



Tree of Life church

**CHILD PROTECTION
POLICY**

March 2010

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Clarification of Terms

The terms used within churches for people who work with children vary. In Tree of Life Church, we have Children's Workers and Children's Leaders who run the various Children's ministries throughout the church. We also have various roles and titles for people who work within the Youth church and Youth cell ministry.

For the purpose of this policy, for clarity and simplicity, the word **worker** refers to any adult who is engaged in children's or youth work on behalf of Tree of Life Church.

The word **leader** refers to any adult who has a supervisory role within the youth or children's ministry. This simply means someone who has a role which involves making decisions for the ministry. This includes but is not limited to Superkid's Academy Commander, XCEL cell leaders and tribe leaders, the Rootz Captain and the Seedlings Leader.

The words children, youth and young people throughout this policy are interchangeable; wherever one is used then the rest are implied.

Although the guidelines we are supposed to follow are recommendations for caring for young people under the age of 16, due to the fact that the 1989 Children's Act defines children as persons under 18 this is the age range that this policy covers. This ensures we are promoting best practice.

Acknowledgement given to the Baptist Union of Great Britain publication "Safe to Grow" which has been used in the development of these guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Sarah is crying as she arrives at church. You are unsure as to why. As a Rootz worker or Superkid's Academy worker you listen to her tell you what she is going through at home. What she tells you makes you think that she is being abused at home.
- ❖ Matthew is crying as he walks out of XCEL Youth Church. As a youth cell leader you listen to his problems. What he tells you suggests that one of the other youth cell leaders may be bullying him.

Either of these situations could happen in any church. Either of these situations or situations like them could happen in Tree of Life Church. Today, it is a fact of life we have to recognize that some children and young people are abused physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect. Children may come to our church bearing the marks of their abuse from their own unsafe world.

Churches have to work safely and responsibly with children and young people, but occasionally those who have been put in place and entrusted to work with them may actually cause them harm.

The Home Office has produced a set of recommendations and guidelines for all voluntary groups to help them produce a framework to promote the welfare of children. This policy document is about how Tree of Life Church ensures and promotes the welfare of children and young people. This set of recommendations is called *Safe From Harm* (Pub. Home Office, London, 1993, ISBN number 0862529 93-X), and although it does not have the force of law it is recommended as steps to enable the safeguarding of everyone under 18.

As Tree of Life Church has a trusted position within the community and area, we will follow the recommendations so that everyone in the church who works with children and young people, as well as every leader in the church, knows how to:

- ❖ Protect children from abuse within the church structure
- ❖ Act responsibly if abuse is discovered or disclosed

This booklet has been prepared to give Tree of Life Church and the leaders of the church practical and helpful guidance so they can follow the guidelines found in *Safe From Harm*.

You may think that you do not need to read and grasp these guidelines. You may believe some of the following:

- ❖ Abuse could never happen in this church
- ❖ We don't have a large enough children's ministry for it to be an issue

- ❖ We are desperate for any help we can get, so why the hassle of screening people

However, the fact is that there are over 50,000 children in this country which have been registered at "at risk". Any child could be abused and any adult could be an abuser. Child abusers can be very devious, and it can be the case that they are drawn to places where they have easy access to children.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WORLD AND IN THE CHURCH

All human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1.27) and are part of His creation, although in a fallen world that image is marred. All children are precious to God.

In the Old Testament, there are at least two examples of children (Samuel and Jeremiah) hearing God's voice and speaking to the nation as prophets (1 Sam. 3; Jer. 1.4-8). In fact when Jeremiah tried to use his age as an excuse not to speak to the nation, God told him not to say "I am only a child."

When Jesus became human, He did not become a full grown human, He became a child. He had a family, he grew and developed. By doing this, Jesus affirmed the value and dignity of children. God has had experience as a child!

A child is a whole person with rights and needs and should be honoured and respected by all of us. Indeed, Jesus told us that children had qualities that adults need to emulate to find the way to the kingdom of God (Matthew 18.3).

Children are valued yet vulnerable parts of our church community, and we need to take care of them. We must take seriously the charge of Jesus to welcome children (Luke 9.48), protect children (Matthew 18.6-10) and allow children to worship and fellowship with Him (Mark 10.13-16).

We have as Tree of Life Church a wonderful opportunity to follow these charges of Jesus and to stand alongside our young people in the face of a culture which still regards them as possessions. We will model in our worship services, in our structure and fellowship and in our mission a community where:

- ❖ Children are listened to and feel they belong
- ❖ Children are nurtured and feel (and are) safe
- ❖ Parents are supported and encouraged
- ❖ Everyone who works with young people is supported and protected

Child abuse is not a new sin. But it is only in the last several decades that abuse – and in particular sexual abuse – of children has been recognized and named as a point of law. The protection of children from harm is a real issue – and one that is urgent not just because of the children in the church but because adults who were abused as children and suffered secretly now feel able to share the pain and grief of their experiences. This means that as a church we must provide appropriate pastoral care and education to these "survivors".

SIGNS OF ABUSE

When children and young people receive love, care and discipline (against which they can sometimes rebel) in a safe environment they have the chance to grow into healthy, stable adults. This process can be prevented by adults or other children who hurt the young people. This kind of damage is called abuse.

Children who suffer abuse will behave in a variety of ways that may be considered abnormal as they are struggling to cope with a world that has gone wrong for them.

Workers who work with children and young people need to be able to detect the signs which are actually cries for help which – in most cases – the young person concerned cannot articulate in a normal manner.

However, there can easily be other reasons for what a child is doing and a worker is not expected (nor is it wise) to make a decision on their own as to whether abuse is taking place. Tree of Life Church has a process of consultation which must be followed if abuse is suspected. This process is found in Appendix 4 of this policy.

CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse	when a child's body is hurt
Emotional Abuse	when children are not loved and shown affection; or taunted or threatened; or given responsibilities beyond their years
Sexual Abuse	where adults use children and young people to satisfy their sexual desires
Neglect	where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children and protect them from danger leading to impairment of the child's health and/ or development

A variety of personal circumstances could cause an adult to abuse a child physically or neglect them, and these kinds of abuse can be the easiest to spot. Signs of emotional and sexual abuse can be a lot more subtle; and with sexual abuse in particular, children may be sworn to secrecy as part of the abuse pattern, so the child will be reluctant to disclose what is happening.

A summary of the signs of abuse is given in Appendix 4.

WHO ABUSES CHILDREN

- ❖ Most abusers are known to the child. It may be a parent, sibling, other relation, family friend or neighbour.
- ❖ Sometimes the abuser is an adult in a position of authority over the child, such as a church worker.
- ❖ They can come from any background.
- ❖ There is no certain way of identifying an abuser or potential abuser; they are not weird people who seem different from the rest of society.
- ❖ Abusers are individuals who need help and the love of Christ themselves.
- ❖ Most adult abusers are individuals who have been abused themselves as children.

Although Tree of Life Church will take the pastoral care of any adult abuser very seriously indeed, and will love and care for them and those that are close to them; our primary concern will always be to ensure the safety and welfare of children.

TRAINING WORKERS TO HELP ABUSED CHILDREN

Workers Have Feelings

Most of the government guidelines are concerned with good practice to protect the children, it is a fact that if workers spot abuse and have to deal with an abused child and listen to them disclose abuse that this can be distressing for them. Often children's workers are young adults themselves and inexperienced at dealing with what can be horrific accounts of situations.

Part of our commitment at Tree of Life Church will be to carefully train all children's workers to handle their emotions in case they do meet someone who has been abused. If a child tells their secret to a worker who has not had that kind of training and experience what can unfortunately happen is that the worker shows revulsion on their face and the child misinterprets that expression and feels guilty for sharing. The victim needs to talk to someone who is not visibly shocked, but will listen attentively to what has been said.

Overcoming Defence Mechanisms

Adults are often very reluctant to admit that someone is being abused, especially if the child comes from a family that we are close to. We have built into all of us a natural defence mechanism which refuses to notice or admit abuse. This is perfectly natural, but it can prevent us from being alert to when abuse happens. Effective training helps us place things into perspective. Note: this is not talking about treating everyone with suspicion. That is not the atmosphere that we will cultivate within Tree of Life Church.

Other Help

Tree of Life Church is committed to ensuring that the best training is available to its children's workers. This involves providing and promoting training from CCPAS and taking groups to their training sessions when they are local to the area.

Protection of Our Workers

People who work with young people give up a great deal of their time, effort, money and love often for no financial gain, and with no thought of gain except for the chance to help develop the church and make a difference in the lives of young people.

Workers need protection – it is a sad fact that sometimes children make wrongful allegations. In providing good training, we help our workers see actions that could be misconstrued or situations which could make them vulnerable. Appendix 3 gives examples of attitudes and actions that will protect children and workers.

PASTORAL CARE

Suspected Abuse

In the case that abuse is suspected, the first priority from the pastoral team is that the child is made safe. The second priority is that the worker's feelings about the child's experience are worked through. It is important within Tree of Life Church that we have a structure that means the worker can be supported and encouraged and loved. Similar help needs to be offered to the family and those surrounding the child who may be damaged by what has happened.

This may include the abuser and their immediate family and friends.

In Tree of Life Church, every member of the church is part of a cell. They have a cell group leader who can provide comfort and love in these situations. In difficult situations, ward leaders, area leaders and area pastors can easily be called upon and all have experience in comforting and encouraging people.

Abuse situations are often highly confidential, so should not be shared around the church or in cell meetings. It is more appropriate to contact your cell leader who will ensure that you are provided the highest level of pastoral care.

Survivors

It may be that the worker training or just the church setting or a cell meeting or other event may lead an adult to share about their past abuse. These people will need pastoral care and it should be accessed in the way outlined above. The area pastors can refer people to professionals if necessary.

SAFE FROM HARM GUIDELINES

Section 1: Organizing the Church to Protect Children

Guideline 1: Adopt a Policy Statement on Safeguarding the Welfare of Children

Our policy statement is found in Appendix 2 of this document. This policy statement is available on our church website, and is displayed in Harmony House on a Sunday when we meet. All workers with children and young people are presented with this document as part of their training.

We are committed to reviewing the policy annually and reaffirming it on these occasions.

Guideline 2: Plan Your Work So As To Minimize Situations Where Abuse of Children May Occur

Our good practice guidelines are found in Appendix 3. All our children's workers will receive a copy of these guidelines.

Guideline 3: Introduce a System Whereby Children May Talk to an Independent Person

Access to an independent person gives children and young people more rights and reduces the potential for undiscovered abuse. In Tree of Life Church, this individual is called the "Children's Champion".

Our Children's Champion will have the following qualities:

- ❖ Not involved in children's work in any form
- ❖ Available to listen to young people through the XCEL, Rootz and Seedlings ministries of the church as well as the Superkid's Academy.
- ❖ Available to listen to children no matter what they want to share

We will ensure that the Children’s Champion receives adequate training in how to deal with disclosed or discovered abuse (see Appendix 4). Further information about the Children’s Champion is found in Appendix 7.

Section 2: Supporting Staff In Order to Protect Children

Guideline 4: Apply Agreed Procedures For Protecting Children with All Workers

It is not safe to assume that anyone can automatically be excluded from being a potential abuser. A person's good name or reputation should not be the way in which they are protected. The steps that we have in place in Tree of Life Church are universal to all children's workers and leaders, and all pastors.

This does not mean we treat everyone in the church with suspicion – it simply means that the rules for child protection apply equally to all.

Written acceptance of the church's policy on child protection is a condition of service for all workers and leaders.

Guideline 5: Give All Workers Clear Roles

This prevents confusion. Abusers often thrive in environments of confusion. Although most workers and leaders in Tree of Life Church are voluntary helpers, this does not exclude us from having clear roles and the need for accountability.

All children's workers have a job description which includes:

- ❖ Their immediate supervisor
- ❖ Anyone they are responsible for supervising
- ❖ A description of their role within the church
- ❖ The duty they have within the church to assist in preventing abuse and guidelines on the actions they should take if abuse is discovered or disclosed.
- ❖ (A sample job description can be found in Appendix 5)

Guideline 6: Using Supervision as a Means of Protecting Children.

Every worker in Tree of Life Church, no matter how experienced, has someone who supervises their work. Ultimately each Director is responsible for all the workers in their department. All directors report to the appropriate pastor.

Within the church, each of the departments should meet monthly or quarterly dependent on the department for prayer and care. All people who supervise others will be trained in how to do this effectively and lovingly.

Section 3: Choosing Staff to Protect Children

It may be that you wonder whether all of this safeguarding information is necessary, especially if you are reading this manual in one sitting. As Christians we are supposed to always think the best of one another, and it is not pleasant to suggest that some people should not be trusted.

In Tree of Life Church we are a family and our leaders and our workers know each other well – this is one of the key advantages of our cell structure. As we are a growing church there may be times where we are so short of children’s workers that we would be tempted to gratefully accept any offer made to us of help – screening people is an extra burden on some of the hardest working people in the whole church!

However, we have to weigh all of these facts against the reality that we have a serious duty to prevent unsuitable people working with children – which I am sure you are aware can and does happen in many churches.

Having this selection system in itself is a strong deterrent to many potential abusers. The procedures in this manual are to become part of the fabric of church life in Tree of Life Church, and apply to all helpers no matter how much or how little they help.

If these screening processes outlined below mean that we have to at times delay launching or expanding various children’s ministries then that is for us the better option.

Guideline 7: Treat All Would-Be Workers As Job Applicants for Any Position Involving Contact with Children

In Tree of Life Church anyone wanting to work with children must fill in the Personal Record Form found in Appendix 5. They then must have a short interview with the appropriate pastor or department director.

Guideline 8: Gain At Least One Reference From A Person who Has Experience of the Applicant's Paid Work or Contact with Children as a Volunteer

Guideline 9: Explore All Applicant's Experience of Working or Contact with Children in an Interview before Appointment

In the interview with the appropriate pastor or department director, they will ascertain the applicant's experience of working with young people. They will be informed of the church's policy on safeguarding and told that they need to be prepared to undergo relevant training.

Although the interview will be searching, it will be conducting in a positive and supportive manner. All interviewers will be experienced children's workers.

During this interview, the person who wishes to work with our young people should be prepared to provide identification and a reference.

Guideline 10: Ask Whether the Volunteer Has Any Convictions For Criminal Offenses.

Legally, all children's work is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore, all convictions no matter how old, which relate to children and young people must be declared. Information about all criminal convictions must be given as these may be relevant to the person's suitability as a children's worker.

In practise, this information can be difficult to obtain from the individual. Abusers may not answer honestly and only a small percentage of potential abusers are actually convicted. Therefore it is Tree of Life Church's policy that all children's and young people's workers are subject to an enhanced Criminal Reference (CRB).

Guideline 11: Make Appointments Conditional on the Successful Completion of a Probationary Period

All volunteers appointed to positions that involve working with children or young people in Tree of Life Church are subject to a six month probationary period. In this time the volunteers are:

- Properly trained in the work that they are doing
- Properly trained in our child protection procedures

During this probation period, the appropriate supervisor will meet with the new worker on a monthly basis (this may only be a few minutes over coffee after a Sunday service for example) and ensure that they are suitable for the role they are in. The purpose of the probationary period is not just to assess the suitability of the individual for children's ministry but to support and ensure that they are aware of what they are doing and supported in the work they are doing.

Working with children is a very important role within the church and all people who complete the probationary term will be confirmed and celebrated during a special service.

Section 4: What To Do For Child and Worker if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

Guideline 12: Agree and Issue Guidelines for Procedure if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

In Tree of Life Church we have a set procedure of consultation and referral. It is not the task of an individual worker or even the church as a whole to investigate situations. For the safety of the child and the worker, however, we have a system of steps to follow on the pathway to referral to the appropriate body.

If a child discloses abuse by someone outside the church, then the person to whom it is disclosed should always inform the child of what they are going to do about it. They should then contact either the Children's Champion or an appropriate leader (their supervisor, Cell Leader or pastor). The leaders will then refer to CCPAS if necessary and contact either social services or the police as relevant.

If abuse is suspected then a more detailed discussion will occur and discreet observation will take place before referral.

Full guidance is given in Appendix 4.

If the abuser is suspected or alleged to be someone from within the church community the procedure is similar. It must be reported immediately to either the supervisor, cell leader, Children's Champion or one of the pastors.

Section 5: Training Leaders and Workers to Protect Children

Guideline 13: Train Volunteers, Supervisors and all Church Leaders who Make Decisions of Child Protection Policy

In Tree of Life Church we will ensure that over time, all workers will be trained in:

- Planning children's and youth work to prevent abuse
- Dealing with abuse if it is disclosed or discovered

Training is also organized on an ongoing basis for all relevant department directors in how to best supervise children's workers and protect children. This training will also be available for our Children's Champion.

All pastors will also regularly have training on child protection issues to ensure best policy and this manual and our policy will be updated on a regular basis to reflect this ongoing training.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Guidelines

A summary of the Home Office recommendations and guidelines from *Safe From Harm*

Appendix 2: Policy Statement

This is the Tree of Life Church Policy Statement on Children, Young People and the Church.

Appendix 3: Good Practice

This is the list of points that are given to all children's workers

Appendix 4: Procedures

This is the procedures that must be followed if abuse is discovered or disclosed

Appendix 5: Forms

These are appropriate forms that must be used in appointing youth workers or children's workers.

Appendix 6: Resources

A list of training materials and contacts that may be useful

Appendix 7: Children's Champion

This outlines the role of the Children's Champion

APPENDIX 1: GUIDELINES

These are the *Safe From Harm* guidelines. Although the law has developed and moved on since they were published in 1993 they still are the best framework for developing a children's policy. Our practice will always reflect these in addition to any later advice published.

Safe from Harm recommends that agencies and community groups:

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding and the welfare of children;
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur;
3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent adult;
4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers;
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers clear roles;
6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children;
7. Treat all would-be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children;
8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicants paid work or volunteering with children;
9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment;
10. Find out whether an applicant has any convictions for criminal offences against children;
11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period;
12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse;
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.

APPENDIX 2: POLICY STATEMENT

Tree of Life Church

This statement was agreed by the church on 2nd March 2010.

It will be read annually at the Government Board meeting held in the month of September where progress in carrying it out will be monitored.

- As members of Tree of Life Church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected
- We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole organisation
- Tree of Life Church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision
- Tree of Life Church is committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice *Safe From Harm* and adopts the guidelines and procedures developed by Victory Churches International (UK)
- Each worker with children and young people must know the recommendations, and undertake to observe them. Each shall be given a copy of the organisation's agreed procedures and Good Practice Guidelines
- As part of our commitment to children and young people, Tree of Life Church will appoint a Children's Champion. This role will be explained regularly to children, and the names, phone numbers and email addresses of the Children's Champion will be displayed publicly within the church
- Children and young people are part of our organisation today. They have much to give as well as much to receive. We will listen to them. As we nurture them in worship, learning and in community life and ministry, we will respect the wishes and feelings of children and young people.

APPENDIX 3: GOOD PRACTICE

Good Practice Guidelines For Workers

Tree of Life Church will ensure:

- As far as possible ensure a worker is not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. On premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- In a counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important that another adult knows the interview is taking place and where and when and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building and the young person be aware they are there.
- Ensure that access to all buildings is safe and well-lit
- Interviews should be with the same-sex staff and children at all times. If necessary, a second adult of the same sex should be present

Children's and Youth Workers will ensure:

- They treat all children and young people with respect and dignity benefitting their age, being observant of language, tone of voice and body language.
- That they do not engage in any of the following
 - Invading the privacy of young people when they are showering or using the toilet
 - Rough, physical or sexually provocative games
 - Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even as "fun"
 - Inappropriate or intrusive touching of any kind
 - Any scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting of young people or children
- Learn to control and lead groups of young people without ever needing to use physical punishment
- Ensure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underwear and needs to be washed
- They that do not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is:
 - Overtly sexual
 - Overtly physical
- That they do not invite a child or young person to your home alone
 - Invite a group
 - Ensure another adult is in the house
 - Ensure parents know where the young person is
- That they do not give lifts of children or young people on their own other than for short journeys. If they are alone, they must sit in the rear seats of the car.

- Not share sleeping accommodation with a child or young person if they take a group away.
- If they see a colleague acting in a manner which has the possibility of being misconstrued they will speak to them or their supervisor about their concerns
 - Tree of Life Church want to foster an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

**THESE MEASURES WILL ALSO PROTECT YOU
FROM FALSE ALLEGATIONS!**

Good Practice Guidelines For Supervisors:

- Meet with your workers regularly to review and plan the work that you are doing.
- Ask about their working relationships and personal relationships with the young people or children they are working with
- Take or create opportunities to watch how all your workers interact with young people in and out of their time in their particular role
- If you have any doubts about a particular worker and the way they relate to young people or children:
 - Talk to them first and explore your concerns
 - Then share with your supervisor should you still have concerns
 - The matter should not be dropped until your concerns are dealt with
- Be aware of any child being given exceptional treatment – either highly favoured or unduly harshly.

APPENDIX 4: PROCEDURES IF ABUSE IS DISCLOSED OR DISCOVERED

Tree of Life Church and every appointed children's and young person's worker are committed to protecting children from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Types of Abuse:

Physical Abuse	when a child's body is hurt
Emotional Abuse	when children are not loved and shown affection; or taunted or threatened; or given responsibilities beyond their years
Sexual Abuse	where adults use children and young people to satisfy their sexual desires
Neglect	where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children and protect them from danger leading to impairment of the child's health and/ or development

Signs of Abuse

The following *may* indicate abuse, but do not jump to conclusions. There are other explanations for all of the following signs.

Physical Abuse	unexplained or hidden injuries; serious injuries that have a lack of medical attention
Emotional Abuse	reverting to behaviour of a younger child; overly nervous; sudden underachievement; attention-seeking; running away; stealing; lying
Sexual Abuse	preoccupation with sexual matters evident in words, play or drawings; being sexually provocative with adults; disturbed sleep; bedwetting; secretive relationships with adults or children; tummy pains with no apparent cause
Neglect	looking ill-cared for and unhappy; being withdrawn or aggressive; having lingering injuries or health issues

If Abuse is Disclosed or Discovered:

- Do not delay – act on the day you are informed or have suspicions
- Do not act alone – tell your supervisor or a pastor or the Children’s Champion
- Do not start an investigation
- If appropriate contact Pastor Benjamin Conway on his mobile on 07828985400

IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL THE POLICE. EITHER CALL THE MET POLICE ON 0300 123 1212 OR IF APPROPRIATE CALL 999.

If A Child Tells You About Abuse

(this is a summary and is not a substitute for appropriate training)

- Look at the child directly
- Accept what the child says without challenge
- Be aware the child may have been threatened with consequences should they share with anyone
- Assure the child they are not to blame
- Do not press for more information
- Reassure the child that they are correct to tell and that you take what they say very seriously
- Let the child know who you are going to contact next and why. Let them know you are going to do it that day, and what will possibly happen
- Finish on a positive note
- As soon as you can, make handwritten notes of exactly what the child said and the date and time of your conversation.

What Will Happen Next

- When professionals are brought in to deal with child abuse, especially sexual abuse, the following will normally happen:
 - A discussion will take place between Social Services, the Police Child Protection team, any other significant professionals and the person suspecting abuse or the person the child talked to
 - A decision will then be made whether to investigate
 - The investigation may include any of the following:
 - A discussion with the child

- A formal police video-recorded interview with the child
- A medical examination of the child
- A preliminary family assessment
- If this investigation finds cause for concern, a child protection conference will be held to decide the best course of action to protect the child and help the family. At this stage, the abuser may be subject to criminal prosecution.

APPENDIX 5: FORMS

Tree of Life Church

All prospective helpers in children's and young people's ministry have to complete this form. The information on this form will be held in strictest confidence by Tree of Life Church unless requested by an appropriate authority.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE: _____

MOBILE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Time at current address: _____

Previous Experience with Young People/ Children:

Any relevant qualifications: _____

Are you prepared to undergo additional training? YES/NO

Do you suffer any illness which may affect work with young people?
YES/NO

Reference: (must know you well, not be immediate family and able to give a reference):

NAME:	ROLE:
TEL:	
EMAIL:	

tree of Life church

DECLARATION:

As a children's or youth worker in this church we expect that you understand the serious responsibility involved in working with young people and the need to ensure their safety.

Therefore, we are asking you to sign the following declaration.

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or are you at present the subject of criminal charges? (NB. The disclosure of an offence will not necessarily lead to a bar in appointment)

YES/NO

If YES, please outline the nature of the offence:

Signed:

Date:

All convictions must be disclosed, as the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply in this instance.

Tree of Life church

Dear Sir/ Madam,

(Name of Applicant) has offered to help with our children's and young people's programme within the church.

As you are probably aware, before we can accept new volunteers or paid workers we must be sure that they are suitable for working with children or young people. (Name of Applicant) has given your details as someone who can provide a character reference for them.

I would be grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire, which will be treated with the strictest confidence, and return it as soon as possible.

(Name of Applicant) will mainly be working with children/ young people from the ages of (range of ages), and will be working as a (job title).

In commenting on this individual, please bear in mind that it is the active policy of Tree of Life Church to protect children from harm of a physical, sexual or emotional nature, and all volunteers are required to sign an undertaking to this end.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter,

Sincerely,

(Pastor/ Department Director)

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL:

Tree of Life Church

Name of Applicant:

What is your relationship with the applicant:

Relative	
Friend	
Employer	
Other (please specify: _____)	

How long have you known this individual: _____

With your knowledge and experience of the applicant, please comment on their suitability to work with children/ young people. Please include information regarding their honesty, reliability, health and previous experience with young people:

Any Additional Comments:

Tree of Life Church

VOLUNTEER CONTRACT:

Name:

We welcome you as a:

You are joining a team of workers which, together with the whole church, is committed to the care and nurture of children and young people.

On behalf of the church, we undertake to support you and your work with prayer, with interest and time, and by providing resources and training that match your role.

The person who will give you primary support is:

They are always available to you to discuss any concerns you may have.

Your role is:

Once a year a pastor will meet with you to talk to you about your work and if you wish to continue working ensure that you are given the best training and development possible.

Working with young people is hard work and a responsibility, but it also brings the most remarkable awards. We hope and believe that you will enjoy all you do.

Signed:

(Pastor)

Date:

Tree of Life Church

VOLUNTEER CONTRACT:

I understand the nature of the work I am going to be doing with:

(fill in the name of the ministry you are working with)

I have read the guidelines Tree of Life Church have produced for safeguarding children. I understand that it is my duty to protect the children and young people with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or disclosed.

Signed:

(Worker)

Date:

APPENDIX 6: RESOURCES

Our professional training and resources come from CCPAS. Their website is:

<http://www.ccpas.co.uk/>

You can obtain a resource list from their website. If you cannot access the internet, you can call CCPAS on 01322 667207. They have CDs, DVDs and printed materials you can purchase.

APPENDIX 7: CHILDREN'S CHAMPION

The Children's Champion is an individual within the church who has the strength and skill to listen to children and to speak up on their behalf to the leadership of the children's ministry and the church.

Children often cannot easily present and express their feelings and views, and they are not often consulted in the ordinary business of church life.

The role of Children's Champion is someone who has a vision that the children in Tree of Life Church should experience the love and kindness of God and have their views and their emotions expressed clearly to the church leaders.

Why Do We Need a Children's Champion?

The background of the appointment of a Children's Champion is the government initiatives for voluntary organisations which includes churches, especially the *Safe From Harm* guidelines. Within these guidelines some sort of children's advocate is recommended. Government guidelines recommend that children within any voluntary organisation have access to an adult who is not one of the workers or supervisors to minimise the possibility of abuse being undetected.

What Does the Children's Champion Do?

They have three main roles within Tree of Life Church:

- Become a voice for the children in the decision making processes of the church. This will mean attending cell and ward meetings and reflecting on the impact of any major decisions on the children and young people within the church
- Become a point of contact for young people within the church and their families for any concerns or complaints regarding any aspect of the church's work with children and young people
- Support and monitor the implementation of the children's policy within the church

How Will It Work Exactly?

- As a voice for the children, the Champion might speak for them in a variety of ways within the church. This may involve practical matters as we come to purchase and decorate our own building, or spiritual matters such as the young people wanting teaching in prayer or the children not being entirely happy with the curriculum in one department

- As a contact person, the Champion's contact details will be made available to the church and children, young people, parents and carers will be invited to raise concerns with them which they may not be able to communicate with other church leaders. This could include complaints about time-keeping in meetings to suspicions that a child is being abused to a simple question about the youth ministry
- As part of the team monitoring our youth and children's policy, the Champion will ensure that all workers and leaders have access to training in child protection and that new workers are taught best practices.

What Kind of Person is a Children's Champion?

- Mature
- Able to keep confidences
- Emotionally stable
- Experienced with children – a parent/ teacher/ child worker
- Sufficient time available
- Respected by church leaders
- Willing to co-operate
- Able to act independently
- Able to make difficult decisions
- Able to network with agencies
- Willing to attend meetings about the practical and pastoral care of young people

If that seems daunting, it is evidence that this role is a major role within Tree of Life Church and should not be entered into lightly.

In Tree of Life Church Children's Champions will be appointed for a term of three years and will appoint a deputy.