

Scripture Union Northern Ireland

# HOW WE CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

A Safeguarding Guide



## **SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW**

**A full copy of our Safeguarding Policy is available upon request.**

Working with the Churches, Scripture Union Northern Ireland aims:

1. To make God's Good News known to children, young people and families
2. To encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer so that they may:
  - Come to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
  - Grow in Christian maturity
  - Become committed church members and servants of a world in need

The purpose of this abridged policy is:

1. To protect all children and young people (including volunteers under 18 years of age) associated with Scripture Union Northern Ireland from all harm;

2. To provide volunteers and members of SUNI staff with principles for safeguarding all the children and young people we meet.

This policy applies to all members of staff and volunteers working through our various ministries, including students on placements and interns. SUNI believes that everyone within our organisation is responsible for the protection of all children and young people from abuse and all children and young people should be welcomed and cared for equally.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **You should:**

- treat children and young people, and encourage them to treat each other, with dignity and respect.
- never allow inappropriate language, behaviour or bullying to go unchallenged.

- you should never be alone with young people in isolation from others. In the case of an emergency, make sure you have approval of the team leader or staff worker.
- never take children or young people alone in a car on journeys, however short, with the exception of work experience/placement students and within the full knowledge and consent of their parent/guardian and the team leader or staff worker.
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with children or young people.
- never meet or communicate with children or young people outside organised activities.
- respect the children's right to privacy - never do things of a personal nature for children or young people that they can do for themselves.
- never engage in rough physical games, including horseplay, other than sports activities which are properly organised and supervised.

- never engage in sexually provocative games or activities.
- never make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person.
- avoid any situation that may be open to misinterpretation.
- consider your online footprint – do not connect with any child or young person on social media.
- do not take any photographs or video footage of a child or young person or group of children and young people unless you have been given permission by your SU Staff member or Team Leader.
- with God’s help, live within the standards of the SUNI Statement of Ethos.

If you have any further questions relating to this, please speak to your Schools’ Worker, Team Leader, relevant SU staff member or to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

# ABUSE

## Types of Abuse and Recognising Abuse

You may be informed of abuse or neglect by a child/young person (or by someone else) either directly (a specific statement), indirectly (an ambiguous statement) or non-verbally (something written or drawn).

Alternatively, you may notice visible signs of abuse or neglect through behaviour or appearance.

### Physical Abuse

*Deliberately hurting a child/young person*

Signs may include:

- Unexplained, recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Fear of physical contact, a shrinking back if touched

## **Sexual Abuse**

*Sexual exploitation of a child/young person for the gratification of others*

Signs may include:

- Sexual knowledge, behaviour or use of language inappropriate for the child's age
- Regression to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking
- Self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses or anorexia
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating

## **Emotional Abuse**

*Persistent emotional maltreatment of a child/young person*

Signs may include:

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Continual belittling of oneself
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation

- Inappropriate response to pain
- Neurotic behaviour

## **Neglect**

*The failure to provide for a child/young person's basic needs*

Signs may include:

- Constant hunger
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Poor personal hygiene

## **Exploitation**

*Intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person*

Signs may include:

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that cannot be accounted for
- Use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Experiencing health problems that may indicate a sexually transmitted infection

- Having mood swings/changes in temperament
- Displaying over familiarity with strangers

## **Bullying**

*Deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend himself or herself (Department of Education, 1999).*

Signs may include:

- Being reluctant to participate in activities
- Being distressed or anxious
- Losing confidence and becoming withdrawn
- Having problems eating and/or sleeping
- Having unexplained injuries
- Changes in appearance
- Changes in behaviour

## RESPONDING TO ABUSE

### DON'T –

Do not panic.

Do not ask leading questions.

Do not promise to keep secrets. Explain that you may have to talk to someone else in order to be able to help.

Do not inquire into the details of the abuse or make a physical examination of the child.

Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.

Do not delay in reporting.

NOTE: If the child has suffered a **physical** injury that presents immediate threat **you must ACT straight away**. Seek medical assistance, informing a doctor of any suspicions of abuse. Once medical assistance has been obtained you must report the incident to the relevant Designated Officer. **The care of the child is of first priority.**

## **DO –**

**Stay calm.**

**Listen and hear. Give the child time to say what he/she wants.**

**Reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing in telling.**

**Record in writing what was said as soon as possible.**

**Report by following the guidelines for your context.**

**Record your report on a disclosure report form.**

**Continue your relationship with the child from then on as normally as possible.**

*Guidelines adapted from Volunteer Now: Our Duty to Care, 2019.*

## REPORTING ABUSE

### Record...

In writing, as soon as possible after identifying a concern or disclosure, including (if known) exact quotes (should the concern be verbal), times and dates, names, exact details of what was seen or said.

### Act...

Immediately and report to the relevant Designated Officer (D.O.) The context in which you serve will determine who you report to:



Volunteer will then be asked to complete a Safeguarding Report Form (available upon request).

## A School Visit (Lesson or SU Group):

Within the school context, the class teacher/school's Designated Officer is the ultimate authority on all matters of safeguarding and they are the person to whom you should report. They may ask for the notes you have made.

You may wish to inform your SUNI Schools Worker about any concern or disclosure you are aware of, but you are not obliged to do so (unless the disclosure is made during an SU Group).



Within the SUNI context, the D.O. will listen to what you have identified and assist you to complete a Safeguarding Report Form.

## **Continue**

Your relationship with the child or young person from then on as normally as possible.

Remember, if the child is in immediate risk you must act and contact the PSNI on 999.

If any member of staff, volunteer or other individual has genuine and serious concerns about Scripture Union's safeguarding policies and procedures and how they are put into practice, the individual(s) should raise their concerns by speaking up and contacting SUNI's Headquarters or Council.



To find out more about who we are, scan the QR code or go to [www.suni.co.uk](http://www.suni.co.uk).

## SUNI'S DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

Camps & Missions Manager

Schools Ministry Manager

Operations Manager

Ministry Development Director

*Contact us:*

**[safeguarding@sunico.uk](mailto:safeguarding@sunico.uk)**

Scripture Union Northern Ireland's Designated Safeguarding Officers can be contacted at (028) 9045 4806.



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