



Youth Leader Handbook

This handbook is based on 'The Care and Protection of Children and Young People' by the Diocese of Chichester. For more details please refer to the policy available on the Diocese of Chichester's website (www.diochi.org.uk). If there are any conflicts between the Diocese's policy and this handbook, please adhere to this one which has been specifically adapted for The Point.

Volunteer Youth Leader Role Description

All members of the Youth Leadership Team are to abide by the instruction of The Point Church leadership and to seek to demonstrate values, principles and ministry guidelines of The Point Church.

Aim

- To make disciples among young people; to encourage young people to grow into maturity spiritually, emotionally and mentally as they develop healthy relationships with family, with peers, with adults and with God.

Role

- To come alongside young people and build healthy, purposeful relationships with them. A leader should take the initiative in approaching young people, seeking to connect with those whom they feel they could particularly encourage and mentor.

Responsibilities

- To actively develop your own relationship with God and maintain a lifestyle that is a positive example to others, in line with the teaching of The Point Church; one which demonstrates positive holiness and honours God.
- To be open and honest with other leaders about your own personal struggles in order to foster an environment of honesty, accountability and transparency among the youth team.
- To attend the agreed youth group activities and other youth related events where possible (or to send apologies in advance when not possible).
- To attend prayer and youth team meetings.
- To use individual gifts to contribute to the work of Youth at The Point in whatever way is appropriate.
- To be loyal, committed and accountable to the Youth Pastor, the Youth Leadership Team and the leadership of The Point Church.
- To be consistent in prayer, seeking God for yourself and the young people.
- Any change in situation or commitments that affect your position and/or work must be communicated to the Youth Pastor with at least one month of notice before affect.
- Report all incidents of past and/or present abuse of any nature to The Point Church's safeguarding officer; never promise full confidentiality. Always make a written record of any disclosure as soon as possible and process the disclosure in line with The Point Church's safeguarding procedure.

Build purposeful relationships through

- Regular youth sessions
- Interaction with the families of young people
- Mentoring of young people through one to one contact when appropriate and agreed with the Youth Pastor

Guidelines

- To build others involved in the youth work up; to avoid gossip and back biting; if/when difficulties arise to seek to obey Matthew 18.15 (go directly to the person concerned and seek always to deal with it 'just between the two of you' in the first instance).
- To inform the Youth Pastor of any 'one to one' time and follow the 'one-to-one guidelines'.
- Youth leaders must not have an exclusive relationship with any child.

One-to-one Mentoring

The Point Church seeks to ensure the safety and well being of all children, young people and the Youth Leadership Team. The following guidelines exist in order to maintain this.

- All one-to-one mentoring sessions should take place with a young person of the same sex; a youth leader should never meet solely with a young person of the opposite sex. Where a mentoring session of this nature is required, a leader of the opposite sex should always be present.
- Always inform the Youth Pastor, by email, in advance of any one to one sessions with a young person (including the venue, time and people present) 24 hours before the meeting. If it is not possible to give more than 24 hours notice, please phone the Youth Pastor.
- All one to one meetings should be held in a public place; this ensures transparency and protection for both parties. When meeting a young person in their home, always meet in a room other than their bedroom, with the door open and an additional adult present in the house. All one to one meetings should be completed before 9pm.
- Leaders should avoid being alone in a car with a single young person (please refer to the transport guidelines).
- A short account, detailing the time, place, young person and main topics of conversation from your meeting, should be recorded on the one-to-one mentoring forms provided. These are confidentially stored in a locked cupboard at The Point Office.
- It is important to ensure that the young people with whom you are meeting do not become dependant upon the support that you are providing, causing them to become unable to cope without your support. For these reasons, please ensure that you discuss with the Youth Pastor any long term support you are offering and inform them of anything you have committed to with the child or young person. It is important that a support network for the young person is created through the mentoring system (possibly including the Youth Pastor, other youth leaders, parents, etc.)
- If a disclosure of abuse is made during a one to one meeting with a young person, or if you suspect abuse, please refer to the child protection guidelines and follow its procedure.
- Never promise confidentiality. When discussing the area of confidentiality with a young person say something like “anything you tell me will be confidential, however if I’m concerned that you or someone else are at risk, then I have a duty to share that with people who can help to keep you safe.”
- If any other significant pastoral issue arises during a one to one meeting, please confidentially inform the Youth Pastor.
- In any situation where the youth leader feels uncomfortable about the way the young person has interacted with them/spoken to them, or feels mistreated by them, they should inform the Youth Pastor or Safeguarding Officer (Sarah Emmanuel or Helen Watkin) appropriately.

Transport Policy

The Driver

- The driver must be over 21 years old, have held a full UK driving license for over two years, and be covered by a current comprehensive insurance policy. If you are in paid employment by the church then you should have business use on your insurance, however this is not necessary for volunteers.
- Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their license should inform the Safeguarding Officer.
- Any driver who has an 'unspent' conviction for a transport related offence should not transport children.
- Only those who have signed a confidential declaration form can transport children.

The Vehicle

- The vehicle should be clean and road worthy including fitted seat belts which must be used by everyone in the vehicle.
- You should only carry the number of people for who you have seat-belts.
- At no time should the number of people in the car exceed the usual passenger number/ nor should it exceed the number for which there are 3 point seat belts.

Guidelines

- Written parental consent must be obtained before transporting children and the Youth Pastor must be made aware of the journey.
- If a child is known to have a disability or special need, consideration should be given whether to have a non-driving adult in the car. This adult should sit in the back, behind the driver, with the child in the seat beside him or her.
- Best practice when transporting a young person is for another youth leader (or young person) to be present in the car. Where possible, a leader should not be on their own in a car with a young person. However, where this is sometimes unhelpful (in the context of a mentoring session), prior arrangement with the parent or guardian of the young person must be acquired.
- If a driver has to transport one young person on his or her own, the young person must sit in the back of the car and other than in an emergency, the young person should be of the same sex as the driver; it is not acceptable for a leader to be in a car by themselves with a member of the opposite sex, under the age of 18, as this contravenes the Child Protection Policy.
- If in an emergency a driver has to transport one young person on his or her own, the young person must sit in the back of the car. Please record every unexpected lift.
- Never leave a young person alone in the car.
- It is not acceptable for a leader to consistently and regularly give young people lifts. Wherever possible, leaders and volunteers should avoid getting into a routine with people and should avoid long term commitments.

I _____ have read and agree to follow the transport policy guidelines when transporting young people from The Point Church and agree/disagree (delete as appropriate) to do so if and when this might be necessary.

Signed _____

Date _____

Electronic and Social Media Policy

The use of social media and additional electronic technologies (i.e. SMS messaging, email) is a powerful tool when working among young people. Youth leaders hold a responsibility to model an appropriate use of these technologies and to interact with young people in an appropriate manner. In order to ensure the safety of young people and youth leaders, the latter must adhere to the following guidelines.

- Young people should be actively discouraged from joining social media platforms that are not age appropriate for them (the minimum age of most platforms is 13 years old).
- When using Facebook, youth leaders must decide whether they want to accept or decline all friend requests. Whatever they choose, this must be consistent with all requests, without showing any type of preference. Youth leaders must never request to be friends on Facebook with young people; they must only respond to requests made by young people. This activity is the same when following young people on Instagram, Snapchat and other platforms. Youth leaders should not accept friend requests/follow young people who do not meet the minimum age requirements.
- Youth leaders hold responsibility for any content uploaded by themselves or others (with exceptions) to their own social media accounts.
- Youth leaders should never ask a young person for their phone number (unless through official documentation required by The Point Church). Youth leaders are able to give their phone number to a young person and respond to messages/phone calls in a manner related to their role as a youth leader.
- When using any social media platform, temporary photos, videos or messages should never be sent privately to a young person; any communication of this nature should be made public.
- All communication should be short, intended to offer a quick response or arrange practical arrangements for a one-to-one session in person. If a discussion is needed, this should be arranged face to face.
- All communication should use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal. This includes the use of emoticons.
- While communications should be warm and friendly, they should not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Youth leaders should not have excessive contact with young people.
- It is good practice to store all messages **sent** and **received** from young people. Especially communication of a pastoral or similar nature. Be aware that

Anti-bullying Policy

Statement of intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all of our children and young people so that they can develop in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at The Point Church. If bullying does occur, all young people should be able to report it and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is responsible for reporting it.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, gestures)

Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Homophobic/Transphobic: Because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality

Verbal: Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Cyber: A misuse of electronic technologies

Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied.

Youth leaders should be aware of these possible signs and respond if these symptoms are observed.

- Doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Prevention

When appropriate the following strategies may be adopted:

- Writing a set of group rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to the group
- Making up role plays
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Procedures

1. Report bullying incident to staff
2. In cases of serious or persistent bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff
3. In serious or persistent cases parents will be informed and asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If it is thought that an offence has been committed, contact the Police
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and all bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bullies change their behaviour.

Outcomes

- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion from the group/activity will be considered
- If possible, the children/young people will be reconciled
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated parents/carers should be informed of the action taken.

Help Organisations: see the 'useful resources' section.

Guidelines for Physical Touch

- Any form of physical touch should be initiated by a young person; not a Youth leader.
- Any form of physical touch should always be in a public context, age appropriate and related to the young person's needs; not the youth leader's.
- Youth leaders must avoid any physical activity which is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or young person.
- Young people hold the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others (except in exceptional circumstances when medical attention is needed). Youth leaders must be mindful that their concept of acceptable physical touch may be different to a young person. For example, a handshake or a hug, whilst normative for most youth leaders, could be difficult for some young people.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misunderstood. Concerns about possible abuse should always be reported.

Intimate Care

- Unless a child has a disability, once they have reached school age they may be accompanied as far as the toilets but it is expected that they would be able to manage their own personal care.
- If a child in the process of going to the toilet wets or soils themselves, then the parent should be sent for to change and clean up.
- For those with disabilities, specific guidance should be sought from the parents in regards to intimate care.

Abuse and Neglect of Young People

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a young person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult/adults or another child/children. Faith communities need to be especially aware of mixed age activities where adults have the opportunity to build up a relationship with a child in an informal setting. As youth leaders, spiritual harm is particularly relevant.

Spiritual harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include: the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way. Other forms of spiritual harm include the denial to children of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow and develop within their own faith community.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caretakers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Safeguarding Procedure for Responding to a Disclosure/Allegations or Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect

Through a youth leader's work with young people, a young person may feel able to disclose information to the youth leader. This is both a privilege and a responsibility; whilst the youth leader is in a privileged position of trust, they have a duty to ensure the safety of that young person (and others). It is imperative for a youth leader to be aware that if the information disclosed is of a criminal manner, their conversation with the young person and their following actions could be used as evidence and considered in legal proceedings.

- Never promise full confidentiality. See earlier for an appropriate response.
- If a young person is going to disclose something, where possible, another youth leader should be present. However, do not prevent the young person from speaking if this is not possible.
- Remember that the young person may want the abuse to stop but still love the abuser. The young person may think that it is possible to stop the abuse without anything else happening.
- Listen positively to what the young person says and take it seriously. Accept what is being said (this is not the same as deciding whether the allegations are true or not; others will address this later).
- Always use open questions (i.e. "What happened next? How did that happen?"); any testimony from leading questions (i.e. "Did he/she hurt you?") can be discounted as evidence. Ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
- Be aware of interpreting what the young person says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate, or if English is not their first language.
- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell.
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way that the young person can understand.
- Reassure the young person that he or she will continue to be supported.
- If the young person needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue.

As soon as you are able to, make careful notes (the circumstances, what the child said, what you said, etc.) as soon as possible, preferable within an hour. Include dates and times of the incident/recording and keep the notes safe.

You must inform the Safeguarding Officer, Sarah Emmanuel or Helen Watkin, as soon as possible and make sure that they are given a copy of your notes. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer to decide the next steps and to make any referrals. You do not need to speak to anyone else, including the Youth Pastor and the leadership of The Point Church.

You must not speak directly to the person against whom allegations have been made or attempt to investigate the situation yourself. It is not your responsibility to decide if the abuse has or has not occurred. Do not speak to anyone (including the parents) without consulting Sarah Emmanuel or Helen Watkin.

Procedure for “Whistle-blowing”

Every member of the The Point Church has an individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of the Safeguarding Officers, Sarah Emmanuel and Helen Watkin; this includes matters of concern which involve other members of The Point Church and its leadership. Although this can be difficult, it is particularly important where the welfare of children or young people may be at risk.

A youth leader may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express concerns feeling that this would be disloyal; he or she may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk.

Concerns, suspicions or uneasiness should be voiced as soon as possible. Try to identify exactly what practice is concerning; what has been heard or what has been observed. It is important to provide as many facts as possible and not rely on rumour or opinion; where possible, concerns should be put in writing and include dates and times.

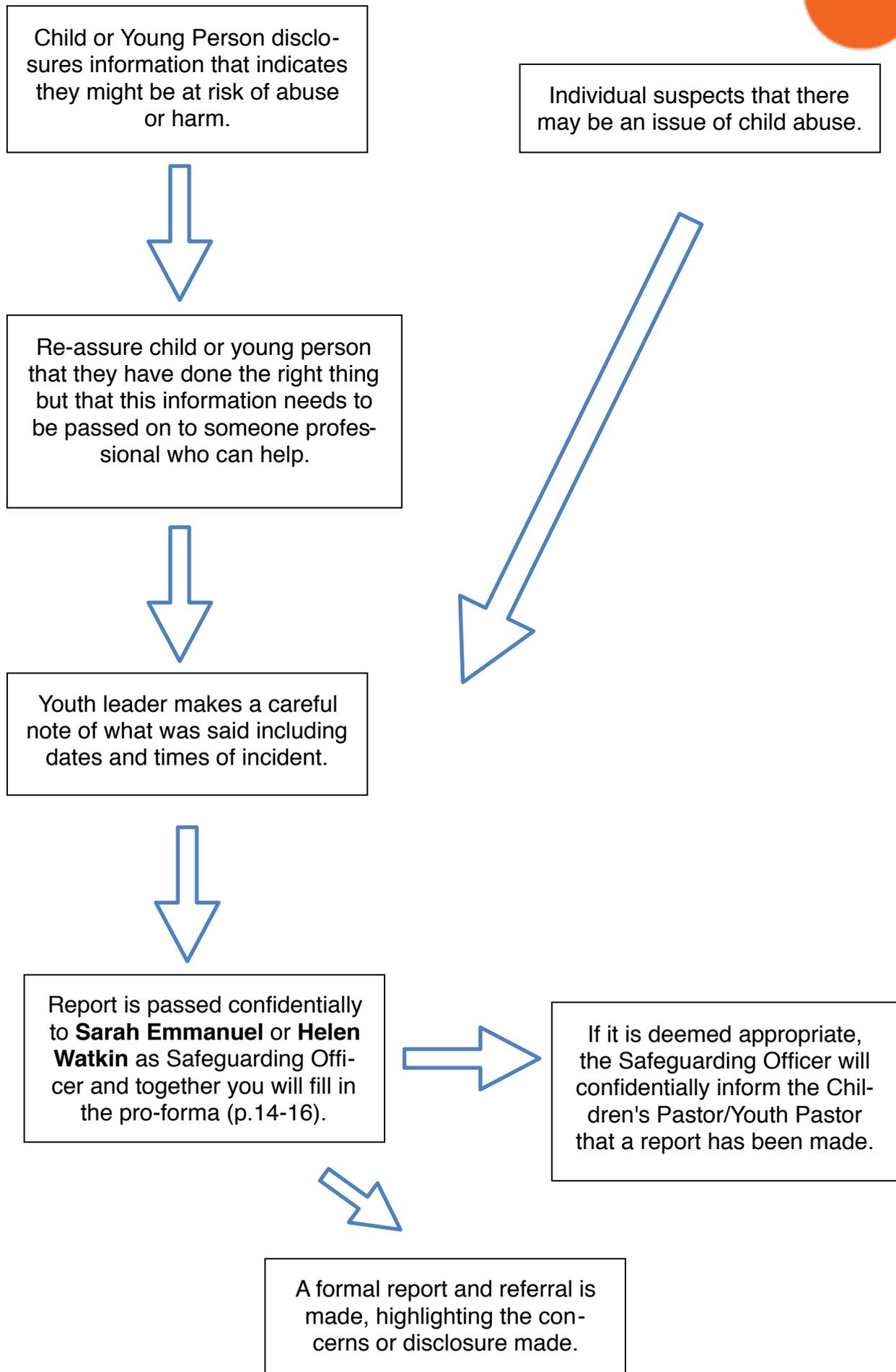
Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (see the useful resources section).

Self Reporting

There may be occasions where a youth leader has a personal difficulty which they know to be impinging on their role and competence; it is this person's responsibility to discuss such a situation with the Youth Pastor so that support can be offered. Whilst this information will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children/young people.

Summary of the Safeguarding Procedure





Proforma for Reporting Allegations or Suspicion of Child Abuse

This form is to be completed with the Safeguarding Officer.

Reporters Details

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

Group Name:

Position:

Reporting a disclosure/Reporting suspicions

(Please circle)

Child or young persons details

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone:

Please make a note of any special information about the child (e.g. disabilities)

Parent/Carer's Name:

Parent/Carer's Phone:

Briefly describe what prompted your concerns including dates, times, etc of any specific incidents:

Have you noticed any physical, behavioural or indirect signs of abuse? If so, what and when? (Please be as specific as possible including dates, times and details of what has been observed)



Has the child said anything to you? If so, what was said and when?
(Use the child's words wherever possible)

Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details?

Have you consulted anybody else? Give details.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

For Child protection representative only
Further Actions/referral:



Declaration

I _____, certify that I have received and understand the contents of the 'Youth Leader Handbook'. I have undergone appropriate training by 'The Point Church' regarding this handbook and agree to follow all the guidelines, policies and procedures outlined within it.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____