



## **Child Protection Policy** **To be read and understood by all applicants**

### **Creation Fest Policy** **Safeguarding the Welfare of Children and Young People**

Creation Fest recognises the unique status of children and young people, and seeks to ensure that they are respectfully treated as individuals in accordance with the Children Act 1989. All volunteers accept that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The highest standards towards children and young people will be maintained in all pastoral, counselling, worship, prayer and recreational circumstances. All workers may have contact with children and young people; and so all volunteers will be asked whether they have been subject to criminal or civil proceedings.

Clear recruitment procedures, training and supervision are essential for achieving a high quality service to children and young people participating in Creation Fest activities. It is the duty of all people working with children and young people to prevent abuse and unsafe situations from occurring. All volunteers are also required to report any abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected, in line with these procedures.

Creation Fest will collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary authorities concerned with investigating abuse. It is important to note that it is the responsibility of the Police and/or Social Services (not Creation Fest) to investigate the truth of any allegation of abuse.

#### **Good Practice Guidelines:**

Please be aware that your words and actions may be open to misinterpretation, and therefore you should take great care to avoid situations in which your actions could be misunderstood.

- You should never pray with a child or young person under 16 in an unsupervised situation.
- You should never be alone with a child or young person under 16 outside an organised activity.
- You will be responsible for ensuring that abusive peer activities (such as bullying etc.) do not occur.
- It is essential that any child abuse issues are not trivialised or exaggerated and that the proper steps are followed.
- All steps must be taken to ensure that the site is safe for children and young people. Any concerns that you may have should be reported to your Team Leader immediately.

### **Creation Fest guidelines to recognising signs of abuse:**

The following signs of abuse are guidelines to help workers who may have a concern that a child or young person is suffering from abuse.

**Abuse falls into four broad categories:** (some young people may suffer from more than one)

#### ***Physical Abuse:***

Any injury that does not fit with the explanation given or within what is considered normal for a person of that age should be treated suspiciously. Not seeking medical attention for an obvious injury may be a cause for concern.

#### ***Neglect:***

The lack of adequate food, lack of appropriate clothing, lack of supervision, lack of protection and/or being left alone.

#### ***Emotional Abuse:***

Lack of confidence and self-esteem, being withdrawn and anxious; being demanding and attention seeking; poor communication skills.

#### ***Sexual Abuse:***

Sexual knowledge inappropriate for the age of the child or young person; sexualised behaviour, play or drawings.

If signs of abuse are recognised it must be immediately reported to the Child Welfare Officer and documented as a concern. The Child Welfare Officers will then discuss and agree a decision and document the reasons clearly on the form, taking action accordingly. If uncertain, advice will be immediately sought from the relevant agencies (Police and Social Services).

### **If a child or young person begins to tell you about abuse it is vital that you do the following:**

- Do NOT promise not to tell anyone or say you will keep it a secret.
- Listen carefully but do not ask questions (a trained professional will do this).
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by disclosing the abuse.
- Let the child or young person know that you will need to let someone else know about what they have said.
- Immediately report the child or young person's disclosure to your team leader, who will alert a Creation Fest Child Welfare Officer.
- As soon as possible write down what you were told by the child or young person using his or her own words to describe the abuse and pass this report form immediately to the Creation Fest Child Welfare Officer.
- It is important not to discuss the disclosure with anyone other than your team leader or Child Welfare Officer.

### **Guidelines for dealing with an allegation:**

- For all volunteers the most important consideration is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people with whom they come into contact.
- Any allegation of abuse must be taken seriously. Creation Fest has a duty and a legal obligation to report all allegations of abuse to the relevant statutory authorities.
- Allegations may come directly from a child or young person, or from a fellow team worker, or from an adult.
- Allegations may refer to a family member or to someone outside the family such as a teacher, youth leader or pastor, etc. No groups of people are exempt from being abusers or from being abused.
- If the allegation concerns the Welfare Officer then the allegation must not be reported to them, but must be immediately reported to the Festival Manager, who will follow the procedures below.

### **Creation Fest procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse:**

- Report all allegations of abuse to your team leader immediately. They will inform the Creation Fest Child Welfare Officer, who will take up the matter with the relevant statutory authorities (Police, Social Services), which are responsible for investigating allegations of abuse, they will also direct all action that is required.
- The first person to be told of the abuse may be asked to give a statement to the Police.
- It is important to remember that what has been disclosed is confidential and should only be shared with designated staff.
- After the telling of abuse, a child or young person can be distressed and concerned about what will happen next. They should be reassured that they have done the right thing and an appropriate adult should stay with them until the relevant agency arrives.
- It is important to remember that the best interests of the child or young person, and the need for the abuse to stop come before the interests of Creation Fest or the abuser.
- The Creation Fest Child Welfare Officer will deal with all child protection incidents reported.
- Creation Fest recommends that if abuse is disclosed to you, you seek the comfort and support of the Prayer Ministry Team, without disclosing the details of the situation.