

F. WORKING SAFELY

1. GOOD WORKING PRACTICES

To keep our church family safe, we need to adopt working practices that lessen the opportunity for harm to our children and adults. This involves:

- Planning the work of the department to prevent abuse.
- Using supervision to prevent abuse.
- Teaching children to be appropriately aware of how to remain safe and who to approach to report abuse or concerns.
- Recognising and responding to concerns or disclosures of abuse.
- Undertaking risk assessments and implementing risk mitigation measures for all church activities.

The Church also promotes best practice in the taking of photographs and filming and the use of digital technology and social media across all its activities. (See Appendix 10: Online and Digital Safety, p27; Appendix 11a: Photographs and Filming, p.28)

2. CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Creating safe environments for our church family is a matter of applying good working practices across all our activities. The means we should:

- (a) Arrange, as far as possible, that no adult is left alone with a child or young person without the activity being observed by others. This may mean that doors will have to be left open or that small groups work simultaneously in the same room.
- (b) Organise and monitor activities so as not to allow individuals to create relationships or arrangements that exploit or abuse a worker's position of trust in relation to an individual, e.g., an elderly person feeling obliged to pay the debts held by someone helping them.
- (c) In a one-to-one situation with a child or adult at risk, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, another adult should be in the building, and the child or adult at risk should know they are there.
- (d) As far as possible, ensure that there are always at least two adults working with a group of children or vulnerable persons, especially when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. Consideration must be given to matching the gender of the workers with that of the group. The two-adult provision applies in changing areas and toilets, even if only one or two children are present.
- (e) Never do anything of a personal nature for children or adults that they can do for themselves. Be mindful of how and where one touches minors and adults at risk. Always seek consent before any physical touching.
- (f) Arrange when transporting children or young people by car or minibus to have more than one passenger in the vehicle. Vehicles must have appropriate seating for children (to keep them physically safe), drivers must be fully insured and age-appropriately authorised to drive the vehicle. Require leaders/workers to keep others informed if they have to drive a minor home on his/her own.
- (g) Provide an adequate number/ratio of adults to supervise events for children/young people according to the activity and especially where overnight activities are involved. There should always be more than one adult for any group and they should reflect the gender of the group. Helpers under 18 years old count as children and not adults in the ratios below. For further guidance see the OFSTED Guidelines www.ofsted.gov.uk or its equivalent within your country. An example of a minimum ratio is provided below.

For 0 to 2 years – one adult to every three children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years – one adult to every four children (1:4) (1:5 in Scotland)

For 3 to 8 years – one adult to every eight children (1:8)

For over-8s – one adult for the first eight children, then one for every additional ten children.

- (h) Any activities involving children or vulnerable adults outside of church, or taking place online should be risk assessed and accordingly managed (see Appendix 9 for sample risk assessment documents, p.23).
- (i) In the event of any injury to a person, accidental or otherwise, ensure that it is recorded on an Accident Form and that the record is witnessed by another adult. Ensure that any necessary health and safety actions are undertaken. For more information on Health and Safety, visit http://adventist.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/8048/01-SDA-Health-and-Safety-Policy-Statement-Dec-2009-Final.pdf

3. INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDING – ADRA-UK

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is the international humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church serving in 118 countries. ADRA-UK organises initiatives both at home and abroad. Its work empowers communities and changes lives by providing sustainable community development and disaster relief.

ADRA-UK's disaster response work includes services to children and adults often in urgent need. In meeting these needs, their welfare and protection are prioritised in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) or regional equivalent, along with the UN's Declaration of Human Rights. ADRA-UK is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people who use our services are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. KCFS policy and procedures should be followed in conjunction with ADRA-UK's Code of Conduct and suite of safeguarding policies, specifically the Safeguarding, Child Safeguarding and PSHEA policies.

Where church activities involve work in another country, ADRA-UK must ensure that KCFS policy requirements are met by all those who work for the church and that partner organisations have proper procedures in place to protect children and adults at risk. This includes completing safeguarding checks on personnel working on behalf of the church; a risk assessment, and following KCFS code of conduct and all safe working practices throughout all our activities in that country. KCFS requires clear and established reporting mechanisms being in place to address concerns and allegations of abuse. Additionally, ADRA-UK's work in those countries will be fully compliant with the safeguarding legislation, policies and standards of those countries as well as ADRA-UK's safeguarding policies.

Support for Volunteers and Staff

The psychological wellbeing as well as the physical safety of volunteers and staff who provide support to vulnerable groups, must also be protected. Those providing support may often be exposed to disturbing situations which are potentially traumatising. The reporting of concerns of abuse may create potential dangers due to the emotional reactions of those involved. ADRA-UK has a duty of care not only to those in need of support, but also to those who support them, and must be intentional about providing such assistance where it is required. Help may take the form of support from work colleagues or support through counselling provided by an outside agency.

Suspicion of Abuse by a Volunteer or Member of Staff

Where volunteers or staff are the subject of an allegation of abuse, appropriate support will be offered by ADRA-UK while fully complying with KCFS protocols, ADRA-UK's safeguarding policies and cooperating with the statutory services during any investigation. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken where safeguarding violations have occurred.

Where a volunteer or staff member is suspected of abuse, ADRA-UK's complaints procedure will be followed.

4. THIRD PARTY HIRE OF CHURCH PREMISES

The welfare of adults at risk is with those responsible for their care. Where external organisations are using church premises, safeguarding responsibilities rests with that organization. Hire arrangements must make it clear and agreed that the organisations are to abide by the KCFS safeguarding policy.

A copy of the policy to be used should be attached to the hire agreement. Hirers should be asked to sign a copy of the safeguarding policy, even when the organisation has its own, to acknowledge that this has been seen and will be adhered to. The church has a responsibility to ensure that health and safety obligations pertaining to the building are maintained (See Appendix 9, p.).

SAFEGUARDING WITHIN THE DIVERSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Safeguarding and child protection require us to make sensitive and well-informed judgements about a child's needs, a parent's ability and an adult's capacity in any given circumstance. It is important that we are sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles that vary across different ethnic and cultural groups within our churches.

We must also be aware of the broader social factors that serve to discriminate against people from ethnic communities or particular groups, e.g. recent migrant groups or adults with learning disabilities. Christians should guard against myths and stereotypes, whether positive or negative, that would in any way obstruct them from treating every individual and situation with objectivity and the highest respect for individuals created in the image of God.