure information observe the Code of Practice.

5 Failure to comply with the Code of Practice

The Bureau is empowered to refuse to issue a Disclosure if it believes that:

- a registered person; or
- someone on whose behalf a registered person has failed to comply with the Code of Practice.

Appendix 4

Glossary of Terms

Child Protection Policy	All organisations working with children should formally adopt a child protection policy. Such policies are recommended in government guidance such as "Safe from Harm" and "Working Together to Safeguard Children". The Charity Commission require organisations (including churches) to have a child protection policy in place before granting new registrations. Policies are also an expectation of many insurance companies
Code of Practice	This Code sets out the requirements that employers and other bodies must comply with in order to use standard and enhanced disclosures
Criminal Conviction	Criminal conviction is a finding of guilt by a criminal court. Criminal convictions form part of the criminal record
Criminal Record	A criminal record relates to a person's convictions, whether spent or unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974; cautions; reprimands; final warnings and other non-conviction information such as acquittals
Criminal Records Bureau or CRB	The CRB is an executive agency of the Home Office, set up under the Police Act 1997 to facilitate safer recruitment to protect children and vulnerable adults
Counter-signatory	An individual within a registered body or umbrella organisation (authorised to support applications for a criminal records disclosure)
Disclosures	The criminal records certificates. There are three types of disclosure: basic, standard and enhanced.

Employment	Employment in CRB terms is interpreted widely and covers volunteer and paid work
Lead signatory	The person in the registered body (or umbrella organisation) heading up the service and authorised to support applications for criminal record checks.
Police National Computer	The police national database against which all checks will be made. This is the only source of information, which will be used for basic and standard disclosures. For enhanced disclosures, checks against local police records will also be made.
Recruiter	The description given to the individual within the church or organisation responsible for recruitment of workers. The recruiter is required to see and check evidence of identity of each applicant and will be the person in direct contact with AOG CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT in the checking process. The ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT disclosure unit will only be able to deal with the named recruiter in any matters concerning an individual application. Recruiters are required to handle all disclosure information in a sensitive and confidential manner.
Registered body	The registered body is an employer or other agency registered with the Criminal Records Bureau to administer standards and enhance disclosures.
Safe from Harm	Issued by the Home Office in 1993, "Safe from Harm" contains various recommendations to be adopted by voluntary organisations working with children.
Umbrella organisation	Umbrella organisations are registered bodies (see above) providing access to CRB information to other organisations not registered in their own right

**Working Together to
Safeguard Children**

The current edition of Working Together to Safeguard Children was issued in December 1999 by various government departments. The volume is addressed to statutory and voluntary agencies providing services to children and contains details on how agencies should work together to protect children in each local community.

Acknowledgements

Safe to Grow – Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1994

Protecting Children and Appointing Children’s Workers - CCPAS, 1998

A Church Policy - Watton on the Web, 2005

Raising the Standard, The Definitive Guide for Children’s Workers - Nick Harding, 1998

Safe from Harm – The Code of Practice for Safeguarding the Welfare of Children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales, 1993