

# Instruction Booklet

Information and manual for creating local church guidelines in the work against violence, inappropriate behaviour, sexual and other forms of abuse in all organizations affiliated to BCC.

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## Foreword and disclaimer

These two booklets, “Safety of Children – the Adults’ Responsibility” and “Instruction Booklet”, are translations of the policy documents of Brunstad Christian Church with regard to the protection of children and adolescents in the church. They are written in accordance with Norwegian legislation as well as ethical considerations according to the teachings in the Bible concerning care and upbringing of children.

**Although the latter will be consistent throughout the churches in the world affiliated to Brunstad Christian Church, every church is urged to familiarize themselves with the laws of their own country concerning child protection and exploitation of vulnerable people, including any legislation relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.** Any questions arising from this can be addressed to the central resource team. Mail: [ressursteam@bcc.no](mailto:ressursteam@bcc.no)

*When it concerns the issues covered in this instruction booklet, it is important to understand that the treatment of information about people and situations relating to inappropriate behaviour is extremely sensitive. Information must therefore be handled in strict confidentiality, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and in line with the appropriate guidance issued by BCC.*

### Be especially attentive to this when it concerns:

1. Reporting
2. Providing feedback
3. The storage of information
4. Distributing or forwarding of information
5. Confidentiality/duty of care
6. The use of E-mail – this medium must not be used to transmit sensitive information unless attachments are password protected.

# Table of Contents

<b>Good Attitudes.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Safe and Open Culture .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Culture of safety .....	5
Culture of openness .....	5
Culture of Positive Leadership .....	5
Safety within clear boundaries .....	6
Rules and procedures .....	6
Safeguarding particularly vulnerable people .....	6
Instruction .....	6
<b>Children and Adolescents .....</b>	<b>6</b>
An activity that includes them presupposes working consciously towards: .....	7
Conditions for an open and safe place for all .....	7
One-to-one conversations with children and adolescents .....	7
Camps and trips .....	8
<b>Responsibility and Preparedness .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Voluntary co-workers .....	8
Follow-up action with volunteer co-workers:.....	8
Ethical Standards .....	8
<b>Social Media .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Safe Adults on Social Media .....	9
Guiding children and adolescents on social media .....	10
Risks for adolescents who use social media: .....	10
<b>Local Contingency Plans .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Disclosure and reporting of abuse.....</b>	<b>10</b>
General comments regarding disclosure of abuse .....	11
Confidentiality and Duty of Prevention.....	11
What can arouse suspicion?.....	11
Tips on how to proceed if you suspect a child or adolescent has been abused:.....	11
Examples of questions one can ask in a secure relationship: .....	12
Handling suspicions of abuse in one’s own field of work/responsibility .....	12
<b>Responsibility for handling a matter.....</b>	<b>12</b>
An established leadership team or a contingency team of 2-4 persons, consisting of:.....	12
Allocation of roles in the team when handling a case: .....	13
<b>Following up those affected .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Advice on supporting the person or persons affected in a case .....	13
Advice on speaking to the accused person or persons involved in a case .....	14
Suggestions for questions one can pose to the one affected and also to the accused:.....	14
<b>Routine for dealing with an incident or incidents .....</b>	<b>15</b>
1. The Reporting Stage .....	15
2. The Investigation Stage.....	15
3. The Implementation Stage.....	15
4. The Concluding Stage.....	15
5. The time afterwards.....	16
<b>Handling Information.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Confidential information .....	16
Who should know what?.....	16
Media .....	16
Disclosure of information about the perpetrator.....	16
From dependency to security in society .....	17
ATTACHMENTS .....	19
<b>Model of collaborative leadership in BCC’s work against inappropriate behaviour .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Level 1 - Group leaders – responsible for work among youth and children in local churches .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Responsibility at Level 1 .....	21
Tasks at Level 1 .....	21

<b>Level 2 – Local Church Leadership .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Responsibility at Level 2.....	21
Tasks at Level 2.....	21
<b>Level 3 - BCC Resource Team against neglect and abuse .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Responsibility at Level 3.....	22
Tasks at Level 3:.....	22
<b>Check-list for safe working with children and young people in BCC.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Agreement regarding voluntary work in BCC .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Dealing with sexual offences .....</b>	<b>26</b>
When something has happened!.....	26
<b>Dealing with sexual offences .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Check-list for how to handle these cases .....	27
<b>Report Form .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Reporting Procedure.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Background .....	29
Responsibility for quality development .....	29
BCC's attitude to Reporting .....	29
Meeting with whistle-blowers .....	30
Facilitating disclosure .....	30
Knowing about consequences .....	30
Disclosure – to whom? .....	30
Being alert!.....	30
<b>Guidance on local reporting routines .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Reporting – what is it?.....	31
Right to report.....	31
Obligation to report .....	32
Handling Disclosures .....	33
<b>Reporting Procedure.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Documentation procedures by BCC local churches.....</b>	<b>35</b>
Additions to Literature List in Strategic Plan: .....	36
Resource team for cases of abuse.....	40

This guide has been developed as a resource for individual churches/charitable trusts in BCC who are developing or revising their own guidelines on how to deal with abuse and sexual misconduct. In cases of inappropriate behaviour, the way information about people and circumstances is handled is highly sensitive. The information must therefore be treated in strict confidence, in accordance with the Personal Data Act and in line with the appropriate BCC guidelines.

## Good Attitudes

Our attitudes are shaped by the way we think, feel and act in relationships that we meet and the situations in which we find ourselves. We gain experiences in life which we view either positively or negatively, depending on our own set of values. In a community, conversations about thoughts, feelings, and actions in response to life's challenges we will reveal our views and attitudes. In the absence of such conversations, prejudices can easily influence our behaviour and the way we react. Thinking through what set of values a community wants to adhere to, helps develop attitudes which are beneficial for everyone in that community. Attitudes are seldom openly manifest, but they nevertheless have a significant impact on relationships and the way people participate in the life of the community.

Those who lead and bear responsibility must respect the values which promote common interest, encourage meaningful participation, and uphold equal rights. The development of good attitudes towards the prevention of inappropriate behaviour and abuse is therefore largely about preventing the divisive tendencies which often occur in the interaction between children, adolescents and adults.

## Safe and Open Culture

Good attitudes help to create a safe, open environment where it is possible to prevent many instances of inappropriate behaviour and abuse.

### Culture of safety

- A safe environment is one where everyone feels well cared-for
- There is zero tolerance towards any kind of abuse

### Culture of openness

- Is one where it is easy to speak up if you have been treated in a way you do not like
- There is someone who will take action if you speak up about negative treatment by others

### Culture of Positive Leadership

Leaders are responsible for establishing a culture of respect in which violence and abuse should not occur, and in which any abuse is detected immediately it takes place. The leaders actively work to create a healthy environment in which it is easy and natural to report any inappropriate behaviour, and people feel that doing so will not result in any harm coming to them. The leaders are good examples and receive both guidance and support, so they engage in regular self-reflection; this self-reflection is particularly important when it concerns the use of power, both in their formal and informal roles. In the context of our Christian activities, leaders must be especially conscious of their own influence and position, because a leadership role which carries with it "strong convictions" about right and wrong gives a person enormous power in the work, and hence the potential to misuse it.

## Safety within clear boundaries

- A safe, open environment develops when we are considerate towards one another, show respect for the individual, and have a care for each other.
- A safe and open environment is created by actively affirming what is desirable conduct.
- A safe and open culture is created by consistently speaking out in a respectful manner when someone violates behavioural norms and/or established boundaries, and everyone understands the consequences of doing so.
- In a safe and open environment people are very aware of how physical contact should occur - for example, how they should greet, embrace and otherwise touch each other.
- Violation of norms includes how we talk to one other, the use of humour, irony, and the expressing of emotions in a way which causes offence and/or disturbance.
- Feelings of rejection arise when people deliberately don't greet one another, don't make eye contact, make unkind remarks, or turn their back on those who need recognition and to feel included.

## Rules and procedures

Written rules and procedures that are easy to understand help to create a safe and open culture. A routine (established system) in which a risk assessment is carried out for each type of event considering the possibility of abuse happening enables us to be alert and prevent abusive activity from occurring.

## Safeguarding particularly vulnerable people

We need to ensure that it is safe for everyone to participate in our activities. We must bear in mind that individuals among us may face their own particular challenges, whether or not you as leader know about them. There may be people present who have experienced abuse. We should choose supervised activities and make sure that there are enough adults present whom those who are vulnerable know and trust.

## Instruction

Leaders must facilitate healthy development and learning by:

- speaking openly about the fact that abuse can occur; it can happen in many different contexts, even though it is something that should never happen.
- making it clear that “no one should do anything with your body that you yourself know is wrong, and do not want”.
- strengthen their ability to protect their own boundaries and respect the boundaries others have set for themselves.
- giving freedom to speak up in a proper way if something bad happens.
- acquiring the knowledge, language, and openness to enable you to talk about gender, sexuality and boundary-setting in a safe way – without being intrusive / “getting too close “.
- talking about controlling impulses and dealing with emotions in order to sharpen people's understanding of personal boundaries and inappropriate behaviour.

## Children and Adolescents

Are susceptible to being either victims or perpetrators of abuse.

- In all work with children and adolescents under the age of 18, we have a particular responsibility to safeguard them in a way that nurtures their development as individuals and in society.
- It is an onerous task to lead children and adolescents during this vulnerable phase of life.
- Getting to know children and young people requires open contact and collaboration with their parents.
- The views of parents or guardians should be taken into consideration in matters concerning their children or adolescents.
- The older a child or young person is, the more they themselves should have a say in anything that affects them.

## An activity that includes them presupposes working consciously towards:

### Community

How can we develop the activity so that no-one who is part of the group feels excluded and 'on the outside'?

### Participation

The children experience a sense of belonging through various activities in which the individual child can "participate according to their ability and enjoy according to their need".

### Benefits

Children get a sense of purpose and self-worth, benefit from the social interactions, develop their attitudes and enhance their skills.

### Equality

Care and attention must not be unfairly shown to some while others are neglected; and the different needs of individuals must not be seen to be in conflict with one another.

Children often have very different requirements when it concerns feeling safe and participating meaningfully in a group. You can read more about these requirements in the Appendix.

## Conditions for an open and safe place for all

Important considerations:

- Well-being requires safety.
- Every individual child has personal boundaries which must be respected, and everyone must be accepted for who they are.
- Children and adolescents who, because of difficult experiences, may be particularly vulnerable, need additional safeguarding. If they feel unsafe, they can react by showing erratic behaviour, with irritability and aggression – behaviour that is not so easy to like.
- There must be zero tolerance of bullying and any kind of abuse. One must not use sarcasm or ridicule anyone. No one should experience rejection.
- Children and adolescents should have the freedom to be themselves, but without violating other people's boundaries.
- No "dark corners" where the adults are unaware of what is going on.
- You can share something that is personal when you are aware of where the boundaries lie for what is private.
- Safe adult leaders who set clear boundaries.
- Reliable and dependable leaders who create an atmosphere of trust.
- Leaders who recognize the signals and reactions within the group and take appropriate action. What happens in public is not a secret, but they are careful about sharing things that are spoken about in confidence.

## One-to-one conversations with children and adolescents

- When an adult is alone with a child or a young person, other adults should know about it so that no unnecessary suspicion is aroused.
- Many people will feel a little unsafe having a private conversation in an office behind a closed door; it can give a sense of "being alone with no way of escape". Have the door open or a window in, or beside, the door.
- You may be given information which you are obliged to report in order to safeguard the child or young person, and therefore you cannot always promise absolute confidentiality.
- Be aware of the position of power your relationship can have with a child or adolescent if you want to talk to them or pray together with them.

## Camps and trips

Many activities include camps and trips as an integral part of the work with children and young people. When children and adolescents are together for an extended period without their parents, they may be particularly vulnerable. Therefore, adults must be especially vigilant with regard to inappropriate behaviour at these times, and be prepared to intervene when something is wrong.

## Responsibility and Preparedness

BCC has a system for recruitment of leaders, a collaborative leadership model, an annual review of procedures and processes with documentation. The “Model of Collaborative Leadership” has been developed to provide quality-assurance for the work with children and adolescents. The BCC’s Resource Team has overall responsibility for ensuring the quality of this work which is regulated through the 3 levels of the BCC system with an annual cycle of activity and reporting.

The Strategy and Action Plan against violence and inappropriate behaviour, “SAFETY OF CHILDREN - THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS”, is the underpinning document for both the promotion and implementation of our goal to conduct our activities free from all forms of abuse.

## Voluntary co-workers

Voluntary co-workers and appointed representatives of all ages have a position of power which, unfortunately, can be exploited. To prevent misuse of power, responsibility for oversight of the voluntary co-workers must be clearly defined. There must be no doubt about who determines which individuals are given positions of trust, and who has the authority to remove them. Another important part of the organization of such activities is that there is clarity about who is responsible for taking action if concerns are expressed about a co-worker. Where a breach of trust occurs, there must be no doubt that the conditions for working among children and adolescents have been broken, and the consequences must be made clear.

## Follow-up action with volunteer co-workers:

Leaders aged 18-30 years need good training and follow-up action, so they feel confident in a leadership role, and can establish secure boundaries for themselves and others. Not all people are capable of being volunteer co-workers, and procedures must be in place to ensure that people who take leadership positions are suitable and competent.

- Recruitment of new volunteers:
  - Focus on suitability
  - Ensure there is an induction process
  - Review and sign their self-declaration form in which relationships with others can be discussed
  - Obtain references from previous appointments/roles
- Obtain a police criminal record check
- Training and guidance must be embedded in local procedures, which should include:
  - When the training will take place
  - What topics the training will cover
  - Guidance for whole groups and on an individual basis
  - Annual meetings to discuss relevant issues with co-workers
  - Reporting

## Ethical Standards

Our activities are based on Christian values; it is expected that everyone is committed to, and works in accordance with, these values. Ethical reflection is a natural part of our work. Ethics is the teaching of morality: good/bad, right/wrong, permissible/unacceptable actions. Ethical reflection involves conversations about how the



association/charitable trust's values should determine the way in which the co-workers conduct themselves and influence the tasks and challenges associated with the work. Those ethical standards should help establish good attitudes and prevent both sexual and other forms of abuse from occurring.

By 'ethical standards' we are referring to such values as:

- Showing respect for all people
- Using a position of authority for the good of others
- Creating a culture of accessibility and transparency
- Being committed to the aims and decisions of the association/charitable trust
- Handling confidential information with great care and sensitivity
- Refraining from any financial impropriety
- Reporting of critical incidents
- Being consciously aware of when, and how, you express yourself in social media
- Creating an inclusive community

## Social Media

We must be aware that a great many children and young people live two parallel lives, and that life on social media is a new arena where sexual abuse can occur.

### Safe Adults on Social Media

#### Awareness of:

- Your impact as a role-model
- What you write and share, who can see it and pass it on to others
- What can be interpreted as a violation or invasive behaviour
- The fact that it is unlawful to share information about, or photographs of, children under 18 years old without their parents' permission

#### Before you post anything in a discussion group and/or on social media, ask yourself these questions:

- Is this something I am willing to put my name to?
- Is this something I am able and willing to take responsibility for if it appears in the media?
- Is it appropriate for me to speak about this, bearing in mind my area of responsibility?

#### Think about:

1. The law (Is it legal?)
2. Reputation (Will it damage our credibility?)
3. Ethics (Is it right? What impact will it have?)
4. Identity (Is it consistent with our values?)

#### In the conduct of your official duties:

If you have been appointed to a responsible position you should not assume that what you write will remain "private".

- Think about what you convey and what you want to achieve.
- Think carefully about what you publish on social media.
- Consider that there is a lot of power in what is published.
- Take care not to share internal or confidential information.
- Know when to stop! This applies especially in heated debates.
- Be conscious of the purpose of your role – what its objectives are!

Be a good role model as a leader - also online and on your mobile.

Children and adolescents notice the comments and postings that leaders make on social media and copy their behaviour. Always ask (both the child him/herself and parents) for permission before you, as a leader, post pictures of children or adolescents on social media. A 'no' should be respected as a veto.

## Guiding children and adolescents on social media

The use of media by children and adolescents is changing rapidly. Young people like to have a 'space' online and use codes that only they understand. Adults cannot demand to have control and keep an overview of everything the young people do on their mobiles and social media. It is important to follow along and convey one's attitude against the abuse of social media. Being a fair, non-judgmental and informed adult, puts you in a better position to identify inappropriate conduct between children or young people.

## Risks for adolescents who use social media:

- That they come into contact with someone who will exploit them.
- Bullying.
- Sexting, the spread of intimate images/nude pictures.
- Hiding one's identity on the internet can give confidence to share — for better or worse. The web is, in a way, a free space for transparency and vulnerability, and easily provides a false sense of security that can invite exposing yourself too much.
- Photos and videos can easily be disseminated further and manipulated. What's published online stays there "forever".
- Breaking the law without knowing about it. If children and adolescents under 18 share a nude picture of themselves, it can be considered as spreading child pornography.

Presenting and spreading information and pictures of a sexual nature is punishable, and it is important to be very aware of this.

## Local Contingency Plans

Each local church should have its own concise contingency plan. The contingency plan should refer to the centrally-adopted guidelines to which one subscribes. Having contingency plans against abuse helps to prevent abuse, because it gives increased awareness. The BCC's resource team has developed a "Coherent Management Model" for the work against violations and inappropriate behaviour. Here, the local churches and local leadership can get guidelines for drawing up routines for any contingency.

A contingency plan should preferably include these points:

- Allocation of responsibility for the prevention and handling (follow-up) of sexual abuse
- How one will work to create good attitudes
- Follow-up of volunteer co-workers
- Routines for notifying any incidents at your own events
- Reference to the guidelines one must follow when reporting abuse
- Who to consult with in dealing with abuse cases

## Disclosure and reporting of abuse

In our churches, we come into contact with many people. Abuse is so common in the population that it is fairly certain we will meet people who have experienced abuse, and people who have committed abuse. Sometimes this is abuse that is still taking place in secret, or abuse that has occurred in the past and which has still not come to light. If abuse is suspected one has both a legal and a moral obligation to report it.

## General comments regarding disclosure of abuse

If anyone suspects, or is given knowledge of, sexual abuse one should notify someone who can do something about it, preferably the person in charge of the activity.

Suspected abuses made against persons over and under the age of 18 should be treated differently. If the parents/guardians are not accused, they should always be involved in the disclosure of child and adolescent abuse. The victim's consent should be sought, if possible, before acting; this also applies to children and adolescents. In most cases, one should tread carefully so as not to break the trust of the victim. In this phase it is important to consider to whom information should be disclosed and the extent of any disclosure. A wrong step here can easily jeopardize any further investigation and make the whole process more difficult.

It takes courage to act on suspicions. Don't stand alone when reporting abuse.

## Confidentiality and Duty of Prevention

The purpose of confidentiality is that someone should be able to seek the help of a person who has a special role or expertise without running the risk that the information entrusted will be made known to others. Confidential information in this regard means written, spoken and observed information that a trusted person has been able to access in contact with someone seeking or needing help. It is a punishable offence if a person with a trusted role violates confidentiality (In Norway: Penal code, Section 211). The duty of confidentiality is not applicable in the event of the prevention of a criminal offence or the consequences of it (In Norway: Penal code, Section 196). This obligation overrides confidentiality for crimes such as sexual acts against children, violence in close relationships, and abuse of authority. The condition is that by so-doing it is possible to prevent a crime being committed. The duty of prevention is a personal duty. It is not enough to have reported to a superior or an authority if these do not do anything to prevent the crime. Anyone who becomes aware that a criminal offence may be committed has a personal duty to prevent it. The duty of prevention assumes a likely risk of new abuse, and a systematic assessment of this probability should be made. This must be recorded and managed properly because the law requires reasonable procedures to be verifiable. If, however, a leader or BCC's resource team does NOT think it likely that a new abuse will be committed, the recipient of the information must keep confidential what has been reported in confidence.

## What can arouse suspicion?

- Obvious change in behaviour: someone becomes more withdrawn, more dependent, or more aggressive, and more sexual in their behaviour and use of language.
- Physical pain.
- Fear of people or places that were previously safe.

NB! Changes in behaviour may be quite normal, or due to circumstances other than abuse. Either way, it's important to investigate. Dare to believe it without dramatization – rather be pleasantly surprised if the cause proves not to be abuse.

## Tips on how to proceed if you suspect a child or adolescent has been abused:

- Ask the child or young person directly if there is something that is difficult or that s/he wants to talk about. You must show that you can bear to get a 'no', but the fact that you asked can be an important turning point for the child or adolescent.
- Feel free to ask again and keep the line open: the child or adolescent must themselves let you know when he or she is ready for it.
- When a child tells you something, you should listen to the child and show that you take them seriously. Avoid steering the conversation. Feed back statements made by the child, so that they can correct you if you have misunderstood anything. Write down what the child said after the conversation.
- Be honest about what is going to happen. Be realistic.
- Never promise anything you can't keep. You must never promise the child confidentiality if you need to pass on what they may tell you.
- Prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for what confidences can come.

- Consciously conduct a two-way conversation. In a genuinely two-way conversation the child should be able to express her/himself honestly, confidently and authentically. Lecturing them will make them strategic in their responses and feel restricted, pressured, cautious and defensive. The adult's way of speaking and asking makes all the difference.

### Examples of questions one can ask in a secure relationship:

- Has something happened to you?
- Do you want to tell me about it?
- Do you hurt anywhere? Where?
- How did you get this? (If one sees marks on the body)
- How did this happen? (For example, if one sees that his or her clothing is torn)
- If there are indications that injuries are inflicted by another person:
  - Who has done this to you?
  - How did it happen? When?

### Handling suspicions of abuse in one's own field of work/responsibility

- Have a low-threshold for reporting:
  - When someone shows signs of or says they have been exposed to abuse.
  - When a leader behaves in a way that gives concern.
- Everyone should know who to report to and what information is needed.
- Protect the one who reports in a good way.
- Get the report into written form.

Reporting procedures apply when a person in a position of trust in their own field of work has been accused of having committed abuse outside the organisation, for instance, in their own family. The reporting routines also apply if you become aware of abuse that has occurred in the past, no matter how long ago, if the case has not already been dealt with.

Initially, a report might appear as an isolated and trivial-sounding matter. Nevertheless, it must be handled correctly from the beginning, because when one begins to investigate, more reports may come to light about the same person, or about matters that are more serious.

## Responsibility for handling a matter

There must be processes for reporting and dealing with incidents of abuse, for example, when a case is reported in one's own organisation, and the accused is, for example, a volunteer leader or co-worker.

It is important that a responsible person is appointed to deal with the matter. This should be a person who has responsibility for the accused and has the authority to decide what the consequences of the incident will be for the accused (in the immediate aftermath as well as in the longer term after any final judgment).

### An established leadership team or a contingency team of 2-4 persons, consisting of:

- Responsible leader (responsible for volunteer co-workers)
- People possessing professional expertise
- People able to take responsibility for any follow-up work with individuals
- People who have the confidence of the church

## Allocation of roles in the team when handling a case:

- Delegate responsibility for follow-up work with those affected – be careful not to mix roles and avoid conflicts of interest!
- The support person for the injured party must never at the same time be the support person for the accused.
- The support person should advocate for the needs and interests of the one he/she has been appointed to support to the greatest degree possible.
- If it is believed that the matter will become the subject of a legal action, then the support person for the accused must not be one who could be called to testify in a possible trial.
- The person responsible for handling the case shall not assume the role of a priest towards any of the people involved. He may then be bound by confidentiality and thus prevented from handling the case as it ought/should be handled under applicable regulations. Leave these aspects to others outside of the team.
- In dealing with the case, the person handling it shall obtain sufficient information to bring the most clarity to the facts of the case. It is especially important to have a good process on this in situations where the case is not investigated by the police and in cases that are shelved by the police.

## Following up those affected

The affected parties in a case may include:

- The one affected of the abuse
- The accused
- The person who reports the case
- Family members, friend, co-worker or other people in whom the victim or accused has confidence
- People in the same church as the person(s) affected

There is a difference in following up those affected who are above and below the age of 18 (adult in sense of the law), partly because parents/guardians must be involved when the accused or abused is under 18, unless the parent or guardian is the accused. In such cases one should try to explain to the accused or the victim that the parent/guardian be contacted before doing so. The one affected should themselves choose which of their near ones should be involved. During the handling of a case, the support personnel should ensure that they have full permission from the abused and the accused to use the information needed to handle the case.

It is a good rule to have two together when having conversations with those concerned.

**Do not bring him/her/those abused and the suspected abuser together in a “mediation meeting”!**

## Advice on supporting the person or persons affected in a case

- The affected must be informed as to who is her/his support person, to whom she/he can refer with their questions.
- Ensure that the story of the victim is written down and signed. If the victim does not themselves wish to write, this can be done by the support person, with the victim's signature. Questions to clarify about the incident(s) and the situation may be necessary, but one must watch out for one's tendency to make assumptions or form judgments that influence the answers.
- Whoever has the task of getting the one affected to tell about the event, must create an atmosphere of trust and have a good relationship with her/him.
- Accept the victim's story.
- Let the one affected talk freely about her/his side of the story. Do not ask leading questions.
- Others may only be told of the identity of the affected with her/his consent.
- The support person should ensure that the one affected is updated as soon as possible with all pertinent information in the case that is not confidential. That includes, among other things:
  - the time aspect of the case
  - who is handling the case
  - who else will be informed
  - how the organization regards the question of guilt

- o any admissions made by the accused
- o the possible consequences of the case for the accused
- The one affected, and those close to them, should immediately be offered the help and support of a trusted person.
- The one affected shall receive regular information about the progress of the case and be informed when the church regards the matter as concluded. This can be done by letter or by conversation provided that the matter is documented.

### Advice on speaking to the accused person or persons involved in a case

Such conversations can be to research suspicions/accusations if a case is not a police investigation, or after the police have concluded their investigation. The character of the conversation will depend on whether there is a full admission from the suspect/accused or not.

- Do not confront the person with the suspicions/accusations in any way at the start of the case. Let the police (if there is a police case) do their investigation. This is important to prevent evidence from being destroyed, or that the victim gets threatened.
- The suspect/accused shall be notified of who her/his support person is, whom she/he may refer to with questions.
- When there is a written report from the abused, the case shall be discussed with the support person of the suspect/accused.
- The conversations with the suspect/accused should be carried out by two people, one of whom should normally be the support person.
- The notice of the first meeting shall normally be made by contacting the suspect/accused on the telephone, while sending a written invitation to the meeting. The suspect/accused shall be informed of their right to be accompanied by a close/supportive person of their own choosing.
- Elements of the case that are relevant to consider in the first conversation:
  - o Briefing on the background for the meeting.
  - o Briefing that the conversation is to be regarded as a service call between the suspect/accused and the organization (not a priestly conversation).
  - o Information on the rights s/he has and the procedure that the organization will follow.
  - o Invite the suspect/accused to tell their version of the story. Do not ask leading questions, and do not ask the suspect/accused if "it is true".
  - o Provide information to the suspect/accused and those close to him or her that it may be useful to seek aid/counselling from outside the church to minimise negative experiences.
  - o Make sure that the account given by the suspect/accused is written down and signed after the conversation.
  - o If the suspect/accused himself does not want to write, this can be done by the support person and then signed by the suspect/accused.

### Suggestions for questions one can pose to the one affected and also to the accused:

- What was it that happened?
- What did you think about what happened at the time?
- What do you think now about what happened?
- How is it for you to talk about this?
- Have you experienced anything like this before?
- Who have you spoken to about this, what have you said – who knows what?
- What do you think will happen now – and what would you like to happen?
- What do you need in this situation that has arisen?

# Routine for dealing with an incident or incidents

Here is a general procedure for dealing with cases of abuse; however, each case is special and will require individual assessment. The routine is carried out by the one/ones responsible for handling (see Point 1).

## 1. The Reporting Stage

- Report about the case is received and logged
- The report is written down and confirmed as received
- In an acute situation, consider preserving physical evidence
- Get clarity about any obligation to inform police, child protection team or others
- Keep the others up-to-date that a report has been received, e.g. most responsible leader in the church

## 2. The Investigation Stage

- Seek advice before doing anything
- If the accused or the one affected is under the age of 18, their guardians must be informed immediately (unless they are themselves involved)
- Get an oversight of all concerned parties and the key facts of the case
- Clarify who should be the support person for the victim, accused, and any others affected
- Inform the victim about the possibility of consulting professional help, e.g. lawyer, doctor
- Consider involving the police and reporting
- Make a written procedural plan of what should happen when, and in what order

## 3. The Implementation Stage

- The support people shall provide sufficient information to the effected, the accused (after clearance with the police) and any others affected
- The accused shall be suspended from his/her duties, until the case has been investigated
- Have dialogue with the police when it is appropriate
- As far as possible, set out the known facts in writing
- Follow up and keep in touch with those affected
- Provide information on professional help to support the accused and the abused
- Decide who would have responsibility for communicating with the media should the media become involved, and what information should be given to the media.

## 4. The Concluding Stage

- The management team along with the support people meet for an overall assessment of the facts that have emerged, and to conclude what the consequences of the case should be
- Dealing with the case may be terminated when sentence is passed and/or our own dealing with the case concluded
- Clarify how any acquittal of the accused or dismissal of the case will be handled
- Final conversations with the abused and the accused/perpetrator
- Clarify the consequences and needs of those affected
- Ensure those involved get adequate information about the conclusion
- Those responsible for dealing with the situation meet for debriefing – what was done and what can be learned
- Base the scope of further evaluation according to the seriousness of the case
- Any possible reconciliation process must occur on the victim's terms. The facts of the case must be mutually recognised by both the victim and the perpetrator.

## 5. The time afterwards

- The case log and all relevant documents must be kept secure
- When the case itself is concluded and a judgment has been passed, the matter enters a new phase which can span over many years. Any subsequent follow-up is now the responsibility of the leadership.
- Transparency in the matter can prevent any level of conflict from increasing when the case is concluded
- Protect those who are affected, explore possibilities for eventual reconciliation (important/difficult point)

## Handling Information

### Confidential information

All written information on the case containing sensitive personal data must, for the sake of those affected, be treated as confidential. Information communicated by e-mail must be password protected. Procedures must be in place for information to be kept securely, even after the case has ended. This process must fulfil the requirements laid down by the GDPR.

### Who should know what?

- Create a written schedule for information management
- Parts of the information in a case may be treated as confidential, even if a case is made public
- Consider strictly who needs to know what, avoid spreading rumours with things that are not true
- Details about the content of the case are seldom relevant to share, even though it excites curiosity

Sometimes there may be a need to involve other parts of the church, or official agencies, when dealing with a case. One must then clarify what information is shared and observe the laws concerning privacy and confidentiality.

### Media

- With a police investigation, one should always refer the media to the police.
- The group dealing with the case should appoint one person to have contact with the media. All inquiries should be dealt with by them.
- Decide what message you want people to receive and keep to that.
- Obtain advice on dealing with the media in difficult cases.

### Disclosure of information about the perpetrator

In cases where the church decides that the accused can no longer be trusted, the co-worker will be removed from their post. Volunteers will be relieved of their tasks. Where there is not a conviction, information about breach of trust and inability to reach a verdict will not appear on a police attestation.

In such cases the church has an ethical obligation to help prevent a perpetrator from exploiting a position of trust in other places. This is in accordance with our duty of prevention.

The perpetrator should be advised in a concluding conversation to be open about the matter if he or she contacts other organizations. If the perpetrator himself will not tell, those who have handled the matter can inform the leaders of other organizations about the breach of trust. One should not share information about the perpetrator and about the case beyond what is strictly necessary. Depending on the facts of the case, other churches may give the perpetrator a limited confidence and, for example, arrange circumstances so that they avoid situations where abuse can occur. For example, this could mean that they cannot work with children and adolescents. Sharing of information can be a good way to protect both the perpetrator and the other organization.



By obtaining references from previous jobs or churches where someone has been a voluntary co-worker, it is important to formulate questions that allow for the possibility of the referee to inform about a breach of trust, without having to share confidential information.

## Appendix

### From dependency to security in society

Children and adolescents involved in our activities often have very different experiences and backgrounds. That is why they all react and behave differently in various social situations. It is useful for leaders of children's and youth activities to have insight into their behaviour and reactions so that everyone can participate in the group activities in a way which is beneficial for themselves and for the wider group. In the sections that follow, we set out some essential conditions for this to happen and with which it is helpful for us all to be familiarized.

#### Memory

Our earliest interpersonal experiences determine not only what is engraved in our memory, but how experiences become firm recollections and form our own "narrative" about our lives. The memory can be seen as the way the mind actively converts our experiences into an image of ourselves through our life's circumstances. As a child grows, the mind begins to connect past, present, and future. It links together early experiences with what we experience here and now, and our predictions about what will happen in the future. Our subjective experience thus shapes our real world. Memory is therefore a fundamentally important part of the foundation to the way we think - our intentions, motivations, wishes, longings and our likes/dislikes. Within the imaginations a child creates - the mental model of ourselves - our identity and what we might call our 'roadmap for life' is formed. Our ability to master events and our interactions with others is based on the way our mind treats our experiences. And it is the experiences we have with other people that really mean something - first and foremost with our closest carers.

We are born with a brain that enables us to interpret the motives and intentions behind other people's actions – and not just the actions themselves. The child sees and experiences the energy an adult puts into his actions and the effect of those actions. This amazing ability also enables the child to engage with the carer's own resources <sup>1</sup>; and so the child learns and develops. Without this inherent ability (mirror neuron system <sup>2</sup>), children, in their dependent and vulnerable state, would not be able to survive. However, with the help of this ability, the child's inter-personal experiences determine his/her empathy or "mind-sight <sup>3</sup>" - the critical factor in their social development and ability to interact with others.

This development process is highly sensitive to the quality of care from the child's significant adults. Whatever any given action leads to or does not lead to - particularly the actions of someone important for the child - is stored in the body / mind as an implicit memory (i.e. in the subconscious). Small children are especially sensitive and impressionable with regard to such experiences; their mental resilience is then affected by how their memory stores their experiences of meetings with adults.

<sup>1</sup> By "resources" we mean all that the carer has to give by way of knowledge, expertise, values – everything they themselves have naturally or acquired otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> A "mirror neuron" is a nerve cell function that fires and "mirrors" the intentional behaviour of the other.

<sup>3</sup> "Mind-sight" is the ability to focus our awareness on ourselves, our own thoughts and feelings, and **how we perceive the internal world of someone else.**

#### Attachment (Bonding)

How the bonding system works in a human being is an important starting point in order to appreciate how communication/interaction in relationships influences the mind – in other words, how attachment and communication can inhibit or promote the development of the mind.

A child is both dependent and powerless, and this makes attachment or bonding so vital. All children relate to carers regardless of how they are treated. This they must do in order to survive. However, they relate to them in different ways - depending on the intensity and quality of the emotional interaction with their carers. The adult's care and attention to the child's needs plays a crucial role. If parents are attentive to the child, engage with and take care of him/her, the child will develop a trusting attachment. This means that the child feels safe so that

when it experiences something as insecure or threatening, the parents will protect them. It is a good sign of bonding when a little child takes refuge and clings to his/her mother when a stranger approaches. It is also fundamental to their safety that their carers work well together, showing the child that they like to cooperate.

A child who does not experience they have carers who are interested in how they are will develop some degree of insecurity in that attachment. Reserved, passive, absent-minded, rejecting, authoritarian or unpredictable guardians cause an insecure attachment. Consequently, the child's attentiveness and behaviour will be characterized by the struggle to care for him/herself where the adults have neglected them.

Repeated experiences with significant adults, as mentioned above, are "remembered" in different parts of the senses and nervous system. This not only determines what is remembered, but it determines how the child sees the possibilities for his own development. The subjective experience is encoded into the implicit memory<sup>4</sup> as an effective preparedness against future insecurity. Behaviour, feelings, perception, sensation and expectation of others are all laid down in the child's body. Inter-personal experiences are established in the child's "operating system" – before they become aware of their own identity and the opportunities that are open to them in life. This "operating system" is ready to be activated in future situations which resemble the experiences that were stored subconsciously. The behaviour formed in this way varies dramatically with different patterns of attachment.

4 "Implicit memory" is one of the two main types of long-term human memory. It is acquired and used unconsciously and affects thoughts and behaviours. One of its most common forms is procedural memory which helps people to perform certain tasks without conscious awareness of these previous experiences.

### **Belonging (affiliation)**

Gradually as the child grows, the need for a sense of belonging increases. The mental state they have as a result of interpersonal experiences will affect how easy or difficult it is to achieve and experience a sense of belonging among friends and social systems outside the immediate sphere of their parents. The vast majority of children - including many of those who have experienced inadequate care - will experience successes in their social networks, but when difficulties arise, their "operating system" will tend to react in "crisis mode". That behaviour is often not so easy for others to appreciate! The challenge for adults is to put aside their own prejudices about the behaviour and approach the child in a way which respects what he/she needs. Here the adult needs to be aware of how their own life-experiences (attachment patterns) can affect how they approach the children they are responsible for.

Because children display different kinds of attachment behaviour, it is important that the person in charge is aware of, and applies, good practice when dealing with such situations. Children and adolescents must have good experiences that develop and enhance their social skills; in this way, new memories are created which strengthen their sense of security and value in society.

Both parents and other significant carers should be aware that their own experiences in childhood with significant adults greatly influence the way they tend to treat their own children.

Therefore, it is important to be conscious of how various memories and patterns of attachment determine one's own behaviour - a behaviour which is possible to change if the need to change is truly acknowledged.

### **Risks and hope**

Children who have been subjected to neglect or abuse are at high risk of compromised self-development, and although the possibilities for rehabilitation can be good, many children experience a painful social life and significantly reduced mental health because of such "baggage".

Nevertheless, the "last train" has not departed for anyone! New and convincing experiences of being genuinely appreciated, taken care of and loved, as well as compelling experiences of belonging to a thriving, winsome community on their own terms can change genetic patterns! Our body's 'machinery' for both processing and mastering life's challenges, can be completely transformed!

Therefore, leaders of children's and youth activities should work to embed their values and raise awareness of the aims of the work with their co-workers. They should together consider how the various challenges in the work for the children can be identified and addressed.

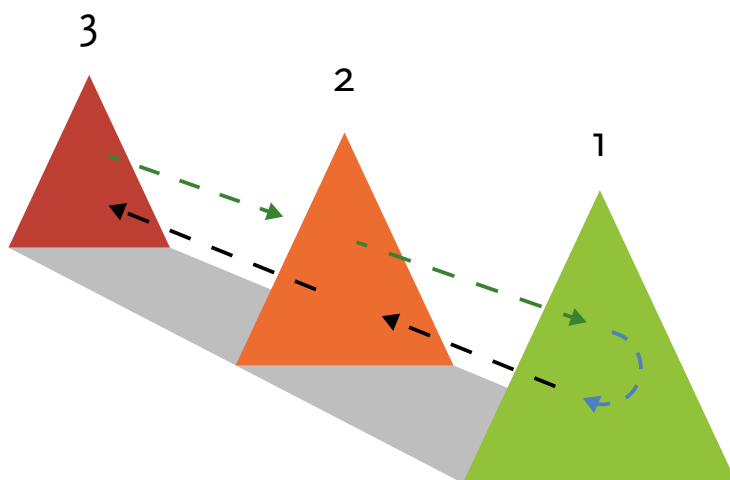
- All children have an unique and absolute value
- All children will when they can
- All children who experience togetherness, work together
- All children who find purpose, participate
- All children have something to add to the community

## ATTACHMENTS

- Model for collaborative leadership of BCC's work against inappropriate behaviour
- Check-list for safe working with children and young people in BCC
- Contract relating to Voluntary Work in BCC
- Personal declaration for working with children and adolescents in BCC
- Dealing with Sexual Offences - Instructions for when something has happened
- Dealing with Sexual Offences – Check-list for dealing with cases
- Report Form for Action Group against Undesirable Incidents in the local churches (AGUI)
- Disclosure Procedure
- Disclosure Routine
- Routine for Documentation from BCC Local Churches

# Model of collaborative leadership in BCC's work against inappropriate behaviour

The basis for accountability and documentation



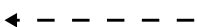
The model shows how BCC handles different challenges related to caring for individuals and dealing with abuse. In accordance with the BCC Policy and Strategy “SAFETY OF CHILDREN - THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS”, the model provides a system for quality assurance and the reporting of local activities. It is our clear intention to ensure that the way we handle inappropriate behaviour is characterised by openness and safety. BCC centrally should also be able to monitor how the strategic plan is implemented in practice. These processes will safeguard personal privacy in accordance with the revised Personal Information Act of 2018.



**Common knowledge base**



Training and skills development from Level 3 to Level 1 in the BCC system.



Annual reporting of activities and immediate information about incidents.



**BSSs Ressursteam** er BCCs faglige instans som ledd 2 og 1 henvender seg til ved behov for informasjon og hjelp i prinsipielle og konkrete spørsmål om grenseoverskridende atferd.



**BCC local church leaders** are responsible for recruitment of, and working in partnership with, group leaders, ensuring procedures and routines are adhered to, activities and incidents are documented, and reporting annually to BCC's Resource Team.



**Group Leaders** for local churches/charitable trusts covering activities for children and adolescents; co-workers in Level 1 of the church's activities, ensuring children and young people experience a sense of belonging and meaningful participation on an equal footing with others. They are carefully observant, and report any undesirable incidents.

# Level 1 - Group leaders – responsible for work among youth and children in local churches

## Responsibility at Level 1

1. Acquire knowledge, practice skills, shape attitudes
2. Lead inclusive activities / work in accordance with BCC's policy and in collaboration with local church leadership

## Tasks at Level 1

1. Collaboration on leadership challenges - help with mutual understanding
2. Know the children and be known by them - build relationships
3. Police Record Check – have a clean record of conduct
4. Personal Declaration - commitment to abide by guidelines
5. Use check-lists - focussed attentiveness
6. Careful observation - generally and if there are incidents
7. Reporting incidents – use a report-form (anonymously, if requested)
8. Seek guidance - locally and centrally

Remember: it is the way an individual perceives the things which happen around them that matters.

*Carers* must therefore be keenly aware of the way an activity is experienced by those for whom it is intended – they should not be satisfied that the intention was good.

The thoughts and impressions adults have about a child determine how they treat them, and the child will be affected accordingly.

Whether an incident results in a traumatic experience for a child depends on the intensity of the experience itself, their experiences of the network generally, the way any incident is handled in the immediate aftermath, and how it is later followed up.

# Level 2 – Local Church Leadership

## Responsibility at Level 2

1. Communicate and promote ethical guidelines with reference to our beliefs, values, and the instruction booklet
2. Delegation of responsibilities
3. Allocate and set limits to responsibility. Ensure people know how they are to report incidents.
4. Ensure people are conscious of their specific remit
5. Provide guidelines for mentors

## Tasks at Level 2

1. Recruitment – scope and training
2. Close communication with those bearing the main responsibility for children's and youth activities
3. Reporting procedures. Ensure that reporting procedures are effective and well-understood
4. Evaluation and revision of practice. Meet with children and youth workers to analyse and improve
5. Annual cycle. Devise strategies and plans for children's and youth activities
6. Anonymized summarized account of the local church's annual cycle of activities to the BCC Resource Team)

The increase in social awareness, and greater access to information generally, has led to a growing focus on citizens' needs and rights. If that focus has a positive impact on the bringing up and development of children, then it will have changed and enhanced our culture for the better.

If we don't improve the culture, nothing is improved! The question that the leadership of any community must ask themselves is: How do we create a social system in which no one on the inside feels they are on the outside?

## Level 3 - BCC Resource Team against neglect and abuse

### Responsibility at Level 3

1. Leadership of professional and organizational quality assurance in accordance with the mandate given by the BCC Leadership
2. Provide high quality guidance for the prevention and handling of “exclusion”, negligence, physical violence, inappropriate behaviour and sexual abuse of children and adolescents
3. The Resource Team develops and maintains structures and processes for quality assurance of this work extending from Level 3 to Level 1 in the BCC system.

### Tasks at Level 3:

1. Ethical underpinning. Based on our faith and beliefs
2. Elucidation/explanation of specific themes. Provide professional insight based on ethical considerations
3. Legal advice. What BCC can deal with ourselves and what must be left to the authorities
4. Development of capabilities for all three levels with respect to knowledge, skills and attitudes
5. Course Design. Material and means to promote, centrally and locally, development of skills
6. Development of processes/procedures. Common approach to local routines and documentation
7. Leadership of training. Delivery of training courses for key people in local churches/charitable trusts
8. Guidance for both Level 1 and Level 2 on generic issues and specific questions
9. Annual report based on documentation provided by Level 2
10. Cooperation with external agencies. Professional networks and other organizations related to the themes in BCC's strategic plan

Access to relevant information about needs, competence, capacity, research and documentation determines the quality of the work. BCC desires quality procedures which enable us to identify and act when the welfare of individuals is impacted.

Our activity includes structures that help develop processes that lead to good results.

## Check-list for safe working with children and young people in BCC

1	We are conscious of the need to find responsible, trustworthy and safe representatives and leaders in the association/charitable trust. We check previous references to assess whether they are suitable for the task.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2	We require a police criminal record check for employees (leaders, mentors, co-workers, etc., who have a responsibility for children / adolescents.)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3	We conduct general mentor training, where we cover several important topics in relation to the role of leaders and the work with children and young people.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4	We conduct separate courses for mentors on the prevention and handling of inappropriate sexual behaviour.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5	We have created a training document for all leaders and mentors in the association/charitable trust.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6	All leaders sign a personal declaration form which describes how we expect them to fulfil their role in the association/charitable trust.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7	We have guidelines covering organizational culture, how we help prevent inappropriate sexual behaviour during our events, and how leaders should adhere to them.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
8	We provide good information to members and leaders so that they know who to talk to if they need to report any negative experiences in the association/charitable trust. We have procedures and routines for how to deal with such incidents.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
9	We have a resource team that has acquired special expertise, and which can be called upon if a crisis arises.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
10	We conduct courses or have conversations with the members of the association/charitable trust during which topics such as social interaction and organizational culture are addressed.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

# Agreement regarding voluntary work in BCC

## 1. Vision for the voluntary work

In all children's and youth work there must be zero tolerance for violence, inappropriate behaviour and social exclusion (bullying). All work should be inclusive - strengthening social interaction, providing meaningful participation, be beneficial, and uphold a sense of equality.

## 2. Tasks and responsibilities to which this applies

This includes, for example, co-workers in the Bible instruction classes, leaders of the Sunday School, mentors in interest group (Youth Club), etc. Responsibilities might for example include: Sunday School, Activity Club, Youth Club, Bible Classes, Youth Meeting, etc.

## 3. Time period

It is good practice for the agreement to cover a specific time period and not to continue indefinitely without being reviewed.

## 4. Rules and procedures for the activity

Refer here to the guidelines and procedures established for various trips, driving of vehicles, health and safety, use of mobile phones, etc.

## 5. Prevention and duty to prevent and report

Volunteers must report anything they become aware of which may prove harmful or threatening to individuals or the association/charitable trust. The volunteer should report to the person responsible for the activity. In cases of abuse or inappropriate behaviour, the Resource Team for abuse should be contacted. Mail: [ressursteam@bcc.no](mailto:ressursteam@bcc.no)

## 6. Initial and follow-up conversations

The volunteer must have an induction meeting with the person responsible for the activity. Later, it is desirable that the volunteer and the responsible person review, at least once a year, the activity and the volunteer's role.

## 7. Social media

Volunteers should be conscious of how they use social media. It is forbidden to post pictures from activities in which he/she has been a volunteer leader without obtaining prior permission of any persons easily recognizable in the pictures. When it concerns children under 18, consent must be obtained from the parent/guardian.

## 8. Police criminal record check / reference

Any activities or events involving children, youth and other vulnerable people, require that individuals obtain a police criminal record check in accordance with the law and report any factors that might prevent them from interacting with vulnerable people.

## 9. Personal declaration

The personal declaration for working with children and adolescents in BCC must be signed before anyone is allowed to participate in the work with children and adolescents.

If a volunteer, because of their role, becomes acquainted with the personal circumstances of other people, then these details are subject to the laws governing confidentiality. The volunteer agrees that relevant information about the person involved which has come to light in his/her role as a volunteer, can be shared and discussed with appropriate members of the association/charitable trust who bear responsibility.

Date    /    -    \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible person for the activity



## Personal Declaration for working with children and adolescents in BCC

We want children and youth taking part in our activities to be safe.

Therefore, all volunteers over the age of 18 with regular leadership responsibilities in our children's and youth activities are required to sign a leadership agreement and obtain from the police a criminal record check.

NAME:	DATE OF BIRTH:
ADDRESS:	
POSTAL CODE AND TOWN:	
E-MAIL:	MOBILE TELEPHONE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I am committed to the association/charitable trust's values and respect the rules for volunteers</li> <li>● I want to help build an open and safe community</li> <li>● I have never exposed any child or any young person to inappropriate behaviour or abuse</li> <li>● I know that sexual acts against minors are illegal and must be reported to the police</li> <li>● I will report to the responsible leader any suspicion of abusive behaviour</li> <li>● I will not abuse the position of leader to exploit or abuse anyone</li> <li>● The information I have provided in this statement is accurate and truthful</li> </ul>	
SIGNATURE:	DATE:

# Dealing with sexual offences

## When something has happened!

### Instructions for reporting / suspecting sexual offences at an event:

The person who bears the main responsibility for the activity must always follow these instructions when an offence has occurred during an event. The person with overall responsibility must be informed immediately when an incident has taken place.

Stay calm and composed. Demonstrate that you can cope and deal with the incident. Make sure that those who are affected are well taken care of.

Get in touch with your immediate superior straightaway to inform them, and to ensure enough resources are available to deal with the incident.

Ask yourself:

- Is there any need for more help from others?
- Is medical supervision needed?
- Should we contact the police?
- Who is taking care of the other participants and co-workers?
- Who are most closely affected?

The affected must be taken care of in the best possible way. If the offender is under 18 years of age, his/her parent/guardian must be contacted.

*This does not apply if the parents/guardians are involved or if other special considerations suggest differently.*

Explain to the different people involved about the incident and about what is happening, but only as much as is essential for them to know.

*Inform as little as possible, but as much as necessary.*

If applicable, consider specific practical follow-up actions such as a visit to the doctor or those in charge of child protection.

*If the affected is under 18, this should be done in collaboration with the parents/ guardians.*

The perpetrator of the offence must be dealt with in a good way by an appropriate person.

*If the perpetrator is under 18, contact the parents/guardians.*

Further follow-up action when the event is over.

*The immediate superior is best-placed to take follow-up action.*

### When something has been reported and it is necessary to take action regarding a case, it is often advisable to consult with:

The Resource Team for Abuse Cases, mail: [ressursteam@bcc.no](mailto:ressursteam@bcc.no), mobile: +47 90586820 (Harald Kronstad) or +47 40401005 (Øivind Jacobsen)

Possibly: Police, Tel. 02800 in Norway, or 999 in UK (Find your local police phone number)

# Dealing with sexual offenses

## Check-list for how to handle these cases

What follows is a list of points that may be relevant when taking action as a result of accusation or suspicion of sexual offences and inappropriate behaviour. There must always be several leaders who work together when handling the case, but one person should have the main responsibility and must use this check-list.

### REPORTING

- An incident is reported
- The report should be written down
- Create a log with details of time, place, events and who has said what
- Inform the person in the next line of responsibility as soon as possible that a report has been received (see contact information on the previous page)
- Documents sent electronically must be password protected

### INVESTIGATION

- Get an overview of all parties involved and the essentials of the matter
- The Resource Team must be consulted and will:
  - Establish whether there is an obligation to inform the police / social services (to stop ongoing sexual abuse) and / or for further reporting of the incident
  - Consider whether it is advisable to inform the police, even when there is no legal obligation to do so
  - Determine who should be in contact with the affected child, the accused, and anyone else affected
  - When the affected child and / or the accused is under 18 years of age, the guardian is usually informed, unless they themselves are involved.
  - The victim should be offered an adult person to support them
  - Make a plan of action setting out what will happen next, in what order things will be done, and who will be responsible for what.

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Take care of the various people involved
- Provide enough information to the victim, the accused and others who are affected (after discussing things with the BCC Resource Team)
- The accused must be removed from any responsibilities/duties until the matter is sorted out
- Begin a dialogue with the police, whenever it is appropriate
- Establish the facts of the incident as clearly as possible and write them down
- Determine responsibilities and be clear about who will perform which role within the support system
- Provide information about professional help to support both the accused and the victim
- Identify who will report to the media and what information should be given

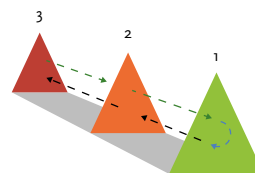
### CONCLUSION

- The incident can be considered closed when legal judgment has been reached and / or an outcome reached regarding how the matter should be handled
- Determine how any dismissal or acquittal is to be handled
- Hold a final interview with the victim and the accused
- Set out the consequences of the incident and the needs of the various people involved
- Those affected must be given sufficient information about the outcome
- Ensure proper archiving of information in accordance with the Personal Information Act

REMEMBER: Once the case has been dealt with and there is an outcome, a new phase begins that can last for many years - it is a leadership responsibility to follow up the matter further.

# Report Form

For the Action Group against Undesirable Incidents in the Local Church (AGUI)



Fill out the form as soon and as accurately as you can. Use extra pages if necessary.

Take up the matter immediately with the local church leadership who may then take it further to the BCC Resource Team.

	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Reported by	
2	Who registered their concern (the victim themselves or someone else)?	
3	When was the concern registered?	
4	What was observed?	
5	How did it happen?	
6	What situation preceded the incident?	
7	When did it happen?	
8	Who was involved / around?	
9	Who knows about the incident?	
10	Knowing about it concerns (close relationship)	
11	What are the relevant facts?	
12	What assumptions / hypotheses are under consideration?	
13	What further information do you think is needed concerning the event?	
14	Who is the contact person for the victim in the situation (primary/ secondary person in charge)?	
15	Who else have you been in contact with about the incident/ concerns?	
16	When did you contact your superior about the incident/ concern?	
17	How serious do you consider the situation?	

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reporting Procedure

REPORTING of inappropriate behaviour within BCC

Level 3:

**Procedure:** **Guidance, how to proceed**

BCC Resource Team has set out a procedure for reporting with suggestions for a local process. The procedure gives some insight into, and an overview of, what needs to happen when the local leaders in BCC design their own local reporting routines.

Level 2:

**Routine:** **Established uniform approach**

Local leaders in BCC base their procedure on the reporting template from the Resource Team which reflects the centrally developed procedure. The routine and review of this is reported annually to the BCC Resource Team.

It is an objective to have consistent practice in all local churches regarding routines to capture and follow up incidents relating to abusive sexual behaviour. In this document, the BCC Resource Team sets out a procedure for designing notification routines in each local church.

## Background

First and foremost, in accordance with BCC's foundation of faith and profession of conduct and the Norwegian Constitution (§100), it is important for us to have ways of working that promote a culture of openness about conditions that impair the quality of our work. Both international (UN conventions) and national laws have requirements on rights and obligations that are consistent with BCC's foundation of faith and preaching. The society around us is overwhelmed by pressure for fundamental ethical and moral values. This leads to increased public awareness of environments and organizations and an expectation that they will have arrangements in place to ensure that these values are protected. An increased awareness of possible abuses that violate human dignity and destroy conditions for individual growth is absolutely necessary to prevent undesired behaviour. Lifestyles that one should be able to take for granted are all too often perverted by primitive inclinations that begin in secret and lead to personal and social tragedies where there is no teaching about a healthy life.

## Responsibility for quality development

The guidelines below reflect the expectations of public legislation on systematic follow-up of rights and obligations in large and small organizations. The guidelines relate primarily to the local leaders' areas of responsibility, but others responsible for activities and groups within BCC's affiliated organizations must also be made aware of them. It is important for BCC that all local churches adopt a uniform approach in this area. The guidelines apply to the reporting of inappropriate and abusive behaviour against individuals' personal integrity, dealing primarily with behaviour of a sexual nature. It is a prerequisite that each individual church will base its routines on the template from the BCC Resource Team, but adapt them according to the laws of their own country.

*It is important to note that these guidelines are not intended or designed to be used by individuals wishing to criticize BCC's doctrine or the content of any of its literature or events.*

## BCC's attitude to Reporting

It is in BCC's interests that any inappropriate or abusive conduct is notified without delay. Church leaders are responsible for putting a stop to such behaviour if it relates in any way to our activities. Anything that cannot endure the light must stop within our ranks, without respect of persons. No one has immu-

nity, and extra requirements are placed on people in positions of trust. Everyone should already know this as a result of the powerful preaching we have about this very area. Nevertheless, to prevent and limit damage and injury, it is a necessary to have a system of internal reporting in place so that shameful situations can become known by those with responsibility as soon as possible.

As with other religious communities, BCC occupies a special position in the voluntary sector because registered religious leaders are subject to a statutory and punishable duty of confidentiality in situations of trust. The purpose of confidentiality is to give people an assurance that they can seek help from an advocate without risking what they say may becoming known by others, and is therefore an important basis for the trust of the members towards their leaders. The duty of confidentiality is not absolute, however, and must be waived for the duty of preventing certain serious criminal offences. Proper management of these two duties - confidentiality and duty of prevention - is central to BCC's treatment of matters needing to be reported.

### Meeting with whistle-blowers

Reporting should be treated confidentially; and the person who discloses information must be treated with openness and respect, because giving such information may be difficult. This is also an important condition for reporting to take place! It must be perceived as safe to report! The informer must not feel that they are at any risk of revenge, punishment or loss of social status for having spoken up. To prevent painful secrets remaining in the dark, the leadership must make every effort to create a climate of confidence, openness and freedom of expression in the local church.

### Facilitating disclosure

Experience from society in general shows that important information about unfortunate situations does not come to light unless members are able to report anonymously in social investigations. We have not normally done this in BCC because we are not a working environment in the traditional sense; however, our climate of observation and communication must eliminate barriers to disclosing what might be happening in secret. Leaders must realise their responsibility to make the threshold for speaking up about inappropriate sexual conduct is to be altogether as low as possible.

### Knowing about consequences

In the event of any incident, the person who has something to report must be made familiar with easy-to-understand information about how things will proceed appropriately in a situation involving disclosure. The informer should also know how the information will be dealt with further. It can be the informer's close acquaintances, friends or people in positions of trust to whom the disclosure applies.

### Disclosure – to whom?

In view of the emotional turmoil surrounding the experience of actual abusive behaviour, and the burden it may be to disclose, the informer must themselves decide in whom to confide. However, there must be processes in place to pass the information up to the leader, or to the nearest responsible person in trust. This is so that effective measures can be taken.

### Being alert!

One must bear in mind that false information can have serious consequences for individuals and for an entire community.

## Guidance on local reporting routines

Routines for the reporting of inappropriate and abusive sexual behaviour exist for the purposes of prevention, disclosure, and follow-up, and should be formulated with these purposes in mind. The routine should, therefore, both describe an overall mindset and give specific directions as to how to proceed with reporting.

### Reporting – what is it?

1. What it means to report
  - a. **Telling a responsible person about something personally**  
unpleasant and reprehensible in a BCC activity
    - I. Inform or ask questions about unpleasant / sexually explicit contact
    - II. Describe a specific inappropriate experience that has taken place
    - III. Report inappropriate behaviour that one has reason to have suspicions about
2. What is meant by inappropriate behaviour
  - I. Doing or saying something that is experienced by someone as having gone “too far”
  - II. When someone receives unwanted touching of intimate areas, and this has not happened by chance
  - III. A stronger individual exploits a weaker person to violate personal boundaries
  - IV. Criminal Code, Chapter 19: Sexual violations distinguish between sexual activity, sexually abusive behaviour and sexual intercourse; thus specifying degrees of seriousness in inappropriate behaviour.
3. What makes a report valid?
  - a. The report must fulfil the criteria in # 1-a above
  - b. The report should, as far as can be judged, have a factual and true basis
    - I. The informer should be careful and act in good faith regarding the criteria in # 1-a
    - II. The informer must describe the facts and have the opportunity to give an account of their subjective experience of the inappropriate behaviour
  - c. One must not require the informer to answer leading questions

### Right to report

1. Who can report?
  - a. Anyone who knows that inappropriate behaviour has occurred in a BCC activity
    - I. Children and adolescents who have themselves been exposed to inappropriate behaviour
    - II. Children and adolescents who know that someone in the group has been exposed to inappropriate behaviour
    - III. Parents / guardians
    - IV. Mentors, group leaders, children’s and youth workers
2. Why should it be reported?
  - a. Because experiences of abuse of children and adolescents must be taken seriously
  - b. Because there is zero tolerance of inappropriate sexual behaviour in BCC
  - c. Because inappropriate sexual behaviour is destructive to personal development
  - d. Because all BCC’s activities are based on trust, and safeguarding personal security is foundational for all edification, preaching and other activities
  - e. Because national and international laws condemn inappropriate sexual behaviour
  - f. Because inappropriate sexual behaviour violates BCC’s foundation of faith, thus damaging BCC’s activities, trust and ability to fulfil our mission

3. What information should the report contain?
 

The report should be as complete and relevant as the situation will allow

  - a. Who is the informer - possibly anonymous?
  - b. Date / time of the report
  - c. What has happened - specific experience / observation?
  - d. Where the violation has taken place - situation and surroundings
  - e. Who has been violated?
    - I. Gender, age
  - f. Who has perpetrated the inappropriate sexual behaviour?
    - I. Role, responsibility, relative strength
  - g. When it occurred
    - I. Date(s), time of day or night
  - h. If there have been repetitions - other events as well
    - I. Patterns of behaviour can give important information
    - II. Who else was involved or may know about the inappropriate behaviour?
    - III. Witnesses
    - IV. Any rumours or unchecked information that is being spread abroad
  
4. How to report
  - a. The informer must decide how the reporting should be made
  - b. In accordance with the rules in the association and personal understanding of right and wrong
  - c. Preferably to the nearest leader, but also to another responsible person at another level
  - d. Reporting can also be made via a close person in a position of care
  - e. Report anonymously (verbally or in writing)
  
5. Anonymous reporting - What does it imply?
  - a. That you are notified in writing without the informer giving their name
  - b. Potentially that the person making the report should not be identifiable by anyone other than the one who has received the report
  - c. That report puts the informer at risk, possibly because of
    - I. proximity to the perpetrator,
    - II. fear of consequences,
    - III. fear of being asked to testify,
    - IV. taboo concerning the content of the reporting, etc.
  
6. Duty of Confidentiality - limitation to the right to report
  - a. It is difficult for those in charge to deal with a matter and at the same time keep it confidential
  - b. The seriousness of the case may require the person who receives the report to request exemption from the informer's desire for silence and anonymity. For a leader, this means that he/she must allow for the fact that the duty of confidentiality cannot be complied with if the duty to prevent overrides it
  - c. Further agreement on limited / extended processing of information - depending on the severity of the case (for example, according to the Criminal Code)
  - d. Rules on confidentiality are contained in
    - I. Public Administration Act - Public Procurement Act
    - II. Certain professional groups' rules on confidentiality (doctors, psychologists, priests, leaders)

### Obligation to report

1. In which circumstances are you obliged to notify?
  - a. Life and health are at risk
  - b. Danger of continued abuse / repetition
  - c. Conditions under the Penal Code
  - d. Conditions covered by Child Law, Child Welfare Services Act, Human Rights Act



2. When do you have to report?
  - a. As soon as possible after the experience / observation has occurred
3. Who has a special duty to report?
  - a. An adult who has specifically observed sexually inappropriate behaviour against children or adolescents
  - b. Leaders, mentors who are concerned or have reason to believe that violations are occurring

## Handling Disclosures

1. Principles for dealing with the disclosure of sexually inappropriate behaviour
  - a. The local leadership decides on who should handle the reporting process when the information comes to light
  - b. Depending on seriousness and extent, the need for discretion and further measures must be carefully assessed
    - I. Concern for the victim and the danger of repetition must be the first priority
    - II. Further investigations must be done competently and possibly involve external expertise/ authority. This is assessed in consultation with BCC's resource team
  - c. The BCC Resource Team must have documentation of all inappropriate behaviour locally  
However, if the leader is bound by confidentiality (e.g. because the information has been given in confidence and there is no likelihood of fresh abuse), such information must be anonymized (so the resource team cannot trace back to the perpetrator)
2. How responsible church leadership should treat the informer
  - a. Show respect for the informer's position and take their report seriously and in a way that safeguards the informer's need to be believed.
  - b. Ask open questions that help the person making the report to test the truth, factuality and relevance of the information provided.
  - c. Explain how the report will be dealt with, who will work with it and what actions may be taken.
    - I. This information should be adapted to the informer's age and role, what the informer can tolerate, and how much they may be able to further contribute to the process.
    - II. If the informer is also the perpetrator, this limits their right to information with regard to the matter's further processing.
3. Who should deal with reports in practice
  - a. As a rule, local leaders should assume responsibility for a proper process subsequent to reporting
  - b. In order to ensure competence, the local leader may delegate to persons with special qualifications and trust in matters involving neglect, violations and / or sexually inappropriate behaviour
4. Reference the information systematically and archive it
  - a. The information provided in any oral report must be written down as accurately as possible, either as written notes along the way or as audio recordings. Do not blindly trust to memory in such matters.
    - I. Check with the informer that your notes are a correct interpretation.
  - b. The responsible person must distinguish between what has come from definite factual information, their own assessments of information, and the informer's honesty and credibility. These must not be mixed up together. It is an important quality assurance of data for further work.
  - c. The notes should be filed, along with stepwise conclusions on further dated follow-up notes.
  - d. The notes should be summarized for the annual report to BCC's resource team.

## Reporting Procedure

### For inappropriate behaviour in BCC's local churches

The BCC Resource Team's Reporting Procedure defines and delineates the criteria for notifying undesirable behaviour. It provides a detailed introduction to WHAT, HOW, WHY and WHO in questions about reporting.

Leader in the church in: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:	Address:	Mobile:
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The local church's responsible person is responsible for making the reporting procedures for inappropriate behaviour known in the church. This must also easily guide the members of the church to have the courage to report and to do this in a proper way.

Persons with specially assigned role and responsibility in working with BCC's Strategy against Abuse: Action Group against Undesirable Incidents: "AGUI"

Name:	Address:	Mobile:
Name:	Address:	Mobile:
Name:	Address:	Mobile:

Leader for the team with special expertise and confidence in working with reporting of inappropriate behaviour:

Name:	Address:	Mobile:
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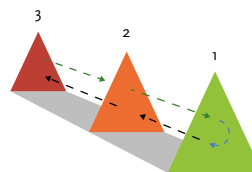
- "AGUI" must conduct a risk analysis for undesirable incidents: Which situations and which special circumstances are particularly vulnerable to undesirable behaviour in our church and require especially alert management. "You do not wait to see it before you think about it."
- The report form for written notification of undesired events should be available during the first reporting conversation.
- The leader of "AGUI" - together with the responsible church leader - assesses the need for guidance and, if appropriate, external help and consultation.
- The leader of AGUI is also responsible for logging all information associated with the reporting. The report form for written reporting of unwanted events should also be used for notes from the reporting process.
- "AGUI" knows the Strategic Plan and the Instruction Booklet particularly well and has the ability to counsel vulnerable people. It is particularly important to have empathy and to realize how difficult it can be to report abuse.

### NB

It is often very difficult to report violations and sexual abuse. Of those who come to the Crisis Centres in Norway, it takes an average of 17½ years from when the abuse/s began until they are reported! During that time, many lives are utterly destroyed. There must be a climate of trust, openness and ambience in BCC to notify as soon and as painlessly as possible. The dedicated people in the system must be especially alert to this!

**This routine should be reviewed annually and reported to the BCC Resource Team.**

## Documentation procedures by BCC local churches



Through documentation we create a connection between what is planned, what has been accomplished, and what is yet to happen in a task. In our work with children and adolescents it is important that what we do stands up to scrutiny. Observing and documenting events and actions make it easier to detect deviations, so corrective measures can be taken. This is reassuring to everyone.

Documentation for activities carried out in BCC's local church in \_\_\_\_\_

<b>DOCUMENTATION FOR FOLLOW-UP BY TEAM LEADERS</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Assignment and Activity</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Date</b> In annual cycle
1	Strategy plan: SAFETY OF CHILDREN – THE ADULTS' RESPONSIBILITY Instruction Booklet: Guidelines for local work.			
2	Police record check for children and youth workers in BCC			
3	Personal declarations and Check-lists for children's and youth workers in BCC			
4	Report forms for undesirable incidents			
5	Annual report to BCC Resource Team. Documentation procedures for children's and youth workers in BCC			
<b>DOCUMENTATION OF LEADER'S TASKS</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Tasks and Activity</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Date</b> In annual cycle
7	Recruiting and instruction of new group leaders			
8	Conversations with co-workers			
9	Information about reporting routines			
10	Evaluation of the year's work with strategy plan			
11	OTHER			

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Leader)

## Additions to Literature List in Strategic Plan:



### 1. BARNE- LIKESTILLINGS- OG INKLUDERINGSDEPARTEMENTET:

Strategi mot vold og seksuelle overgrep

Link: [goo.gl/eJsNrC](https://goo.gl/eJsNrC)



### 2. LITTERATUROVERSIKT OM KRENKELSER, VOLD OG SEKSUELLE OVERGREP

Deichmanns bibliotek

Link: [goo.gl/owciST](https://goo.gl/owciST)



### 3. SEKSUELLE OVERGREP – SAMLET INFORMASJON

Kirkens Arbeidsgiverorganisasjon

Link: [goo.gl/jZX7QJ](https://goo.gl/jZX7QJ)

### 4. SEKSUELLE OVERGREP MOT BARN

Traumebevist tilnærming

Søftestad, Siri

Andersen, Inger Lise

Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2014.

ISBN 978-82-15-02385-4

This book gives fundamental knowledge about sexual abuse against children. It also presents an understanding of the traumatic effects through suspicion, disclosure, protection and dealing with situations. Examples are from school, child protection, police and involvement. It is something to be read by parents, private persons and professional people.



### 5. FOREBYGGING OG HÅNTERING AV SEKSUELLE OVERGREP

Kirkerådet 2013

Link: [goo.gl/tmxzBz](https://goo.gl/tmxzBz)



### 6. SEKSUELLE OVERGREP MOT BARN

En veileder for hjelpeapparatet

Sosial- og helsedirektoratet/ Barne- og familiedepartementet

Link: [goo.gl/RXknBa](https://goo.gl/RXknBa)







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