

## Safeguarding Children in



### **Guidelines for Safeguarding and Protecting Children at Shatin Anglican Church**

At Shatin Church we believe that each and every child is a precious gift from God who has been created uniquely, is important and therefore has a right to dignity and protection. We want to welcome each child to a loving and safe children's program, Kingdom Kids (KK) where safeguarding children is good practice.

We are concerned with the welfare and development of children so that they are free from any form of abuse or neglect. We are committed to the spiritual and physical wellbeing of children so that they may grow into responsible and fulfilled human beings.

At Shatin Church the Pastor, Church Committee and Leaders are responsible for implementing these guidelines as far as practically possible.

Shatin Church:

- Works towards providing the best quality activities and services for children.
- Has a policy with procedures in place to safeguard children.
- Has a safe recruitment process.
- Keeps any personal information secure.
- Trains volunteers in safeguarding and promotes a code of practice so that all children's workers are aware of and understand what kinds of behavior are encouraged, acceptable and unacceptable.
- Aims to help volunteers to spot potential signs of abuse in children.

## **1. Scope of Our Guidelines**

The scope of our guidelines applies to all Kingdom Kids paid staff and volunteers who help regularly during any specified Kingdom Kids or church activity. Any contact with children outside of the Kingdom Kids role or away from church is not covered by these guidelines.

These guidelines are in place to safeguard the children in our care, to detect any signs of abuse happening outside of our care, to protect those working with the children and lead to fair disciplinary action if anyone breaks the procedures.

## **2. Definitions**

In these guidelines a 'child' is anyone who is in the Kingdom Kids (KK) program, so aged between 3 – 11 years.

Abuse can be defined as physical, mental/emotional, sexual, spiritual abuse, neglect, bullying, sexual/child grooming and harmful cultural practices.

## **3. Code of Practice for Working with Children**

Kingdom Kids paid staff and volunteers should cultivate a nurturing and supportive attitude towards children. Children are to be valued, respected and cared for as individuals. Children should be listened to, encouraged to develop their gifts and abilities, and praised for effort and achievements.

Within KK we recognize the trust placed in adults by children and the power over children by adults. We will treat this trust and power with the utmost importance.

In KK we want all our paid staff and volunteers to be godly role models and therefore to act, speak and dress in an appropriate manner.

3.1 Words should be used to encourage, edify and teach and not in a way that is sexualized, suggestive, abusive or demeaning.

3.2 Physical punishment of a child is never acceptable.

3.3 All children should be treated with equal respect, favoritism is not acceptable.

3.4 The KK team should not engage in inappropriate or culturally insensitive physical contact of any kind. This includes tough physical play, horseplay (tickling and wrestling) and touching in inappropriate areas (areas normally covered by shorts and t-shirt.) However this should not prevent appropriate contact in situations where it is necessary to ensure the safety and well being of a child (for example when a child is distressed.)

3.5 Children should never be exposed to inappropriate material such as pornographic videos, pictures, literature or age inappropriate material.

3.6 For the safety of both parties adults should not be alone with a child in a private place that cannot be readily seen by other responsible adults. For example a room with no windows and a closed door would not be an appropriate place.

3.7 Under no circumstances should a child be given alcohol, drugs or tobacco.

#### **4. Safeguarding Children at Shatin Church**

KK aims to create a safe and secure environment where every child can learn about Jesus and grow in their walk with God.

All paid staff and volunteers need to be prepared in their lessons, planning well and having a variety of interesting activities which are age appropriate and in a safe classroom/ environment.

- 4.1 a) Children are the responsibility of their parents when at Shatin Church or at events organized by the church unless they are attending a specified children's activity such as Kingdom Kids.
- b) All children attending must be registered by an adult.
- c) Where possible two or more adults will help with children's activities and there will be an appropriate gender balance.
- d) No child should leave the boundaries of the classroom during a meeting unless with the rest of the group or if aged 7+ if they have been given permission by an adult.
- e) All leaders will be marked clearly with a name badge.
- f) Each week a register will be taken of the children and adults present. It will be filled in correctly and neatly.
- g) For children aged 3 – 6 in Rainbows and Splash, they must be dropped off and picked up by an adult. The adult must take away a collection card to present when collecting their child.
- h) If a child aged 3 – 6 needs the toilet then they will be accompanied by another child and a female adult.
- i) In the case of an accident the First Aid box can be found TBC the children's worker should be informed and the incident logged in the Accident Book after the appropriate action has been made.

For Shatin Church social activities that might happen outside of normal Kingdom Kids time and environment.

- 4.2 a) Parental consent must be given in writing.
- b) All parents must be given contact details for the leaders involved.
- c) Parents must be given the details of the activity in writing.

- d) Details of any dietary or medical needs must be included.
- e) A First Aid kit must be taken on any social outing. This should be made available by the church.
- f) The Children's Worker must be given all the details of the social (written details, who is attending and report of the outing afterwards.)
- g) At a sleepover genders must always be separated for sleeping, children must be given personal space when washing and toileting and the area where the children are sleeping must be secure.

When you are meeting with a child to read the Bible 'One to One.'

- 4.3 a) These should be held in a public place, where there are other people present (eg coffee shop, park, family home where parents are in the house).
- b) Ideally the leaders and children should be the same gender. If not, then they should definitely meet in a public place.
- c) Leaders must not invite a child to your house alone.
- d) The meeting should only take place with parental permission, and with a clear and agreed meeting time, venue and pick up time.
- e) The adult must have a mobile phone with them and be accessible in case the parent or another leader needs to get hold of them or the child.
- f) The children's worker must know which child you are meeting, when and where.
- g) Leaders should not give a lift to a child in their own in a car without parental consent.
- h) Parents must have all necessary contact numbers.

## **5. Class Discipline**

The KK team needs to be consistent, reminding the children of the class rules and not showing favoritism, in order to facilitate a disciplined class for learning. All children will be reminded of the class rules at the beginning of each lesson.

In the case of disruptive behavior the following steps should be taken:

- 5.1 If a child is being disruptive give a verbal warning gently and firmly.
- 5.2 If two further warnings have to be given then the child will have to sit out of the activity for 3 – 5 minutes.
- 5.3 If disruptive behavior continues they will go outside the classroom with a leader until they are ready to rejoin the class. If the child is still not ready to join the class the leaders will use their discretion to decide if they should return to their parents.
- 5.4 If disruptive behavior continues then the Children's worker will speak with the parents.

## 6. Recruitment of Staff Employees and Volunteers

- 6.1 All prospective employees and volunteers will fill out an application form and have an interview.
- 6.2 During the interview applicants will be asked about previous work with children.
- 6.3 For all successful applicants a reliable reference will be obtained and particular attention will be given to any area of concern relating to child protection.
- 6.4 All new employees and volunteers will be informed of the child protection policy, it will be explained to them clearly and they will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood it.
- 6.5 Individuals who come in to teach or work with the children will be asked to read the child protection policy and sign a visitor declaration.

Employees and volunteers will be monitored by team leaders to whom they are assigned to ensure that confidential information concerning children is not misused. Where there are concerns, team leaders should inform the Pastor who will investigate further.

## 7. Initial Response to Suspected Abuse

- 7.1 If an employee or volunteer receives any information about, or observe actual or suspected abuse they must inform the Children's Worker immediately. An incident form must be filled out.
- 7.2 A possible victim of child abuse must not be promised confidentiality by an adult.
- 7.3 If circumstances suggest that a criminal offence may have been committed the Children's Worker or Pastor will report the incident to the police to safeguard the welfare of the child. Suspected abuse cases will be reported to **Family and Child Protective Services Unit** of the **Social Welfare Department** (Shatin Tel: 2158 6680; SWD Hotline 2343 2255; CEASE Crisis Centre 24-hour Hotline 18281) ([http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site\\_pubsvc/page\\_family/sub\\_listofserv/id\\_familyandc/](http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_family/sub_listofserv/id_familyandc/) )
- 7.4 In handling child abuse cases, the paramount concern is the welfare of the child. Therefore they should not be required to describe the incident to multiple parties unnecessarily.

## **8. Actions Following Allegations against Staff and Volunteers**

When there is suspicion or an allegation of abuse by a person who works with the children in KK either paid or voluntarily the following principles should be followed:

- 8.1 When a volunteer or staff at Shatin Church suspects an incident of child abuse has occurred or has received an allegation of such abuse or feels that behavior may have been misconstrued he / she must report it to the Children's worker and / or the Pastor.
- 8.2 Shatin Church will ensure that due consideration and enquiry into such suspicion / allegation is investigated and that any justifiable action is taken to ensure the child/children are safeguarded.
- 8.3 Upon the receipt of an allegation of abuse the person against whom the allegation is made will be suspended from all paid/voluntary work with KK pending the completion of the enquiry service.
- 8.4 Enquiries must be conducted in the strictest confidence so that information may be given freely without fear of victimization and in a way that protects the rights of all concerned. The enquiry outcome should be recorded.
- 8.5 The case must be reported to the police if a criminal offence may have been committed.
- 8.6 Where there is insufficient evidence to determine whether the allegation is substantiated the enquiry outcome should be recorded. The accused employee/volunteer should receive pastoral support if needed and their duties resumed if considered appropriate.
- 8.7 Consideration should be given to support or counsel the child/ren and where appropriate the parents, taking full account of a child's needs particularly if a seemingly false or malicious allegation has been made.
- 8.8 All parties involved in the allegation should be informed of the findings of the enquiry and conclusion.

## **9. Training in Child Protection**

All KK staff and volunteers will be trained in safeguarding children and child protection policies at Shatin Church.

## **10. Information about Children and Communication**

- 10.1 Parents will be clearly told the purpose of collecting information about their children.
- 10.2 All information provided by parents when registering their children will be kept in secure files and only shared with those who are responsible for looking after those children for the above stated purpose.

- 10.3 All parents will sign a photograph permission form and only children with this permission can be photographed.
- 10.4 Any photographs or videos used of the children in the church may only be used with permission of the parents and must be images which respect the dignity of the children.
- 10.5 Any information shared on Facebook of KK activities will be within the private groups which can only be accessed by those who are invited and approved to be a part of them.

## **11. Revisions to This Guideline Policy Document**

This document will be updated from time to time. Last updated 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

It is available to view on the website [www.shatinchurch.org.hk](http://www.shatinchurch.org.hk).

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**Declaration**

**Declaration to be signed by all personnel working with children in KK at Shatin Church.**

I have read and understood Shatin Church’s **Safeguarding Children’s Guide** for KK and I agree to abide by its contents.

Name:.....

KK Class:.....

Signed:.....

Date:.....