

Keeping Children Safe

St. Luke's, Parkstone



The following categories are described in detail in the Child Protection Procedures:

- ◆ Neglect
- ◆ Physical abuse
- ◆ Emotional abuse
- ◆ Sexual abuse



MYTHS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

“It couldn't happen here”

“Christians can never be abusers”

“We all know each other too well”

“We have enough trouble getting helpers – we can't start asking questions”



HOW DO I KNOW IF A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

Few signs of abuse are significant alone, but a cluster of signs must be taken seriously:

- ◆ The child might show by their own **behaviour** that abuse is taking place - inappropriate behaviour for their age or major changes in a child's behaviour.
- ◆ You may **observe** that the child is inadequately clothed, hungry or tired. The child may be developmental delayed or appearing unhappy. The child might tell you about or hint at abuse.
- ◆ You might be concerned about the **behaviour of the adults** with the child, for example, you may be told a child is left alone, a parent is punishing the child excessively or constantly criticising a child.

Record all signs carefully – it may not be obvious how important a sign could be later. Never wait until you are sure before you record and seek advice. Refer to the Church Child Protection Co-ordinator or the local Social Services Department (tel: 01202 735046)



WHAT ARE YOUR CONCERNS ABOUT REPORTING CHILD ABUSE?

I don't believe the child's allegation is true

The child or parent has told me this in confidence

It's only a small sign – I may be over reacting

Social Services may break up the family

The parent would be upset and may tell other families – this could affect the Church



WHAT DO I DO IF A CHILD TALKS TO ME ABOUT ABUSE?

- ◆ Listen to the child, accepting what they say. Take it seriously
 - ◆ Never stop a child who is freely recalling what has happened but do not ask questions to obtain more information.
 - ◆ Make a note of the timing, setting and people present.
 - ◆ Reassure the child who has spoken to you.
 - ◆ Write down exactly what was said, using the child's own words.
 - ◆ Do not promise confidentiality or to keep something secret
 - ◆ Explain to the child what actions will be taken.
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WHAT TO DO NEXT WHEN ABUSE IS SUSPECTED OR ALLEGED

If you are concerned a child could be experiencing abuse, discuss the child with the Church Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Vicar. They will contact Social Services or the Police if there are concerns about significant harm. If you remain concerned, speak to Social Services yourself.

REMEMBER...

- ◆ Always have at least two adults present when working with children
 - ◆ References and application forms will be completed for all "workers" with children and young people
 - ◆ No one has a right to work with children – children have a right to be safe.
 - ◆ Keep telling someone until the child is helped
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