

What do I do if a child talks to me about abuse?

- Listen to the child, accepting what they say. Take it seriously
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling what has happened but do not ask questions to obtain more information
- Make a note of the timing, setting and people present
- Reassure the child who has spoken to you
- Write down exactly what was said, using the child's own words
- Do not promise confidentiality or to keep something secret
- Explain to the child what actions will be taken

What to do next when abuse is suspected or alleged

If you are concerned a child could be experiencing abuse, discuss the child with the Church Child Protection Co-ordinator or the Rector. They will contact Social Services or the Police if there are concerns about significant harm. If you remain concerned, speak to Social Services yourself.

REMEMBER

- Always have at least two adults present when working with children
- References and application forms will be completed for all "workers" with children and young people
- No one has a right to work with children - children have a right to be safe
- Keep telling someone until the child is helped

PARISH OF WEST BYFLEET CHILD PROTECTION LEAFLET

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

It is the commitment of West Byfleet Parochial Church Council that we will provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all children and young people.

This leaflet is a brief guide to child protection. It should be supplemented by reading the Church's Child Protection Procedures available at the Vicarage or from the leaders of the children and young people's groups.

What is child abuse?

The following categories are described in detail in the Child Protection Procedures:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

MYTHS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

“It couldn't happen here”

“We all know each other too well”

“Christians can never be abusers”

“We have enough trouble getting helpers – we can't start asking questions”

How do I know if a child is being abused?

Few signs of abuse are significant alone, but a cluster of signs must be taken seriously.

- The child might show by their own **behaviour** that abuse is taking place - inappropriate behaviour for their age or major changes in a child's behaviour.
- You may **observe** that the child is inadequately clothed, hungry or tired. The child may be developmentally delayed or appearing unhappy. The child might tell you about or hint at abuse.
- You might be concerned about the **behaviour of the adults** with the child, for example, you may be told a child is left alone, a parent is punishing the child excessively or constantly criticising a child.

Record all signs carefully - it may not be obvious how important a sign could be until later. Never wait until you are sure before you record and seek advice. Refer to the Church Child Protection Co-ordinator or the local Social Services Department (Tel: 01202 735 046)

What are your concerns about reporting child abuse?

I don't believe the child's allegation

It's only a small sign – I may be over reacting

The child or parent has told me this in confidence

The parent would be upset and may tell other families – this could affect the church

Social Services may break up the family