

Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project **Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

1. Introduction

Maybridge Community Church has been active in the west of Worthing for 50 years, and this involvement includes delivering a range of children's and youth work. More recently, the creation of the MILE Project has led to a broadening of the activities for children and their families. Many children have a connection and involvement with the church and/or the MILE Project's community work. We therefore continually seek to have high standards based on our agreed key values:

- each person as unique
- unity celebrated in diversity
- integrity in relationships
- transparency in leadership
- love that goes the extra mile
- humility in all we do

We value each child entrusted to our care and recognise their individual uniqueness (whatever their age, developmental stage, ability, gender, sexual orientation or ethnicity), and will always seek to develop high quality relationships that reflect these values. If we are aware of harm for a child, we will respond according to our responsibilities as members of the community.

2. Purpose of this Document

This document has been produced for the following reasons:

- to be clear to all about our commitment to ensuring children are safe in their contact with Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project
- to outline our policy to ensure they are safe
- to outline our key procedures for responding if there is a concern
- to provide further information where help and advice can be received for dealing with specific situations
- to ensure those who work with children are aware of their role and responsibilities
- to enable us to provide information easily to parents and members of the community who wish to know our arrangements for keeping children safe

This document replaces previous versions and will be reviewed annually and updated as required. It has been developed using materials published by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), whose organisation we are members of, and from a range of other child protection materials from Christian denominations (such as the Baptist Union and the Church of England) as well as from charitable and statutory agencies (NSPCC and the West Sussex Area Child Protection Procedures). This document is not available for copying by other organisations without prior written consent.

3. Our Child Protection Policy

Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for all children and young people. We also acknowledge that in our society children and young people can sometimes be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. The following **Child Protection Policy Statement** was publically endorsed at our church meeting in April 2006:

- As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people
- It is the responsibility of each 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 church
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or volunteers
- The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people
- We are committed to following the agreed procedures and statutory and specialist guidelines
- Each worker with children and young people must read the child protection guidelines and undertake to observe them.
- We review our policy annually

We have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this document and seek to have constructive links with the relevant statutory and voluntary child protection agencies so that children can be safeguarded from harm. We acknowledge that the welfare of each child is of paramount importance.

In addition, we seek to offer pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, to support those attending our church who have been affected by abuse.

4. What is Child Abuse?

4.1 Who is a child?

A child is a male or female under the age of 18 years. References to children in this document include young people as well as children.

4.2 What is abuse?

Child abuse is defined as occurring **where a child has suffered from, or is believed likely to be, at significant risk of physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.** It may be deliberate harm or failure to prevent harm. There are Government guidelines that help agencies decide if abuse has occurred.

The effects of abuse vary but are often wide-ranging and profound and emotional trauma can last beyond the time when physical injuries heal. By operating this policy and procedures we aim to equip people to recognise signs of abuse at the earliest opportunity so that harm can be stopped and the damage can start to be repaired.

4.3 Who abuses children?

The vast majority of people do not abuse children and actively care for their wellbeing. However all sorts of people have harmed children and there is no single stereotype that can describe them. It is usually (but not exclusively) done by adults. Most often it is someone who is close to the child, such as a parent, carer, baby-sitter, relative or friend of the family. Sometimes it is someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker or church worker. Rarely is it a stranger, although this can happen. Sometimes those who harm children set out to join organisations such as churches or children's groups to obtain access to children.

4.4 Physical abuse

Definition:

Physical abuse occurs when an adult physically hurts or injures a child (when this is not an accident). This could include hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting or attempting to drown or suffocate them. It could also be by giving a child alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison. Physical abuse includes actions where physical harm or suffering has failed to be prevented.

Recognition:

Active children get scrapes and bruises as part of the rough and tumble of life. This makes it difficult to spot injuries that are non-accidental. Therefore consider both physical signs and behavioural signs.

Physical signs to consider include:

- injuries that the child cannot explain or are unconvincing

- marks on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely (such as the cheeks or chest)
- bruises that reflect hand or finger marks
- cigarette burns or human bite marks
- untreated or inadequately treated injuries
- broken bones (especially in children under 2 years of age)
- scalds, especially those with upward splash marks where hot liquids have been deliberately thrown; or 'tide marks' where a child has been made to stand or sit in very hot water

Behavioural signs to consider include:

- reluctance to have their parents contacted
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- fear of going home or running away
- flinching when approached
- covering of arms and legs even when hot
- depression or moods that are out of character with the child's general behaviour
- unnatural compliance with parents or carers

4.5 Sexual abuse

Definition:

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses a child sexually to gratify their own needs, including by exploiting their power, authority or position. Both girls and boys can be sexually abused and abusers can be both male and female. Sexual abuse includes forcing or enticing a child to engage in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. It also includes non-contact activities such as making a child observe inappropriate sexual behaviour or showing a child pornography or engaging them in inappropriate discussion about sexual matters.

Recognition:

Most acts of sexual abuse (but not all) are likely to happen in private and the abuser may go to great lengths to prevent discovery. A child may be threatened to keep silent and many children feel such a strong sense of shame and guilt that they are reluctant to speak about what has happened to them. Consider both physical signs and behavioural signs when concerned about a child:

Physical signs to consider include:

- Any sexually transmitted disease
- Pregnancy
- Pain, injury or itching in the genital or anal areas
- Stomach pains or discomfort when the child is sitting down or walking

Behavioural signs to consider include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- An apparent fear of someone
- Running away from home
- Nightmares or bedwetting
- Self-harm or attempts at suicide
- Abuse of drugs or other substances
- Sexualised knowledge or behaviour by young children, including sexual drawings or language
- Possession of unexplained amounts of money
- Not being allowed to have friends, particularly in adolescence
- Alluding to secrets they cannot reveal

4.6 Emotional abuse

Definition:

Emotional abuse is the persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child that has, or is likely to have, a serious effect on the child's development. It includes persistently withholding love and affection or constantly shouting at, threatening or demeaning the child. It could also include being persistently over-protective to the extent that the child is not allowed to mix with others. Harassment (including racial harassment) that undermines the child's self-esteem, preventing the child developing a positive self image, may be considered emotional abuse.

Recognition:

Emotional abuse is difficult to recognise and some children are naturally more shy or sensitive.

Physical signs to consider include:

- A failure to grow or thrive (especially if they thrive away from home)
- Sudden speech disorders
- Delayed physical or emotional development

Behavioural signs to consider include:

- An excessive fear of making mistakes
- An unwillingness or inability to play
- Compulsive nervous behaviour such as hair twisting or rocking
- Self harm
- Reluctance to have parents contacted
- An excessive deference towards others
- An excessive need for approval, attention or affection
- An excessive lack of confidence
- An inability to cope with praise

4.7 Neglect

Definition:

Children can suffer from neglect when their basic needs are not being met. This could include having an inadequate diet, being denied proper health care or being inadequately dressed. Children who are left unsupervised in situations which represent possible dangers (at home or elsewhere) or left alone at an age when it is inappropriate for their physical or emotional development may be suffering from neglect.

Recognition:

Neglect is also a difficult form of abuse to recognise. Its effects can be very serious.

Physical signs to consider include:

- Being constantly hungry, even stealing food
- Being in an unkempt state, frequently dirty and smelly
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Being dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- Untreated medical conditions

Behavioural signs to consider include:

- Being tired all the time
- Having few friends
- Being left alone or unsupervised regularly
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging, especially food
- Being late or missing events, activities and appointments

4.8 Abuse of Trust

Many adults in Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project are in a position of trust. It is unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues. We consider it always to be wrong for a leader to enter into a physical or sexual relationship with a young person even if they are 16 years or 17 years old and have consented.

5. Our Child Protection Procedures

The following key procedures are to be followed to prevent harm and respond to concerns. These procedures apply to all children and young people in our care. All workers with children must be familiar with them and observe them. There may be *additional* guidance available for certain circumstances as situations are often complex. Sources for additional guidance are in a later section (section 6).

5.1 Safe Practice – Reducing risks and avoiding misunderstandings

In working with children across such a broad range of activities in the church and through the MILE Project, we continually seek to provide a safe environment and prevent situations where harm may come to a child. We therefore take steps, individually and collectively, as part of our responsibilities to reduce risk and avoid any potential misunderstandings. The steps we take are outlined below.

5.11 CODE OF CONDUCT

We expect members and attenders of Maybridge Community Church and those linked with the MILE Project (volunteers and staff) to follow this code of conduct:

- To seek at all times to live out and model the values of Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project
- To place the safety and well being of children before loyalty to friends and colleagues or any personal or organisational goals
- To be familiar with the child protection arrangements and follow them, recognizing everyone has responsibilities in this area (not just those working directly with children)
- To avoid situations that might be misunderstood by others in relation to children
- To only form appropriate relationships with children that are based on mutual trust and respect, being aware of the relative powerlessness of children compared to adults
- To follow any directions from the leadership of the church and/or MILE Project in relation to working with children as part of the child protection arrangements
- To be committed to actively preventing the exploitation and abuse of children

The leadership of the church and/or MILE Project reserves the right to place restrictions and boundaries on anyone in relation to working with children, including preventing them from any work with children.

5.12 WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, the church leadership will supervise the individual concerned and may offer pastoral care, but in its commitment to the protection of children, will set boundaries for that person which they will be required to keep. In drawing up these boundaries, this will always assume they will not have a direct involvement with children's work unless there are very good reasons to do otherwise.

5.13 RECORDING

If a concern is noticed it is good practice for this to be recorded. This includes concerns that are noticed, disclosures made and action taken. Further details are found in sections 5.2; 5.3; 5.4 and 5.5

5.14 DISCIPLINE

The principles of maintaining discipline with children at Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project are:

- We take a positive approach to behaviour, encouraging good behaviour through praise and recognition
- Leaders and workers are to be clear in advance with children what behaviour is expected, what is unacceptable and ensure these are consistently applied
- Verbal comments and directions, including warnings, may be used to ensure good behaviour. No verbal comments made to children are acceptable if they humiliate, are threatening or are offensive. Favoritism should be avoided.
- Parents or carers can be asked to remove their child from any activity and/or a child can be restricted from future access to the group or activity, particularly if the safety of other children is at risk. If the child is old enough, they may be asked to leave immediately.
- Parents should be contacted so a discussion can occur about the behaviour and circumstances surrounding the difficulty. This may include writing to parents.
- Physical punishment is not permitted at any time.
- Physical restraint of a child is to be avoided unless it is to prevent harm to others or property. Such intervention will be rare and must only be at a level proportionate to the situation and must be fully recorded and reported as soon as possible.
- In extreme cases it may be necessary to call the police.

5.15 RECRUITING AND SUPERVISING VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

Recruiting

Our volunteer and staff recruitment process includes:

- Providing a role description relevant to the work they will be involved with
- Providing a document explaining the ethos, values and practices of Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project
- Providing a brief description of all volunteering opportunities (volunteers only)
- *Providing relevant guidelines/policies*
- Offering a trial supervised visit to meet staff and gain insight into what's involved in any children's activity
- An informal interview for volunteers
- *A formal interview for staff*
- *Completing an application form for volunteers which includes signing the following declaration 'I understand the nature of the work I am to do. I have read the relevant*

guidelines. I understand that it is my duty to protect the children, young people, vulnerable adults and elderly with whom I come into contact. I know what action to take if abuse is discovered or disclosed'. In addition they are asked about criminal convictions.

- *Providing two referees*
- *Undergoing a Criminal Records Bureau check if a relevant one is less than two years old or is not available*
- *A contractual obligation on staff to follow organisational procedures and disciplinary action may be taken if they fail to do so.*

Items in italics above are essential components. Other items are discretionary according to how well the volunteer has been known by Maybridge Community Church or the MILE Project before offering to volunteer with children's work.

CRBs and references

All volunteers and staff working with children need a current Criminal Records Bureau check and two references, which Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project aims to have in place prior to volunteers or staff starting any work with children. If references or Criminal Records Bureau checks are delayed, volunteers and staff may work with children under supervision which includes never being alone with a child.

Induction

All staff will undergo an induction period. Inductions for volunteers are discretionary according to how well the volunteer has been known by Maybridge Community Church or the MILE Project before offering to volunteer with children's work. Trial periods are offered to volunteers.

Training

Child protection training is provided every other year for workers with children across Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project. The DVD training pack 'Facing the Unthinkable – Training for Places of Worship' is available for individuals or groups to use at other times. This is available from the Child Protection Coordinator.

The Child Protection Coordinator has received additional training from West Sussex County Council and the NSPCC. The Independent Adult for Children is a qualified social worker and has received specialised child protection training. The Deputy Independent Adult for Children has received additional training from the NSPCC.

Supervision

All staff have regular supervision sessions with their line manager. This is done both formally and informally.

Volunteer Reviews

Volunteer reviews are offered at least every six months and are discretionary according to how well the volunteer has been known by Maybridge Community Church or the MILE Project before offering to volunteer.

Staff appraisals

All staff have annual appraisals where their performance is reviewed and training needs are identified. Matters of competency or poor performance may be addressed at anytime. The Minister and Operations Director's performance is overseen by the Elders of the church.

Staff handbook

All members of staff have a staff handbook outlining the conduct and behaviour required and a range of policies that apply to them and the organisation. Arrangements for disciplinary action and grievances are contained in the handbook.

5.16 CHILD PROTECTION ROLES

Everyone who is a part of Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project has a role and responsibility with regard to child protection. The details of these responsibilities are contained within this document. In addition we have some specific roles, which are described below:

The Child Protection Coordinator and Deputy Child Protection Coordinator

The following people have been identified in this role (contact details in section 6):

Child Protection Coordinator	Phil Papps, Operations Director, Maybridge Community Church
Deputy Child Protection Coordinator	Andy Hickford, Minister, Maybridge Community Church

The role of the Child Protection Coordinator is to:

- Oversee policy and practice
- Link with child protection agencies, making referrals as necessary
- Keep central records
- Consider training needs
- Ensure child protection has a high profile amongst church and MILE Project leaders

The Deputy Child Protection Coordinator will cover these responsibilities in the absence of the Child Protection Coordinator. The church leadership will support the Coordinator / Deputy Coordinator in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

Independent Adult for Children and Deputy Independent Adult for Children

The following people have been identified in this role (contact details in section 6):

Independent Adult for Children Sue Banyard

Deputy Independent Adult for Children Jennie Jenner

The role of the Independent Adult for Children is to be a point of contact for children who may wish to discuss a concern they have about their own safety or that of another child. This does not limit children only going to these named people but is a way of making it easier for children to raise a concern. The Independent Adult for Children would then alert the Child Protection Coordinator or their Deputy and agree the action that would be taken. The Deputy Independent Adult for Children covers these responsibilities in the absence of the Independent Adult for Children.

We communicate the details of these posts through our annual child protection item in our church business meetings, through our training, through the circulation of this document and by publically displaying this information inside the building at Maybridge Community Church.

5.17 TRANSPORTING CHILDREN, TRIPS AND OUTINGS

Transporting children

The church or the MILE Project may sometimes organise activities which involve transporting children. These guidelines do not apply for private arrangements for transportation made, for example, between parties with parental responsibility. Leaders should ensure:

- Those transporting children should have gone through the recruitment procedures for workers with children and should be familiar with the child protection procedures and therefore able to abide by them
- Parental consent and emergency contact details have been obtained (applies to all trips regardless of transportation arrangements)
- The church office or MILE Project office is aware of the trip in advance
- The vehicle(s) are roadworthy, legal and safe and the drivers suitably qualified
- The highway code and all legal requirements for road users are followed
- Adults should not spend unnecessary time alone with a child in a vehicle and should ensure that nothing occurs that could be misunderstood. Lengthy conversations should be arranged for another time/venue.
- Do not give lifts to children on their own, other than for short trips and if there is no other reasonable alternative. Always ensure another adult knows (and the parent) about the arrangement.
- Children must not be left on their own at collection or dropping off points

For further guidance, contact the Child Protection Coordinator in advance of the trip.

Risk Assessments

All trips must have a risk assessment undertaken by the leader. For long trips, overnight trips, hazardous activities and activities involving swimming, water or outdoor cooking a full written risk assessment must be completed prior to the trip (ideally 2 weeks beforehand). The church

or MILE Project office must be given a copy. Assistance can be provided to leaders in completing these assessments – contact the church office for help. For short or local trips a written risk assessment is preferable but not essential as long as the leader has assessed the situation and planned the arrangements in such a way as to minimise risk.

Overnight stays

Under no circumstances must a leader or adult sleep in the same room or tent with one individual child or young person.

Trips in general

Children must be properly supervised with clear arrangements to keep them safe and deal with emergencies. Leaders must remain vigilant and look out for unexpected or unknown dangers and not rely only on having completed a risk assessment.

5.18 GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH CHILDREN

Internet

If a church or MILE Project activity needs to use the internet with children then the leaders must make sure there is adequate supervision. Children must not be able to access inappropriate sites or disclose personal information.

Counselling

None of our activities involve formal counselling with children. Only trained and suitably qualified counsellors may undertake counselling. Talking with children about life issues or their concerns and problems may occur. Arrangements for these discussions will be undertaken with care. Issues such as not being alone with a child and respect for the child's privacy will be expected. Parental consent may need to be obtained. See the section on confidentiality for guidelines on private matters.

Not alone

As far as possible, a worker should not be alone with a child or children. If this cannot be avoided, this will mean leaving a door open or changing the activity. At no time should one adult be alone on church premises with a child or group or children. Children and young people must not be given access to church premises unless responsible adults are present.

Children with disabilities or special needs

It is recognised that children with disabilities or special needs may be at greater risk of abuse. For example children with disabilities may be more dependent on others for intimate care and may be less able to tell people about any abuse they experience. Workers with children at Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project are asked to remain particularly aware of this.

Toileting

The privacy of children is to be respected at all times. Young children should be taken to the toilets but the adult should not invade the child's privacy. If a child has soiled themselves the parent or carer should be asked to clean the child. If they are not available or cannot come without a delay, then an adult shouldn't deal with this situation on their own. Remember to maintain the child's dignity, privacy and feelings. Inform the parent of the situation.

First aid and medical issues

Emergency situations should be dealt with by the emergency services. First Aid should be administered by trained adults if available. Care needs to be taken if dealing with a minor situation - the following need to be considered: parents availability to deal with the situation; not being alone with a child; the child's dignity and privacy; the child's views; allergies and reactions.

Physical contact

Never initiate physical contact with a child. Inappropriate physical approaches must be discouraged. Reject the physical expression, not the person. Young children who are hurt or upset may need comfort but this should be minimal, appropriate and not hidden. The child's wishes must be taken into account.

Contact with children outside of church or MILE Project activities

Don't invite a child or young person to your home alone. A group may be invited as long as : this is for a genuine purpose, each parent/carer knows where their child is and what time they should return home, and there is another adult in the house. The house and activities must be safe.

If a child or young person initiates a request to visit your home clarify the reason for the request, decline (preferable) or make arrangements only after taking advice from the Child Protection Coordinator or group leader. If a child or young person turns up on your doorstep without prior warning, do not invite them in if you are alone. If another adult is present in the house make sure the visit is short and make alternative arrangements if a lengthy conversation needs to occur.

Phone, Text and Email contact – these and other similar methods of communication need to have the same standards of conduct and appropriateness applied as any other situation. Offensive, suggestive, immoral or other similar behaviour is not acceptable using these communication tools. Personal details should not be circulated without prior consent as it is as important to protect children from unwelcome or unintended contact from others.

Ratios

Recommended child to adult ratios for Indoor Activities are as follows:

- 0-2 years old 1:3
- 2-3 years old 1:4
- 3-8 years old 1:8
- 8 and over 2:20 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every 10 children

Recommended child to adult ratios for Outdoor Activities are as follows:

- 0-2 years old 1:3
- 2-3 years old 1:4
- 3-8 years old 1:6
- 8-13 years old 2:15 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every 8 children
- 13 and over 2:20 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every 10 children

Hire of Premises

We seek to avoid booking events where unknown adults are in the building when there are activities involving children or young people. Private hirers are reminded of their responsibilities for the wellbeing of those at their own activities.

Photos

From time to time photos are taken of activities and events at Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project that may include children. For any public use of these photos consent will be sort from parents/carers. Photos of events on our premises that are private functions or private hires are the responsibility of the hirers and not of Maybridge Community Church or the MILE Project.

5.19 CONFIDENTIALITY

Maintaining confidentiality, avoiding gossip and having integrity in relationships are important to Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project. However adults must be clear that responding to a child protection concern overrides all matters of confidentiality in order to ensure children are kept safe from harm. This applies not only to disclosure from children but also where 'confession' occurs between adults. The Child Protection Coordinator should be consulted if someone is not sure and he will seek professional advice as appropriate.

5.2 Disclosures of abuse – How to respond to a child who tells you something that concerns you

Children may tell you about experiences that are happening to them (or a friend) that indicate abuse may be occurring. A child may do this because they trust you and have therefore built up the courage to disclose something. On other occasions a child may say something without intending to that raises a concern (a drawing or piece of writing might also indicate a concern). Either way, you must take action on what you have been told. The following points should be noted:

WHAT TO DO:

- DO treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child as if you believe what they are saying
- DO remain calm and receptive, accepting what you hear without passing judgement
- DO listen carefully

- DO tell the child they are right to tell you
- DO reassure them that they are not to blame
- DO be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why (communicate this in a way the child can understand)
- DO take further action, following the Steps in section 5.3 below
- DO record your actions and the concerns (See Appendix A)

WHAT NOT TO DO:

- DON'T allow your shock or distaste to show, or cast doubt on what the child has said
- DON'T make promises you can't keep, such as 'everything will be alright'
- DON'T ask questions or interrogate the child – it is not your job to carry out an investigation, this is the role of the Police and Social Services.
- DON'T speculate or make assumptions
- DON'T agree to keep the information secret
- DON'T talk to others, only those involved with the child protection procedures
- DON'T DO NOTHING

5.3 Responding to abuse - What to do if you notice or are told something that concerns you

Action for Individuals with a concern

If you have a concern that a child may be suffering from, or be at risk of, abuse you must take action without delay.

Preliminary Step – if the child needs urgent medical attention, obtain this as a matter of urgency.

Step 1 – Be mindful of the descriptions of abuse and the physical and behavioural signs outlined in this document in Section 4. Remember these are examples, not a comprehensive list.

Step 2 – Without delay, alert the leader of the children's group so they can follow through the concern. If the leader is unavailable or there will be a delay in contacting them, contact the Child Protection Coordinator (Phil Papps or the Deputy Coordinator Andy Hickford). Contact details are in Section 6. If there is no-one available to contact, then call either the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service Helpline on 0845 120 4551 or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000. They will advise you and guide you what to do.

Step 3 – Record your concerns (see Appendix A for details) as soon as possible and provide these for the Child Protection Coordinator who will store them in a safe place. Remember – Under no circumstances should a church worker carry out their own investigation into the allegation or suspicion of abuse. Investigations are the responsibility of the statutory authorities and interference in them may jeopardise a criminal case.

Action for Leaders with a concern

If Leaders have a concern themselves about a child, they should follow the steps above.

If they are told by a worker of a concern, then they are to contact the Child Protection Coordinator (Phil Papps) without delay to agree the action to be taken. The action a leader may be asked to take could include discussing the concerns with the child's parents or carers if this is appropriate. This decision will be made in conjunction with the Child Protection Coordinator but no parent will be contacted if this will put the child at risk (for example if the parent is suspected of the physical abuse or sexual abuse). The Child Protection Coordinator (or Deputy) will usually make any referral to Social Services or the Police.

Direct Referrals

These procedures have been developed so that they are followed and direct referrals should not be made. However it is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from an agency such as the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service. If the individual with the concern feels that the Coordinator / Deputy Coordinator has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Coordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. By making this statement the Leadership seeks to demonstrate that their overriding commitment is to effective child protection.

5.4 Raising concerns - What to do if you are concerned about how an adult is behaving

All members and attenders of Maybridge Community Church and all those involved with the MILE Project, are required to follow the Code of Conduct (see Section 5.11) and behave in a way that is in keeping with the expectations as laid out in the ethos, values and practices of the organisations. If an adult is observed or known to be behaving in a way that is concerning or could lead to a misunderstanding, action should be taken.

- For minor behaviour issues, these should be discussed directly with the adult. The leader of the activity should be informed and notes may be taken as appropriate. It may be that further guidance or training is required for the adult.
- For situations where abuse may a concern or a risk, the leader of the activity should be informed who will then agree the action to be taken with the Child Protection Coordinator. This will be recorded and safely stored.
- If the concern is about a leaders actions (or any member of staff), then the Child Protection Coordinator should be contacted who will determine (taking advice as appropriate) what action should be taken. This will be recorded and safely stored.
- If the Child Protection Coordinator or their Deputy is not available then the Chair of Elders for the Church may be contacted or the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service Helpline on 0845 120 4551 or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 5000.

We seek to have an open culture where issues can be raised in ways that are helpful, supportive and that fulfil our responsibilities. There may be perfectly reasonable explanations

for situations that are observed but we do not discount the potential for something to be a genuine concern.

5.5 Allegations against workers - What we do if an allegation is made

In responding to concerns that are raised it is important to distinguish between general complaints (clear expressions of dissatisfaction with a group, its' personnel or the activities it is delivering) and allegations. Both will be taken seriously. Our complaints procedure is outlined in Appendix B.

If an allegation is made against a worker with children at Maybridge Community Church or with the MILE Project we will seek guidance and take professional advice in considering the course of action. The sources of advice might include published guidance from child protection groups, speaking to Social Services or the Police, speaking to the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service or the NSPCC. The result may be a formal referral to Social Services or the Police.

We will put the welfare of the child first and also consider the implications for the worker (who may or may not have done what is alleged). Social Services and the Police may undertake an enquiry to establish what may have happened. We will cooperate with any such enquiry and will urge that the enquiry is conducted both quickly and fairly.

During an enquiry the worker will be supervised as closely as possible without raising suspicion during the period between the matter being raised, the authorities being informed and the appropriate action being taken. Should the worker (or staff member) be suspended following an allegation, this will be considered a neutral act. Suspension allows for an individual to stand down or stand aside while matters of concern are considered. It may also be necessary to ensure the fulfilment of our priority of protecting children or to ensure children are not being influenced in any way by the person subject to the allegation. As mentioned in Section 5.11 'The leadership of the church and/or MILE Project reserves the right to place restrictions and boundaries on anyone in relation to working with children, including preventing them from any work with children.'

For information on known offenders, see Section 5.12.

5.6 Support for those affected by abuse

The reality of child abuse is distressing and disturbing and it is natural that it will arouse strong feelings. It is important that these feelings do not prevent appropriate action being taken. In dealing with a situation, or after the event, support will be given within the restrictions of not informing a wider group of people. Therefore the Child Protection Coordinator or the Minister will be the first port of call to arrange support. It may also be helpful for individuals to contact the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service Helpline on 0845 120 4551 or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Awareness of child abuse can remind individuals of painful situations in their own past. As a church we seek to offer pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, to support those attending our church who have been affected by abuse.

6. Contact details and Further Information

Child Protection Coordinator for Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project:

Phil Papps
Operations Director
Maybridge Community Church
The Strand
Worthing
BN12 6DL
Office Telephone 01903 700522 or 01903 603337
Mobile Telephone 07910 841769
(Church Members will have home telephone number as well)

Deputy Child Protection Coordinator:

Andy Hickford
Minister
Maybridge Community Church
The Strand
Worthing
BN12 6DL
Office Telephone 01903 700522
(Church Members will have home telephone number as well)

Independent Adult for Children

Sue Banyard
Contact via the Church Office on 01903 700522
(Church Members will have home telephone number as well)

Deputy Independent Adult for Children

Jennie Jenner
Contact via the Church Office on 01903 700522
(Church Members will have home telephone number as well)

Local Social Services Office:

Centenary House,
Durrington Lane,
Worthing, BN13 2QB
Telephone: 01903 839100
Fax: 01903 839248
For an emergency situation out of office hours, call 01903 694422

Police

For an emergency situation call 999
For all other situations call 0845 60 70 999

Other Sources of Guidance

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)
PO Box 133,
Swanley,
Kent
BR8 7UQ
Telephone: 0845 120 4550
Helpline: 0845 120 4551
Fax: 0845 120 4552
www.ccpas.co.uk

NSPCC
Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London
EC2A 3NH
Helpline (24 hours): 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline

The Church Office has the following resources available:

- The West Sussex Area Child Protection Procedures
- Guidance For Churches – a working manual for child protection and safe practice (CCPAS)
- Facing the Unthinkable Training Pack – Training for places of worship, DVD version (CCPAS)
- How to Develop Child Protection Policies and Procedures (Action in Rural Sussex)
- Safe and Secure – Ensuring the well being of children and young people within the church community (CCPAS and the Metropolitan Police)
- Safe To Grow – Guidelines on child protection for the local church and its youth leaders, Fourth Edition (Baptist Union)
- Protecting All God's Children, the child protection policy for the Church of England, Third Edition (Church of England)
- Caring About Abuse – prevention and support (CCPAS)

- Help... I was abused as a child, booklet (CCPAS)
- Caring magazine – (CCPAS)

Please contact Phil Papps if you are interested in making use of them.

Appendix A

Recording Your Concerns

When a child protection concern arises, it is essential that someone records what is said or seen and what action was taken. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and provided to the Child Protection Coordinator who will keep them in a secure place. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated in our procedures.

Items to be included in the Record of Concern:

- Name of child
- Child's address
- Name of parents/carers
- Phone number for parent/carers and child
- What is said to have happened or what was seen?
- When and where did it occur?
- Who else, if anyone, was involved and how?
- What was said by those involved?
- Were there any obvious physical signs or behavioural signs?
- Was the child able to say what happened – if so, how did they describe it?
- Who else has been told about it and when?
- Do the parents know?
- Signature of person filing the record
- Date of record

Appendix B

Complaints Procedure for Maybridge Community Church and the MILE Project

Introduction

Complaints refer to any clear expression of dissatisfaction about Maybridge Community Church or the MILE Project, their staff/volunteers, activities or premises. Anyone may make a complaint including children, parents/carers, volunteers or other people outside the group. Staff have procedures to raise concerns as detailed in their contracts and staff handbook. We treat complaints seriously and aim to always learn from them and improve what we do.

How to make a complaint

- Complaints may be made in writing, by fax, by email or by telephone. Complaints made in person should be made with someone else in the room to witness the complaint.
- Complaints should include the name and contact details of the complainant (anonymous complaints will be equally considered but we will naturally be unable to provide a response or feedback to the complainant if we do not have their contact details); details of what has gone wrong or causing a concern; who has been told about this concern or tried to respond to it (if relevant) and the resolution the complainant is seeking.
- Complaints should be directed to the person immediately responsible for the activity or situation in the first instance (ie to the group leader). If a person is not sure, then the complaint should be addressed to the Operations Director at Maybridge Community Church.

Responding to complaints

- Complaints will be dealt with promptly, politely and respectfully
- The person receiving the complaint will look into the matter and respond to the complainant in the first instance. The aim is to resolve the matter 'as near to source' as soon as possible. It may sometimes mean a written response to the complainant.
- If there will be a delay in looking into the issue, then the complainant should be informed of this delay and the reasons for the delay.
- If the matter hasn't been resolved or the complainant is not satisfied with the initial response, the matter should be referred to the Chair of Elders (for matters relating to Maybridge Community Church) or the Chair of Trustees (for matters relating to the MILE Project) who will seek to bring the matter to a suitable resolution.
- Although every effort will be made to resolve concerns, we reserve the right to not enter into extensive correspondence and there is no right of appeal