



# WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

February 1, 2011

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

Re: Handling matters relating to alleged child abuse

Dear Brothers:

From time to time, organizations and others ask to see our Policy for handling matters relating to child abuse. Of course, our comprehensive and long-standing policy has been set out by the Governing Body in various publications over the years. However, to help answer such enquiries, the enclosed *Child Safeguarding Policy* has been prepared.

The *Child Safeguarding Policy* summarizes key Scriptural and theocratic principles for the protection of children. The policy includes the articles listed on page seven. Once you have entered the telephone numbers on page seven of the *Child Safeguarding Policy* document it should be printed. The articles listed in the “Notes” section are part of this document and should also be printed. Place the policy and the articles in a folder of its own, and then keep it in the congregation file. As stated on page six: “This policy will be made available to any members of the congregation who make the request.”

Reference is made to Trustees where the congregation is a registered charity. However, whether or not the congregation is a registered charity the policy will apply to all congregations in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The protection of children is of the utmost importance to us. (Ps. 127:3; Matt. 18:4-6) Jehovah’s Witnesses abhor child abuse and we do not shield those committing offences of this nature. (Rom. 12:9) Child abuse may include physical, sexual and emotional abuse, or neglect, as defined by law. This policy serves as a guide and, as set out in point #11 of the policy, includes the direction to contact the branch office as soon as possible when elders learn of alleged child abuse. **In such a case, the coordinator of the body of elders (or in his absence another elder) preferably with a second elder, should contact the Legal Department at the branch office, which will route you to the appropriate person.** This should be done even if the report is unsupported and regardless of the age of the alleged victim or perpetrator now or at the time of the alleged abuse. Spiritual and legal advice given by the branch office is situation-specific. Therefore, in every case it is important that you contact the branch office immediately. Do not rely on past advice that may have been given regarding some other situation. Review carefully the *Child Safeguarding Policy*.

Parents bear the responsibility in safeguarding the welfare and safety of their children. But elders do all that they reasonably can to safeguard the cleanness of the congregation and to protect children and other vulnerable ones, while at the same time observing confidentiality. (1 Cor. 16:13) We trust that the information in this letter and the *Child*

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*Safeguarding Policy* will help you carry this load. The branch office is here to assist. Remember to contact the branch office promptly when faced with issues such as those outlined above.

Please be assured of our love and prayers. May Jehovah continue to bless you as you shepherd his flock.—1 Pet. 5:1-3.

Your brothers,

*Watch Tower B. & J. Society*  
OF BRITAIN

PS to the secretary:

This letter should be retained in the congregation permanent file of policy letters. You may wish to update the congregation copy of *Index to Letters—For Bodies of Elders* (S-22) at this time as well.