

## **Safeguarding policy statement**

Ventures and Falcons (part of CPAS) are engaged primarily in children's and young people's ministry. The Board of Trustees of the Charity takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the care of agents of the Charity, i.e. volunteer volunteers of Ventures and Falcons. It is vital that safeguarding is given paramount importance, for the sake of the children, those who volunteer with children, and in order to demonstrate good practice. Children and young people cannot flourish and grow in faith where they are being abused or bullied. Thus safeguarding supports our vision and our work. A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding, promoting welfare and child protection includes the following:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances.

As part of our safeguarding responsibility, Ventures and Falcons is committed to:

- listening to, relating effectively to and valuing children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within Venture and Falcon activities;
- ensuring that volunteers are given support and training;
- having a system for dealing with complaints about Ventures and Falcons, including concerns about harm or abuse occurring during the event or afterwards;
- maintaining appropriate links with the statutory child care authorities.

Ventures and Falcons recognise that many children and young people today are the victims of neglect and physical, sexual, emotional harm and abuse. Accordingly, Ventures and Falcons has adopted the safeguarding policy and related procedures in this section (hereafter, 'the policy') and set out in full in the Safeguarding Officer's Handbook. The policy and procedures cover the following areas:

- what to do if you are worried a child/young person might have been harmed;
- responding to formal or informal complaints and allegations of abuse, including those made against volunteers or volunteers of Ventures or Falcons;
- appointing, supporting and training volunteers of Ventures and Falcons;
- supervision of activities and safeguarding good practice;
- challenging poor safeguarding practices;
- helping victims of abuse;
- working with offenders;
- reviewing the events, the policies and procedures and learning from year to year.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone on a Venture or Falcon, not just the designated Safeguarding Officer and Overall Leaders. Every volunteer is responsible for their own behaviour and ensuring the safety and welfare of children and young people both during an event and in any contact after an event. In addition, volunteers are required to watch out for each other in ensuring that good practice is followed. However, all Overall Leaders of Ventures and Falcons are responsible for ensuring that each member

of their team understands the safeguarding policy and its associated procedures. The Overall Leader has a summary of the policy for this purpose, but they should also familiarize themselves with the responsibilities of each special delegated role. In addition, Ventures and Falcons is committed to providing ongoing training for Overall Leaders.

This policy is in place to protect children and young people, but also to protect volunteers from allegations which may be unfounded. It also demonstrates our continued commitment to safety, good practice and accountability.

This policy statement refers to safeguarding policies and procedures regarding the welfare and protection of children/young people including the promotion of good practice and the prevention of situations which may lead to abuse. It includes disclosures and allegations of abuse, be that physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or organised abuse. Policy concerning issues of general safety and health on Ventures and Falcons are to be found in the Overall Leader's handbook and in specific handbooks for these specially delegated officers.

The Safeguarding policy and related procedures have been prepared in accordance with up to date statutory guidance and guidelines provided by a qualified and independent Safeguarding Consultant. They are subject to an annual review and for this reason volunteers should attend safeguarding training each year.

### **Helping victims of abuse**

If a victim or survivor of abuse discloses this at a Venture of Falcon it is important to listen, not to judge and not to investigate. It is important to recognise the courage shown by anyone who discloses abuse and the need to refer such concerns to the authorities, especially when the person concerned and/or others are still at risk. Always consult with the Safeguarding Officer or the VF Office.

We do consider the support of victims of abuse to be important; however, the proper place for this is in the context of the local church, not just for a few days during a short residential event. Overall Leaders should encourage such victims of abuse to talk to a group volunteer at their church or school (offering, if possible, to be with them when they do so) so that they can receive ongoing support.

### **Relationships of trust**

As a Charity we recognise the trust placed in volunteers by parents and all members. It is therefore unacceptable for those people in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop whilst the relationship of trust continues.

We consider it of paramount importance to protect the welfare of the young people in our care and protect them from sexual activity from those looking after them. Volunteers on Ventures and Falcons must recognise that they are in a position of trust and that they are not to abuse that relationship. This includes abuse in any contact or communications, including the making, sending or viewing of inappropriate material, either during or following an event.

All volunteers have a duty to raise concerns to the Safeguarding Officer about behaviour by any volunteer which may be harmful to those in their care, or which may be negligent concerning safeguarding or safety procedures.

These principles of the abuse of trust apply irrespective of sexual orientation or race, gender, etc. Any volunteer with any concerns about this area (for example, if they feel they may already be in breach of our safeguarding policies) should raise them immediately with their Overall Leader. In certain cases, undertaking or continuing a sexual relationship whilst in a relationship of trust may be a criminal offence.

### **Recruitment of ex-offenders policy**

Ventures and Falcons will not accept as a volunteer anybody who is known to have harmed

children or who is listed as barred from such work by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and will take all reasonable steps to ascertain the background of potential volunteers.

As noted on the volunteer application form, a criminal record will not necessarily prohibit the appointment of an individual as a volunteer.

With regard to certain specific areas, our policy is as follows:

- volunteers will not be accepted on a Venture or Falcon team if they have any previous convictions or cautions for offences against children, offences of domestic abuse where children were affected, or if they are barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service;
- volunteers with any offence involving possession, supply or use of drugs where the conviction took place within the five years prior to the individual's application will not be accepted;
- volunteers with any offence involving dangerous driving, driving under the influence of drink or drugs or careless driving where the conviction took place within the ten years prior to the individual's application will not be allowed to drive with anybody else in their vehicle during a Venture or Falcon.

Other offences and issues will be considered on an individual basis by the Principal, in discussion with specific Overall Leaders, with specialist advice where appropriate. In particular, we will consider the following points:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.