

Appendix 14

A Policy Statement on Young People and the Church

This statement was agreed at the Church Meeting held on 23 September 2003. It will be included in the Annual Report each year and will be re-affirmed annually at the January Church Meeting, where progress in carrying it out will be monitored.

- As members of this Church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially young people.
- It is the responsibility of each one of us to be alert to the possibility of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect of young people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- We recognise that our work with young people is the responsibility of the whole Church.
- We are committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with young people and to providing supervision.
- We are committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice *Safe from Harm* and have adopted guidelines and procedures based on those published by the Baptist Union of Great Britain in the most recent edition of its booklet *Safe to Grow*.
- All workers will be committed Christians whose lives bear evidence of their Christian profession, and Principal Leaders and Leaders must be Church Members. However, a young person up to the age of 18 may be taken on as a Trainee with a similar role to that of a Helper and need not necessarily be a committed Christian. There is no automatic promotion from Trainee to Helper or Leader.
- All workers will be given a copy of the Rushmere Baptist Church *Safe to Grow* Policy and must undertake to observe it. They will be asked to sign a Youth Worker Agreement prior to commencing their probationary period.
- As part of our commitment to young people, we appoint two people, preferably one male and one female, to be their Young Persons' Advisors. Their role will be regularly explained to the young people and their names and telephone numbers are publicly displayed.
- We also appoint a Responsible Person who acts as the central point of contact for any child protection concerns raised within the Church.

Children and young people are part of our church today.
They have much to give, as well as to receive. We will listen to them.
As we nurture them in worship, learning and community life,
we will respect their wishes and feelings.

Please note that the terms "children", "young people" and "youth" in our documentation are interchangeable and relate to all children and young people at Rushmere Baptist Church up to the age of 18, as well as older young people who may still be involved in our youth groups. The term "Church" relates specifically to Rushmere Baptist Church and not necessarily the wider Christian church. The full version of our *Safe to Grow* documentation is available to parents and other interested parties on request. For your copy, please contact the Church Office on Ipswich 721455.