



INVERCLYDE YOUTH FOR CHRIST

GUIDELINES FOR WORK WITH AND THE PASTORAL CARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE (Under 18's)

The Home Office has produced a set of recommendations and guidelines to give all voluntary groups a framework for action to promote the welfare of children and young people, in particular to prevent abuse taking place. Called "Safe from Harm", the recommendations and guidelines do not have the force of law but recommend the steps that should be taken to safeguard everyone under the age of 18. These Government recommendations came as a result of the Children Act 1989:

Below is the policy statement for YFC. Attached with this are YFC guidelines for the pastoral care and work with young people

1. A policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.

YFC is committed to good practice through our core values of professionalism and being person centered. We therefore make the following statement in response to Government guidelines:

As a Christian organisation committed to presenting the reality of God to young people, we affirm our belief in the God given value of each young person with whom we work or have contact. In recognition of God's wholehearted commitment to them, we will also treat each individual with value and dignity and aim that none suffers physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of any kind. If at all possible it is the responsibility of each one of us to safeguard young people against physical, sexual, spiritual¹ and emotional abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

YFC is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with young people and to providing supervision.

YFC is committed to following the Home Office code of practice "Safe from Harm", and adopts guidelines and procedures based on it. Each staffworker and volunteer shall be given a copy of this statement and YFC's agreed procedures and good practice guidelines. YFC will encourage places where itinerant teams visit to appoint an advocate² and additionally have a local person to whom cases of suspected abuse should be referred. (A copy of this policy should be included within information circulated to locations.) Nationally we will have a Safe from Harm committee to whom National staff should refer

¹ "Spiritual abuse happens when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower, thus causing spiritual wounds." Ken Blue: Healing Spiritual Abuse. IVP 1993.

² An advocate is a person locally independent of YFC who is known by the young people and to whom they know they can go to talk..

individual situations and from whom local ministries can obtain advice. Local Ministries will appoint a designated person to co-ordinate any situations. This statement will be reviewed on a regular basis and applies at any event or where ministry is undertaken in the name of YFC.

All staff and volunteers will be expected to sign a declaration stating whether or not they have ever accepted an official caution from the police, been convicted or are currently the subject of criminal charges. (Disclosing such information may not bar an individual from being appointed.)

2. Plan of work for the pastoral care of and work with young people.

All activities should avoid any situation where abuse could result. All young people should be treated with respect and dignity.

- 2:1 Any form of ministry is to take place in public. Personal conversations are to include someone of the same sex and with a minimum of three people present if at all possible. Both public ministry and personal conversations are to be within the guidelines laid out in (Appendix 1).
- 2:2 When giving lifts to young people, if only one is left in a four door car, that young person should normally sit in the rear seats. In the case of a staff member, lifts must only be given where the driver is insured for use of the car for business purposes.
- 2:3 Initiating physical contact with young people is to be avoided. If physical abuse is threatened, then workers should seek assistance in the first instance and if physical violence is used against you then you may defend yourself using the minimum of force.
- 2:4 In school lessons and assemblies a member of the school staff should be present. For after school or lunchtime events, an agreement is to be negotiated with the school as to whether or not they wish a staff member to be present (although a member of staff should always be on call). The recommended minimum is that two YFC/school staff members or volunteers to be present during such events.
- 2:5 In youth work (bus, club, group etc.) ensure there are always two staff members or volunteers present and if young people need to be escorted off the premises, that this is done wherever possible through verbal encouragement! If more than verbal encouragement is needed, the recognised supervisor should be aware of this.
- 2:6 When out on the streets, to work in two's. It is the responsibility of the team leader to set up procedures so that in depth conversations are conducted where two people of the same sex are involved.
- 2:7 Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in "fun", any scapegoating, ridiculing, rejecting or comments about a young persons attributes or attractiveness of a young person should not occur.
- 2:8 Hugging is to be discouraged among the staff and volunteers when young people are present. Although physical contact should not be initiated by the worker it is

important that young people if they initiate and choose to have any contact are responded to appropriately, e.g. a side arm hug. Physical contact should be age appropriate.

- 2:9 Residential work: see attached guidelines (Appendix 2.)
- 2:10 Parental/guardian consent must be obtained for any activity undertaken where the young person is involved in extended time out of their home. Communication of what is happening should always be made available to parents/guardians.
- 2:11 An agreed system of recording activities and conversations with young people should be implemented. These should be completed with as agreed with your supervisor.
- 2.12.1 Avoid favouritism and special friendships. Do not develop an exclusive relationship with a group member if you are a leader, however small the age gap. Do not be over eager to befriend particular young people. Crushes with group members are strongly discouraged and an intermediary should be involved if necessary.
- 2.12.2 There should be a team of a minimum 6 but preferably 8 people (including YFC personnel) loading and unloading equipment from YFC creative arts vehicles. This will include the moving of some heavy items. It is strongly recommended that trustworthy local volunteers should be enlisted to help the YFC teams load and unload safely and at no time should anyone be left alone with a vehicle.

3. Procedures for protecting children and young people for all staff and volunteers.

In cases where face-to-face work with children and young people is part of their normal role then YFC would seek to initiate police checks on all staff and volunteers. Everyone shall be given and have explained this policy statement. All staff and volunteers will receive training according to these guidelines when they join YFC.

YFC recognise that when its staff are visiting churches or running conferences, events or training events, those attending may reasonably assume that such staff have been subject to checks relating to protection of young people. Therefore all staff visiting groups on behalf of YFC and all those running or assisting at YFC conferences, events or training events where they could have unsupervised access to young people must be subject to checks as set out in these guidelines.

One-off volunteers undertaking tasks for YFC will be subject to the same procedure as staff. This requirement may be waived if the person is known to YFC and will not have unsupervised access to young people in the course of the task. 'Known to YFC' means that at least two people who are staff, Board members, staffworkers or people who have significant connections with YFC could, if asked provide references for the person. One-off applies to volunteers giving not more than one days time for their volunteering. One-off volunteers will include those who accompany staff on a speaking engagement, help at a YFC day (such as Wheatley) or evening event. Once someone is volunteering with YFC on a regular basis, 'regular' meaning more than three times a year, then they will be subject to the YFC guidelines for volunteers in this document.

YFC is not responsible for the selection, approval or appointment of those working with children or young people in any affiliated church or group. These groups and churches are responsible for appointing people to work with children and young people according to their own policies for protecting children and young people.

4. Appointment of staff and volunteers

The appointment of staff and volunteers will follow the relevant YFC recruitment and selection and probationary procedures. These are available from the Personnel department and include what to do in relation to application process, interviews, references and proof of identity etc.

All staff and volunteers will have a written job description.

A record of those staff for whom police checks have been made. CRB disclosures will be kept separately and securely in a lockable, non-portable storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

5. Management/Supervision

There shall be a system of line management within YFC to provide supervision and accountability.

This will include monitoring ongoing work with young people and for staff, line management in accordance with YFC policies and guidelines.

Line management practice will normally involve regular meetings with the appropriate line manager in order to review and plan their work. The supervisor should be aware of each staff members working and personal relationships with the young people in their care.

It is expected that each supervisor will take time to observe the member of staff or volunteer whilst he/she is working with young people.

Ideally, supervisors should keep a brief written record of each supervision meeting and of any things of note which are observed..

It is expected that records of contact with young people would be kept by the worker in accordance with those requested by the line manager.

The recommended format is that records of work with young people should be kept, these do not need to include personal details of young people but a general account of the work. The record should cover number of young people in attendance; the activities done or the issues covered in conversation; and unusual events such as fire alarms or young people escorted off the premises.

6. Training.

YFC will run a training course each year for new staff and volunteers which will endorse the guidelines and equip staff and volunteers in the guidelines spelt out in this document. The Safe from Harm committee will work in conjunction with the training department in keeping them up to date with any changes made to these guidelines.

7. Identifying Abuse - signs, symptoms and how to respond.

Procedures if abuse is suspected, discovered or disclosed:

The most important thing to remember is that when a young person discloses that abuse of any nature is taking (or has taken) place, they are divulging a secret. It is not the place for this document to provide guidance for counselling in this scenario, but please make sure that the young person knows that YOU believe them. Many situations have arisen where the first person to be told of such events failed to demonstrate that they believed the young person in the first instance and this led to the abuse being covered up for years.

If a young person wants to talk to you about some form of abuse follow the following guidelines as much as is possible and appropriate to your situation. General points are

- accept what the person says
- keep calm
- be honest
- look directly at the young person
- do not appear shocked
- let them know you may need to tell someone else
- assure them that they are not to blame for abuse
- never ask leading questions
- never push for information
- do not fill in words, finish their sentences or make assumptions
- be aware that the child may have been threatened

In the work of YFC it is our duty to work to prevent abuse taking place. There are several forms of abuse:

Types of abuse:

Physical when an adult kicks, beats, or punches and children's bodies are hurt or injured.

Emotional where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years.

Sexual where adults (and sometimes other children) use children to satisfy sexual desires; touches a young person's private parts in a way that makes the child feel worried or unhappy; showing the young person rude pictures or videos; sexual abuse can be anywhere in the range from visual contact to sexual penetration.

Neglect where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development; when an adult leaves a young person alone for long periods of time.

Spiritual when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower causing spiritual wounds.

If any young person or child comes to you and talks about past or present abuse situations, keep a hand-written narrative of the conversation immediately after you have spoken with that person.

If you suspect that a young person may be the victim of such abuse the following procedure must be followed:

For National projects :The team/project/holiday leader must inform a YFC designated person who are the members of the Safe from Harm Committee.

In Local Ministries the disclosure should be reported to the designated person in the Local Ministry, usually the Director.

It is important to keep reporting channels as short as possible and this should not prevent or delay any reporting to relevant authorities. If the person to whom the abuse was disclosed believes that the designated person has not taken appropriate action they may speak to the authorities themselves.

After you have made the handwritten notes you should fill in the Safe from Harm Abuse disclosure form.

The young person must be kept informed at all times of what is being done, what is likely to happen, and should be prepared for such an eventuality before they disclose such information. Where the abuse is current this will need to be reported to the authorities normally by the designated person. However, it is also important that the young person is aware that no action is likely to be taken by the authorities without the young person being listened to and all decisions reached will take account of the wishes and feelings of the young person. (1989 Children Act).

When the situation is reported to the authorities then it is likely that the following may be included:

- * A strategy discussion involving Social Services, Police Child protection team, other significant professionals and the person suspecting abuse or to whom the young person has talked.
- * A decision will be taken as to whether an investigation is warranted; if so, it will then be planned. If the Social Services decide to pursue this the investigation is likely to include:
 - * An informal talk with the child.
 - * A formal police (+/- social services) video recorded interview
 - * Medical examination
 - * Preliminary family assessment.

The authorities are likely to be more proactive in situations where other young people could also be at risk.

If there is sufficient concern, a child protection conference will be held to decide the best course of action to protect the child and help the family. There may be criminal prosecution of the abuser.

Note: Ensure records of action taken are recorded on Safe from Harm Abuse disclosure form.

8. Accusations of abuse against YFC staff or volunteers

If any member of staff or volunteer is accused of abuse then YFC will co-operate with other agencies in the enquiry.

During the course of the enquiry it is recommended that the staff or volunteer concerned is not involved in face to face youth work and that they take a period of special leave during which salary continues to be paid. If the enquiry is not concluded within a month or two this action may need to be reassessed.

YFC staff and volunteers must report any allegation made about themselves or others to their supervisor or his/her delegated representative.

APPENDIX 1

Guidelines for talking and praying with young people.

These are not a set of rules just for the sake of it. There is a good reason why they are there, for your own protection and the person you are dealing with.

1. Always talk and pray with someone in a group of more than two if at all possible. One to one contact may take place only in a public place and your supervisor must agree should this become something that needs to continue with that person.
2. Always same sex - i.e. 2 males - male, 2 females - female, when involved in praying with young people. If for any reason this is impossible then it should happen in a public place and be agreed with your supervisor.
3. Always pray and talk in an open space where others are around, privacy is a factor, but don't go alone.
4. Confidentiality is vital - they will need to know that you will not go to others and talk about their problems. However, do not promise to keep a secret. You may need to tell someone in authority. If that is so, tell them who it will be and what you will say - in order to build trust. In British law the responsibility for any investigation is with the Social Services, Police or the NSPCC and it is not for workers to carry out these preliminary investigations.
5. Keep calm and be honest. Don't feel you have to know all the answers. If you don't know, find someone who does and ask them.
6. Don't be afraid to ask for advice. We are not out to prove anything to anyone, we want the best for them. If you feel out of your depth or unsure, ask someone to help you.
7. Don't keep bringing it round to your own experience, i.e. 'yes, I remember when that happened to me and ...' Testimony is good, but listen.
8. Don't make promises you can't keep.
9. Don't appear shocked or appalled.
10. Be sensitive, don't say things like - 'I can't believe it, why didn't you tell anyone before?' or - 'no, you didn't, did you?'
11. Don't laugh at them.
12. Don't minimise or trivialise the issue, even if it may not seem important to you. If they need to talk about it, it is important.
13. Be aware of your body language, the way you are reacting. Always encourage and affirm, don't judge or condemn.

14. Don't feel you have to wrap it up straight away, some things need talking through more. Talk that through with a leader or prayer co-ordinator. Don't offer to do it on your own, or offer the availability of someone else before checking it out with them.
15. If you are told about anything illegal you must tell your supervisor (or his/her delegated representative) straight away. There is no general legal duty to report an offence to the Police.
16. Don't take on board other people's problems as if they were your own. Remember, empathy is standing in someone else's shoes, with your feet firmly in your own.
17. Do not under any circumstances touch someone inappropriately when praying or talking with them. Do not initiate hugging - whether same sex or opposite sex. Remember we need to be above reproach.
18. Allow young people privacy when going to the toilet or changing
19. Follow up, check how they are doing the following week.
20. Fill in a form straight away. Give it to your supervisor. We don't need to know all the intricate details, but the general issue.

APPENDIX 2

Residential Work:

The following are guidelines based on respect for the individual and legal requirements. They are not intended to restrict the diverse opportunities presented by residential work, merely safeguard all concerned from the potential of abuse.

In residential work, do not invade the privacy of young people unnecessarily. Leaders are to knock before entering dormitory accommodation and except for emergencies to enter the accommodation of young people of the same sex only.

Separate accommodation for the sexes and for leaders. The latter if possible.

Keep age groups together in dormitories/rooms/tents.

In residential work there must be same sex leaders as the young people attending.

For residential work longer than 90 days, or where a young person under 18 is employed by the organisation and living away from home, the organisation shall register with the local Social Services as an organisation which takes young people away, and shall register both with the SS department and the location's SS department when using a specific venue.

Disclosures during the residential : If there is an incident on site it should be reported to the local police. If the disclosure is of current or past disclosure which has not taken place at the residential then it should be reported to the local social services of the young person concerned.

Where minibuses are used it is expected that all drivers and leaders will adhere to the legal (and where appropriate, local authority) regulations.

APPENDIX 3

Internet and the web

New Media is defined in this document as any technology that is used to communicate a message, e.g. websites, mobile phones and such things as cd-roms and DVD's.

A conversation in this context can be an exchange of emails or text messages.

1 What needs to be included in any information we provide

- We need to be transparent in all our information. Every website we create or have influence over needs to have a section clearly labelled as a reference to our Safe From Harm Policy. This section will spell out what our policy is and what our working practices are.
- All our sites will have the YFC logo clearly visible which links to our main site.
- Where possible all sms and mms messages should clearly identify the sender and their YFC connection.
- We will adhere to the STOP command issued when someone no longer wished us to contact them via sms or mms.

2 Best Practices of those using new Media

- Everyone involved in using New Media will have read and understood the Safe From Harm Policy.
- Under no circumstances are personal details to be exchanged in a public forum. If someone posts personal details in a public forum then the post must be deleted or modified to remove the details, a note explaining this will then be posted.
- No meetings are to be arranged. This is a rule that can only be broken if the meeting is supervised in a public place. The director of the local YFC centre of the line manager of the worker must be informed of the meeting and approve of it.
- If at all possible a record of any sms, mms or email conversations should be kept and archived.
- YFC workers should use their real names for chat purposes
- All YFC discussion boards will be monitored by YFC staff or volunteers
- No conversation is to be entered into that involves sexual or pornographic websites, if they do come up in conversation either ignore the comment or terminate the conversation immediately.
- Any photographs used on our websites will be such that no young people will be identifiable. Any photographs will be vetted to make sure they are acceptable. Images of young people participating in any sporting activity have the potential for greater abuse by paedophiles wishing to manipulate the digital image and create pornographic material, with this in mind any images we put on our websites will be such that the possibility of manipulating it will be minimal.
- Above all the over-riding attitude is a concern for the people we are working with, for their well being and salvation. As long as we are working for their good then what we do and how we approach our work will dictate our working practices for the good.

APPENDIX 4
Information

Safe from Harm Committee:
designated persons

Graeme Brooks (Scotland: Inverclyde YFC)
Sue Jutsum (Personnel & Training, Chair)
Judy Lloyd (Overseas)
Damian Wharton (National Ministries)
Leon Coates (Personnel)
Sharron Cohburn (Church Resources)

Useful phone numbers:

YFC Head Office - 0121 550 8055
Local Social Ser.
Police

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