

Ballycrochan Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Principles

All are welcome at Ballycrochan Baptist Church. Children, young people and vulnerable adults ('vulnerable groups') are an important part of the church family and the church is committed to their safety and wellbeing.

Leaders and helpers who work with vulnerable groups ('workers') are encouraged to use 'safe working practices'.

Ballycrochan Baptist Church has a clear procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse and co-operates with the appropriate statutory agencies.

Policy

1 Recruitment and training

The selection procedure for workers is based on the principles in the ABCI 'Safe in our Care' document. An electronic version of this can be supplied on request. The name of a suggested worker will be approved by the office bearers, the person interviewed by the leader concerned and an AccessNI check carried out before the person has any unsupervised access to children. The appointment of leaders will be by a ballot of the church members.

All workers will have an enhanced AccessNI check every 3 years. They will be required to attend safeguarding training every 2 years.

2. 'Safe working'

For the safety of vulnerable groups and the reputation of workers it is vital for workers to avoid situations which could lead to allegations. There will be no private 1:1 meetings between adults and children. If a child or young person needs confidential support this must be with the knowledge of the leader and within sight of another worker. There is a practical issue of transport – at some point the driver will be with one child/young person. This should be done openly and for as short a time as possible. The principles in 'Safe in our Care' will be followed including the ratio of adults:children. These are

0-2 years 1:3

2-3 years 1:4

3-7 years 1:8

8+ years 1:10

3. Safeguarding Team

The church has appointed a Safeguarding Officer and accepted 2 assistants. Their details are in the appendix. Their role will be to keep safeguarding as a live issue within the church, help compliance with this policy and be available to listen to any vulnerable person with concerns. Their term of office is 3 years.

4. Records

Each leader will keep a record of parental/carer contact details and relevant medical information. All details will be kept confidentially and accessed only as necessary.

5. Technology

In general workers will use groups rather than individual internet and mobile means of communication. For the protection of vulnerable groups and workers individual messaging should be limited.

6. Offenders

As stated, all are welcome at Ballycrochan Baptist Church. This includes those convicted or suspected of abuse. The office bearers will ensure there is a clear agreement and plan to prevent abuse within the church. The principles outlined in 'Safe in our Care' will be followed.

Procedure

Any witnessed, suspected or reported abuse should be brought to the attention of one of the safeguarding team as soon as possible. The PSNI or Gateway Services of the HSC Trust will be informed. Their details are in the appendix. The office bearers of Ballycrochan Baptist Church will be told that a report has been made but will not normally be given the details of those involved. Advice will be sought from the investigating team.

If a vulnerable person tells a worker about abuse the following must happen:

Reassure the person that what they say will be taken seriously but cannot be kept secret.

Let the person say what they have to say, paying close attention so it can be written down promptly. Only ask questions to clarify.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE! This could sabotage the official investigation.

If there is violence or threat of violence contact the police using the emergency number.

Tell the vulnerable person that their concerns will be passed to the safeguarding team.

Ensure the vulnerable person is safe.

Write down what has been said and done.

Contact one of the safeguarding team.

Reassure the vulnerable person but as far as possible do not discuss their concerns.

Await the arrival of statutory investigators if advised to do so.

Keep all information confidential, sharing only with the safeguarding team and statutory investigators.

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually on the anniversary of its acceptance.

This policy was adopted by the Trustees/Office Bearers on 4 January 2022. The next review date is January 2023.