

## GUIDELINES ON CHILD PROTECTION for school SU leaders



Scripture Union is fully committed to the welfare of the children and young people involved in all our activities. Volunteers are expected to do all they can to protect those in their care from abuse. They are also expected to behave in such a way that no possible allegation of abuse can be made against any of them.

SU coordinators are required to ensure that each of the adults involved in their groups, or in any residential activities organised by their groups, has been approved by the school principal in accordance with the school's policy on Child Protection and has received some basic training in child protection. Such training can be provided by Scripture Union, if necessary.

Each of the adults involved in a school SU group, or in any residential activity organised by the group, is expected to be familiar with and to **comply fully with the school's policy on Child Protection**.

They are also expected to adhere to the following guidelines.

1. You should treat children, and encourage them to treat each other, with dignity and respect at all times. You should never allow inappropriate language or behaviour to go unchallenged.
2. Other than IN AN EMERGENCY, you should never be alone with a child in isolation without the consent of the SU coordinator and / or the school principal.

Meetings with individual children should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other adults informed of the meeting.

3. You should never take children alone in a car on journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the SU coordinator and of either the school principal or the child's parents / guardians.
4. You should avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. There may be occasions when it is unavoidable, such as when providing comfort and reassurance for a distressed child. In such circumstances care should be taken to ensure that physical contact does not take place in any way that might be considered indecent or that might be misconstrued.

In extreme cases, it may be necessary to restrain a child physically to prevent injury or damage to property. In such circumstances no more than the minimum necessary force should be used. You should be familiar with and adhere rigidly to school guidelines in this respect.

5. You should never arrange to meet with children outside of organised activities without the consent of the SU coordinator and of either the school principal, if you are meeting within the school, or the child's parents / guardians, if you are meeting outside the school. Under no circumstances should you meet with a child or young person on your own.
6. You should respect the children's right to privacy. Do not invade their privacy, for example, when they are using the toilet, changing or showering. Be sensitive to children who may be shy about communal changing or showering and make allowances for them.
7. You should never:
  - engage in rough physical games, including horseplay, other than sports activities which are properly organised and supervised;
  - engage in sexually provocative games or activities;
  - make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun;
  - do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.

It may sometimes be necessary for you to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or if they are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full knowledge and consent of the child's parents / guardians and with another adult present. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, the school principal and the child's parents /

guardians should be fully informed as soon as possible. In such situations it is important to ensure that you are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

- You should avoid any situation that may be open to misinterpretation. If there is any situation with which you are uncomfortable, you should consult either the designated teacher responsible for child protection within the school or the member of staff responsible for child protection within Scripture Union about it.

#### Responding To Abuse

- It is not the role of leaders to seek for and to identify symptoms of abuse. Nevertheless it is vital that no child in need of help is ignored.

If you have any concerns about a child being abused, or if any such disclosures are made to you, you **must** report these immediately to the designated teacher responsible for child protection within the school. If your concerns relate either to incidents suspected or disclosed to have taken place during a Scripture Union activity, or to a volunteer associated with the activity, you must also report them to the member of staff responsible for child protection within Scripture Union.

If neither of these are available and, in your judgement, the matter is urgent you should report your concerns to your school SU coordinator who should in turn seek advice from the school principal or from Social Services in your area.

- If a child discloses to you that he / she has been abused in any way you should adhere to the following guidelines, which are adapted from those in the DHSS publication, 'Our Duty to Care.'

| Do   | Don't   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Stay calm.</b></p> <p><b>Listen</b> and hear. Give the child time to say what he/she wants.</p> <p><b>Reassure</b> the child that he/she has done the right thing in telling.</p> <p><b>Record</b> in writing what was said as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Report</b> the matter as above.</p> | <p>Do not panic.</p> <p>Do not ask leading questions.</p> <p>Do not promise to keep secrets. Explain that you may have to talk to someone else in order to be able to help.</p> <p>Do not inquire into the details of the abuse.</p> <p>Do not make a child repeat the story unnecessarily.</p> |

You may wish to involve your school SU coordinator in the conversation at an early stage but you should do so only with the consent of the child.

You should also adhere to the following guidelines.

- Maintain confidentiality at all times. Do not discuss the matter with anyone other than those to whom you have reported it, as above.
- Continue your relationship with the child from then on as normally as possible. Do not pursue the matter any further, or refer to it again unless the child initiates the discussion.
- Do not make any physical examination of the child.

Our full Child Protection Policy can be downloaded from the schools section of our website: [www.suni.co.uk](http://www.suni.co.uk) as can the Disclosure Report Form you will need if you have to report a disclosure or concern to the member of staff responsible for child protection within Scripture Union.

If you have any further questions or concerns relating to child protection please speak either to the designated teacher responsible for child protection within the school or to the member of staff responsible for child protection within Scripture Union.

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