



# **Safeguarding Children and Young People**

**Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**for**

**Tiptree United Reformed Church**

# Tiptree URC Child Protection Policy

1. Tiptree United Reformed Church (URC) recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. Under the terms of the Children Act 2004 anyone under the age of 19 is considered to be a child/young person.
2. This document sets out the overarching policy of Tiptree URC, acting through its office holders, members and others working under its auspices, towards the safeguarding and welfare of children involved in activities on URC premises.
3. We aim:
  - to create a safe environment within which children and young people can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.
  - to identify any child or young person who is suffering.
  - to take such action as is necessary to see that any child or young person is kept safe from harm.
4. We will nominate and elect annually a lead person with special responsibility for child protection issues. Any lead person so elected will be a recognised member of the church and, where possible, will have a background in child care, youth work or social care. This person will:
  - undertake training adequate to their needs in fulfilling that role.
  - access regular URC policy updates and apprise the eldership of any changes in URC policy or procedure.
  - ensure that an annual review of this policy and procedure takes place.
  - ensure that all church personnel working with children or young people receive a copy of this document.
5. We understand that any member of staff or volunteer who falls within the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criteria for 'Regulated Activity for Children' will require an enhanced DBS certificate.
6. We will ensure that staff and volunteers working with children receive training sufficient to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the church's policy and procedures, with refresher training at least every 3 years.
7. We will approve and annually review this policy and its procedures with a view to:
  - raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment.
  - establishing and updating procedures for reporting concerns.
  - establishing and updating procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers.
  - the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers.

8. We will ensure that any external organisation wishing to hire the premises of Tiptree URC for the purpose of children's activities has read and understood this policy and agreed to implement it, or has a similar policy drawn up under the guidelines of the HM Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. We will require any such organisation to confirm agreement in writing.

9. We recognise that the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 state that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. We also recognise that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with allegations towards an individual can irreparably damage that person's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, allegations of abuse will be dealt with sensitively and in a careful, measured way.

10. We are aware of the following types and signs of abuse:

- *Physical abuse*: causing harm to a child's person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.
- *Neglect*: the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- *Sexual abuse*: a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant.
- *Emotional abuse*: persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection, causing severe and adverse effects to behaviour and emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

## Tiptree URC Child Protection Procedures

Tiptree URC recognises that an allegation of child abuse made against a member of staff or a volunteer may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that investigations are thorough and not subject to delay. In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, it is important to:

- listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour
- let them know that you take what they are saying seriously
- make no attempt to investigate or to interview them yourself
- let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help them
- make no promises to keep what they tell you secret
- inform your designated lead person for child protection as soon as possible
- make a written record of the incident or events using either an Incident Report Form (available from the lead person or from the church office), or by writing a full factual account which must be dated and signed.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with Essex Social Care. It is the responsibility of the lead person(s) for child protection for Tiptree URC to make any referral to Essex Social Care. The designated lead persons for child protection for Tiptree URC are Tessa Perrin (07875 695688), Teresa Henderson and Ann Dolphin. If no lead person is available, contact the minister Rev Ken Thom on 01621 819437, or the URC Children and Youth Development Officer Nicola Grieves on 01223 830770 or 07515 721172. If the situation requires urgent attention and none of the above are available, contact Essex Social Care on 0845 603 7627. Out of hours contact (5.30pm - 9.00am Monday - Thursday, 4.30pm Friday - 9.00am Monday and bank holidays) as follows:

- Tel: 0300 1230 779
- Fax: 01206 851844
- Email: [EmergencyDutyTeam.OutofHours@essex.gov.uk](mailto:EmergencyDutyTeam.OutofHours@essex.gov.uk)

**Please note - if there is an immediate risk of harm to a child then contact the police direct on 999.**

This policy is drawn from guidelines in the following documents:

- Good Practice: Safeguarding Children and Young People in the Church. The United Reformed Church, Third Edition.
- Sample Child Protection Policy. The Churches' Agency for Safeguarding.

*Policy to be reviewed April 2017*