



# Safeguarding Policy

**July 2012**  
& Subsequent amendments

Last updated November 2025  
**(Signed off by trustees)**

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## Section 1. ORGANISATION DETAILS

### 1.1 DETAILS OF THE CHURCH

Address:

Limes Avenue Baptist Church

Limes Avenue,

Aylesbury,

BUCKS,

HP21 7HE.

Church office Tel No: 01296 415327

Email address: [info@labaptistchurch.org](mailto:info@labaptistchurch.org)

Membership of Denomination/Organisation:

Grace Baptist Association

Charity Commission Number: 1140574

Insurance Company:

Congregational & General Insurance PLC

Employer's Liability Insurance Policy no.RC01003128

### 1.2 OUR IDENTITY

Limes Avenue Baptist Church is an evangelical church situated in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. The Sunday services incorporate groups for children and young people. In addition there are mid-week activities / meetings for pre-school children with a Parent and Toddler Group, and for children and young people. There are also a wide range of people including some adults who might be described as vulnerable adults who attend the church services and activities such as The Tuesday fellowship (TTF).

Limes Avenue Baptist Church has an active ministry focusing on children, young people and seniors. The Church Leadership believe that this work should

take a high priority, and that a safe environment should be provided within which all will be treated with dignity and respect.

The object of the work is:

- To share the gospel of Jesus Christ with all.
- To help those who have committed their lives to Christ to grow in their discipleship.

### 1.3 OUR COMMITMENT

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual, spiritual, emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to *“all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”*. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from *“all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child”*. As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance.

We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy including the practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by **“thirty-one-eight”** formally known as the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.

The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

### **1.4 CHURCH STATEMENT**

The church is committed to:

- Protecting and safeguarding the welfare of children and adults with care and support needs entrusted to its care.
- Recognising that the responsibility for children, young people and adults lies with the whole church.
- Listening to, relating effectively and valuing children and adults with care and support needs.
- Encouraging and supporting parents and carers.
- Adopting a formal recruitment policy for both paid and voluntary workers.
- Ensuring that children's, youth and vulnerable adults' workers are given appropriate support and training.
- Adhering to good practice guidelines for working with children and adults with care and support needs.
- Following robust procedures for dealing with concerns about possible abuse or allegations.
- Managing and supervising known offenders in the church.



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- Building constructive links with Children's and Families Social Care (Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board) and the Police Child Protection Team.

## Section 2. RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

### 2.1 UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution, or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult or vulnerable person.

In order to safeguard those in our Church we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 that states:

- 1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 states:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

## 2.2 DEFINITIONS OF CHILD AND ADULT WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS

### Definition of a child

The legal definition of a child is someone under the age of 18. Some legislation in the UK allows young people from age 16 to make certain decisions for themselves (e.g. getting married), but safeguarding legislation applies to anyone under the age of 18 because this is the legal definition of a child. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 in England and Wales, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 in Scotland and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 in Northern Ireland similarly define a child as someone under 18.

Throughout this policy, when we refer to a child our meaning (unless otherwise stated) is a person under the age of 18.

### Definition of vulnerable adult / adult in need of protection

An adult is someone over 18 (unless specific legislation states otherwise). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) all state that adults should be free from abuse.

It follows that some adults because of circumstance or particular vulnerability or risk may be in need of protection. Vulnerable adults are also known as 'adults at risk or adults with care and support needs'. Throughout this policy we will use these terms interchangeably.

'No secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse' - Department of Health and Home Office (March 2000) states a vulnerable person is someone:

*'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be*

*unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.*

### **2.3 STATUTORY DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (Vulnerable Adults)**

The following definition of abuse is based on 'No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse' (Department of Health 2000):

*"Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors:*

*Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it".*

#### **Physical Abuse**

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

#### **Psychological or Emotional Abuse**

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

### **Spiritual Abuse**

Spiritual abuse is identified as coercion, control, manipulation, or the pressuring of individuals, through the misuse of religious texts and scripture or providing a 'divine' rationale for certain behaviour.

### **Financial or Material Abuse**

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.

### **Neglect or Act of Omission**

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour, which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general wellbeing or development is impaired.

### **Discriminatory Abuse**

This is the inappropriate treatment of a vulnerable adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

### **Institutional Abuse**

This is the mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

## **2.5 STATUTORY DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (Children)**

### **What is abuse and neglect?**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those

known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical Abuse**

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

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Spiritual Abuse**

Spiritual abuse is identified as coercion, control, manipulation, or the pressuring of individuals, through the misuse of religious texts and scripture or providing a 'divine' rationale for certain behaviour.

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate

expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Signs of Possible Abuse (Children and adults with care and support needs)**

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in the context of the child, young person or vulnerable adults whole life.

#### **Physical**

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc

- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts / scratches / substance abuse

### **Sexual**

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia

### **Emotional**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

### **Neglect**

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses, Inadequate care, etc

## **2.6 SAFEGUARDING AWARENESS**

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. We seek to provide recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis. The Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy will aim to attend the 'Facing the Unthinkable' seminar run by "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" and attend local interagency training provided by Buckinghamshire County Council. The Leadership will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

## **2.6 HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD OR ADULT WANTING TO TALK ABOUT ABUSE**

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or vulnerable adult to talk in confidence but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.

### **Effective Listening**

- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- Above everything else listen without interrupting
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used.

**Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different**

- Be honest, tell the child or vulnerable adult you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information - if the child or vulnerable adult decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared

### **Helpful Responses**

- You have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will try to help you

### **Don't Say**

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

### **Concluding**

- Again reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they were right to tell you and show acceptance
- Let the child or vulnerable adult know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Notify the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator.

- If you consider that there is a risk of further abuse if the child or vulnerable adult returns home and you are unable to contact either the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy, you should refer directly to the Children and Families' Social Care or the Police. If advice is required contact "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT".
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

### **2.7 INITIAL RESPONSE TO CONCERN OR ALLEGATION OF ABUSE**

If there is a concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been abused or a direct allegation of abuse is being made, it is important the person receiving this information does the following:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking) including a description of any injury, its size, and a drawing of its shape and location on the body.
- Write down exactly what has been said, when she/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity).
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all handwritten notes even if subsequently typed up.

These notes should be passed on to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator to assist them should the matter need to be referred to Adult or Children's Social Services or the police. Any referral should be confirmed in writing within 48 hours and you should expect an acknowledgement of your written referral within one working day of receiving it.

All documents should be signed, dated and kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. Consideration should be given to any procedures that have already been adopted by the organisation and it is important that the conditions

laid down by organisation's insurers are followed to ensure there is appropriate cover against any claims.

There is also a requirement for some allegations to be reported to the Charity Commission.

"THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" can also offer independent verbal advice that will be followed by written confirmation of the advice given.

If the Safeguarding co-ordinator, or Deputy, is not contactable or they are the subject of the concerns, the statutory agencies should be contacted as outlined below.

### **2.8 RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. All allegations should be reported to the appropriate person (see below) who will then follow the detailed procedures outlined in the next section.

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse involving children or young people should report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse involving vulnerable adults should report concerns as soon as possible to the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to **Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator**. If the suspicions in any way involve the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, then the report should be made to **Safeguarding Coordinator**
- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service ("THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT") PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0845 120 4550. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

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- Where the concern is about a child, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the First Response Team. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection, contact Adult Social Care or take advice from “THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT” as above.

The First Response Team at Buckinghamshire County Council:

**01296 383962** (Out of hours Duty Team – **0800 999 7677**)  
**(cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk)**

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board can be contacted from 9.00am – 5.00pm (Monday-Friday). **01296 383962**

The local Safeguarding Adults office telephone number (office hours) is **0800 137 915** or email: **ascfirstresponse@buckinghamshire.gov.uk**

Social Services (**Care Line**): **0800137915** re: vulnerable adults

Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Team **0800 999 7677**

The Police Child Protection Team telephone number is **01865 841148**

“THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT” : **0303 003 1111**

Where required the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should then immediately inform the insurance company. Congregational & General Insurance PLC Employer’s Liability Insurance Policy no.RC01003128.

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place by the Leadership of the church.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Children and Families’ Social Care, the Police or taking advice from “THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT” .
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their

possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT", although the Leadership hope that members of the Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding co-ordinator / Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

### **2.9 DETAILED PROCEDURES WHERE THERE IS CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD.**

#### **Allegations of Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional Abuse**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Deputy will:

- Contact Children and Families Social Care (or "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" ) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about the child's safety, or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children and Families' Social Care.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.

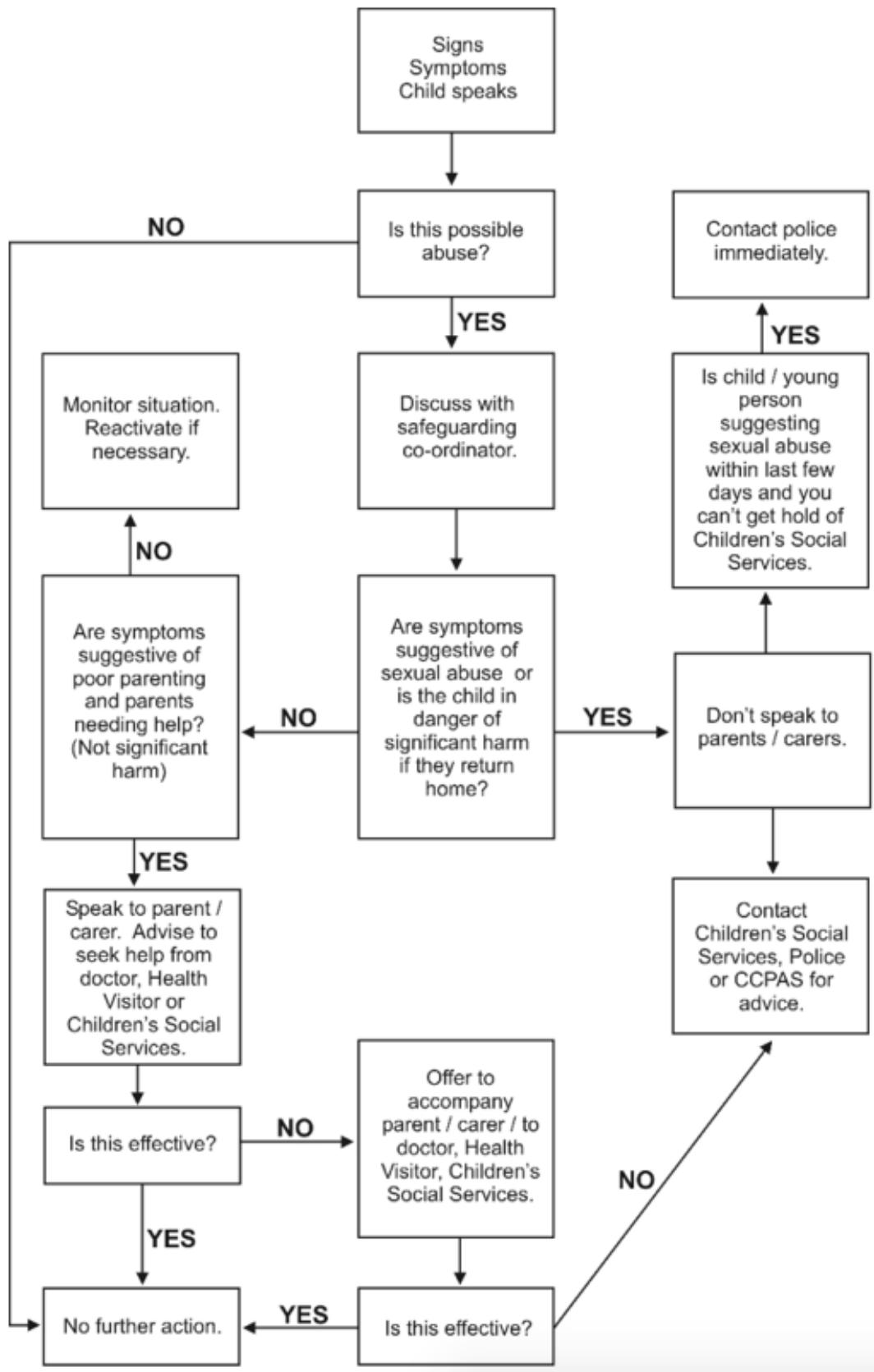
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children and Families' Social Care direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children and Families' Social Care.

### **Allegations of Sexual Abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Deputy will:

- Contact the Duty Social Worker for Children and Families Social Care Department or the Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children and Families' Social Care / Police. "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

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**Flow Chart for Action (children, young people and vulnerable adult)**

## **2.10 PROCEDURES WHERE THERE IS CONCERN ABOUT A VULNERABLE ADULT**

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Deputy will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" can be contacted for advice.

## **2.11 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN OR VULNERABLE ADULTS**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff), whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

### **Managing allegations against children's or vulnerable adult workers (summary)**

The following principles underpin managing allegations against workers:

- The welfare of the individual is of paramount importance.
- The worker should not be informed of the allegation until advice has been sought from the authorities e.g. Police or from Children's Social Services. "THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" is available to contact for advice also.

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- Workers should be informed of allegations against them as soon as possible but with due regard to protecting evidence and disclosure of information.
- It is not up to the recipient of the allegation to determine its validity so it is not your job to judge if the allegation is true or not
- All allegations should be treated in the same way – historical or current.
- An investigation against a worker may have three related, but independent strands:
  - (i) Protection enquiries, relating to the safety and welfare of any children or vulnerable adult who are or who may have been involved
  - (ii) A police investigation into a possible offence against a child or vulnerable adult.
  - (iii) Disciplinary procedures where it appears that the allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct on the part of the worker including suspension as a neutral act
- Even if no legal action is taken, an assessment may still be needed in relation to safeguarding children or worker discipline.
- The decision to suspend a worker will rest with the Elders based on the kind of allegation made.

## Section 3. PREVENTION

### 3.1 SAFE RECRUITMENT

The Leadership will ensure all volunteers/workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. In most cases with all regular volunteers/workers we will ask them to complete a criminal records disclosure (DBS). However, where it's deemed to be appropriate the safe recruitment process may also entail;

- A written job description / person specification for the role
- Those applying have completed an Application form and a Self-Declaration form
- Potential recruits are interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A criminal records disclosure has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- An induction and appropriate training is provided
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant will familiarise themselves with the safeguarding policy and know how to report concerns.

#### Outline of Recruiting Process

1. Potential volunteer is identified and referred to a member of the Elders & Safeguarding Coordinator.
2. Depending on the role and nature of their involvement with children or vulnerable adults, the candidate will be given the following:
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - Application Form
  - Self-Declaration Form

3. Email with a link to the online DBS application form. The applicant will complete the forms and online applications (Application & Self Declaration and a signed statement that they have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy).
4. Identity documents are checked.
5. The applicant joins the Team for a probationary period with a restricted role. During this time the DBS form is processed and references checked.
6. On receipt of the applicant's DBS Certificate and satisfactory references the applicant will become a full member of the team.

### **3.2 MANAGEMENT OF WORKERS – CODES OF CONDUCT**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards Children and adults with care and support needs. The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour, which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

## Section 4. PASTORAL CARE

### 4.1 SUPPORTING THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

The Leadership is committed to working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and to offering pastoral care and support to all those who have been affected by abuse. This will be achieved through pastoral visits, prayer and referrals to professional agencies as required.

### 4.2 WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

When someone attending the Church is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Elders will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

This will include their agreement to a written contract setting out behavioural boundaries they sign and agree to abide by, as well as the provision of appropriate supervision and support. It will be tailored specifically to individual circumstances and guided by advice from statutory agencies.

If the offender does not keep to the agreed boundaries the leadership will contact the Police for advice. If the person leaves the church, the statutory (Probation Service, Police Child Protection Team or Children's Services) will be informed.

#### **Clauses to Consider in a Contract for a Sex Offender**

These are examples of what may need to be taken into account in the particular circumstances of the individual and the Church.

#### **Boundaries**

- I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- I will attend meetings and activities as directed by the Elders.
- I will sit where directed at activities (e.g. meetings, social gatherings) and will not place myself near Children and adults with care and support needs.

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- I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the Elders, nor any area where activities for Children and adults with care and support needs are in progress.
- I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children, young people or vulnerable adults in the home.
- I accept that "x" and "y" will sit with me during activities (e.g. meetings, social gatherings) and accompany me when I need to use other facilities. They will know I am a sex offender.
- I accept there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children, young people or vulnerable adults for whom they care.
- I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with the Elders as and when necessary (where appropriate).
- I accept that "z" will provide me with pastoral care.
- I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, I may be barred from attending activities. In such circumstances the Elders may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. police, probation, Adult Services, Children's Social Services), and any other relevant organisations, as well as members of the Church.
- I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported.
- I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every \_\_\_\_\_ months and will remain for an indefinite period.

### **Pastoral care**

As well as outlining the boundaries a sex offender would be expected to keep, it is also helpful to outline the types of pastoral care and support you are able to offer.

For example:

'X' and 'Y' and 'Z' have agreed to provide you with pastoral care and support; as part of that undertaking, they and the leadership of the Church agree to:

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- Liaise with any previous Places of Worship you have attended, with the Prison Chaplaincy Team, or any other organisation you have worked with prior to joining with us.
- Work closely as a Church with any statutory authorities with responsibility for you, such as your probation officer, police public protection team or children's social services, cooperating with them in helping and supporting you.
- Where appropriate, ask for any risk assessment in order to determine how best we can meet your needs while protecting children and vulnerable adults.
- Attempt to assist with any practical needs you may have.
- Support you in joining Circles of Support or any other similar programme.
- Provide pastoral care and support to anyone with whom you are living with. We recognise that partners of known sex offenders need pastoral care, and 'space' to share without judgement.
- Be there for you and support you.

## Section 5. PRACTICE GUIDELINES

As a church working with Children and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in.

### 5.1 SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES FOR GROUP OR ACTIVITY

Some general principles for running a club, activity or service include:

- Treat all children and young people with warmth, respect and dignity relevant to their age. Only restrain a child if they or another person are in danger of harm.
- Ensure that you are never alone with a child where your activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open or two groups working in the same room.
- In a mixed group, where possible make sure there are both male and female workers.
- Avoid any physical activity, which is, or could be construed as, sexually stimulating to either yourself or the child.
- Keep all physical contact public e.g. a hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to constructively challenge and point out anything that could be misconstrued.
- Under no circumstances should physical punishment be used.

- No person under 18 years of age to be left in charge of children of any age or those attending the group being left unsupervised. Young people under 18 should not be included when considering staff/child ratios.
- Only workers assigned to the group being allowed to participate in the activity. Other adults should not be allowed free access.
- Make a note of other people in the building during the activity and any other events taking place at the same time.

### **Adult to Child Ratios**

In order to supervise children's activities safely it is necessary to have sufficient adult leaders and helpers.

Age 0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children
Age 2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children
Age 3+ years	1 adult to 8 children

### **Recording**

A register of children / young people attending the activity should be kept, together with a register of helpers. This should include a record of arrival and departure times if the participant does not attend the whole session. It is also good practice to keep parents/carers informed of the nature of activities.

Details of the child or young person's address, telephone number, parent or guardian plus medical and other details such as allergies or special dietary requirements should be maintained in case of any emergency.

Accidents and incidents must be recorded in a designated Accident and Incident book and kept in a secure place.

### **Additional Activities**

Where additional activities, trips or socials are organised for the children / young people the group leader should arrange adequate supervision. It is recommended that the group leader complies with the following guidelines:

1. A Risk Assessment is completed for each activity.
2. A Parent Consent Form is completed.

3. The group leader will take a Mobile Phone, and a Register of names, addresses and contact numbers of the children and young people.
4. When transporting children / young people workers should avoid being left alone in a car. If this is unavoidable the child should sit in the left back seat.
5. The driver should have held a full U.K driving licence for at least 3 years, and the vehicle must be adequately insured and the vehicle road worthy.
6. At dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that an appropriate adult collects them.

### **Unexpected attendance at activities**

Sometimes children, young people or vulnerable adults will want to join in with an organisation's activities without the knowledge of parents or carers e.g. children playing outside or wandering the streets with no adult supervision. In these circumstances it is important to:

- Welcome them but try to establish their name, age (children), address and telephone number. Record their visit in a register.
- Ask if a parent / carer is aware where they are, and what time they are expected home. If this is before the session ends, they should be encouraged to return home, unless the parent/carer can be contacted and they are happy with the arrangement. In the case of children in particular, suggest the child seeks the parent/carer's permission to return the following week.
- Link the visiting person with a regular attendee who can introduce them to the group and explain about the activity.
- On leaving, give the person a leaflet about the group with contact telephone numbers etc and perhaps a standard letter to the parent/carer inviting them to make contact.
- Without an interrogation, you will need to find out as soon as possible whether they have any special needs, (e.g. medication), so that you can respond appropriately in an emergency.

### 5.2 SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES FOR ON ONE-TO-ONE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE (UNDER 18YRS)

Most youth work will take place within a group setting, however there may be times when one to one work with a young person is necessary.

Working one to one with a young person can come out of a number of different situations:

- Taking time to listen as a young person shares an issue they are facing
- offering ongoing support and advice.
- A formal agreement involving a mentoring relationship between an adult and young person.
- The need to meet a young person who is facing a crisis in their life.
- Discipleship of a young person, including accountability, prayer, Bible study.

The following guidelines should apply:

- Be familiar with and have a working knowledge of this the LABC Safeguarding Policy.
- Never plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people.
- One-to-one times after main meetings should be '*public and appropriate*' and therefore should occur within the main meeting room, rather than in a side room.
- Whenever possible a young person should meet with a worker of the same sex.
- If it is necessary to work one-to-one off church premises, avoid meeting in a remote or secluded place. Arrange to meet in a public place such as a coffee shop at an appropriate time.
- The child, parent/carer and the leader in charge should know the reasons for the one to one contact and agree for it to take place.
- Inform the child, parent/carer and leader in charge about the time and place when you will be alone with a young person.
- Agree a time limit and keep to it.
- Know what to do in an emergency, how to contact the parent/carer and/or another worker.
- Keep your mobile phone switched on or ensure you have access to a phone or can summon help by calling out.
- Stop the session if you become aware that the child is distressed or uncomfortable with being alone with you.
- Make a written record of the meeting, (e.g. date & time, reason and what happened).

We need to find appropriate and safe ways of coming alongside young people in this way and ensure guidelines are in place to safeguard both the young person and the adult. These guidelines will be clearly communicated to members, workers and parents. Young people need to know that those working with them are dependable, reliable and available, while keeping within appropriate boundaries.

### **Home Visits**

Workers and leaders may need to make home visits from time to time. In these circumstances the worker should have some formal identification.

Guidelines for visiting:

- Inform the leader in charge or another worker of the proposed visit.
- In the case of children and young people, never go into a home if a parent or carer is absent unless the child would be at risk of significant harm if you do not do so.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
  - Purpose
  - Time you arrived and left
  - Who was present
  - What was discussed
- If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them.
- An invitation to a worker's home should only be extended with the knowledge of the team/leadership and the permission of the parent/carer. ("THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT" Standard 5 Working Safely Section 5:14)

### **Guidelines for Being Alone with Young People**

All workers should plan their work with children and young people in such a way that they will not normally be alone with children or young people where their activity cannot be seen by others.

This will mean:

- A worker should never plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people.

When there are insufficient leaders and workers to have two for each group, doors should be left open, or two groups should work in the same room. (Wherever possible all doors should be fitted with glass panels.)

- At least two people should be present before the doors are opened as children and young people arrive for a group and at least two adults should remain until the last child or young person has left the building or room at the end of a meeting.

## Safeguarding Policy

- A worker should never invite a child or young person to their home alone. It may be acceptable to invite a group if another adult is in the house. Establish that each parent/carer knows where their child is and at what time they should return home.

### **Unplanned Occasions when a worker is alone with Children or Young People**

There may be occasions when, despite careful planning, a worker finds himself or herself in a situation when they are in sole charge of children or young people in the context of a church activity. In these situations the worker should:

- Assess the risks involved in sending the child or children home against the risks and vulnerability of being alone with them

Wherever possible, immediately phone another appropriate person to report the situation. Workers should know who they should phone in such a situation. (Safeguarding Coordinator)

- Make a written report of the situation immediately afterwards and give a copy to the Designated Person for Safeguarding (Safeguarding Coordinator) (The report serves two functions. It helps to ensure appropriate accountability for situations where there is increased vulnerability and risk. It also allows for the monitoring of situations where workers are on their own with children and young people. If the same situation keeps recurring, working practices can be reviewed.)

There may be other situations when a child or young person asks to speak to a worker on their own. The most common situation is when a youth worker is offering support or pastoral guidance to a young person where privacy and confidentiality are important. The following guidelines should apply:

- If the worker believes that to speak to the young person on their own would place them in a vulnerable position (for example, because the young person has developed an inappropriate attachment to the worker) the worker should insist that another worker should also be present
- If it is possible for the conversation to be held in a quiet corner of the room where others are present, but where sufficient privacy can be assured, this option should be taken
- If this is not possible, the conversation is best held in a room with the door left open or where there is glass in the door so that others can see inside the room
- Another adult should be in the building and the young person should know that they are there
- Another adult should know that the meeting is taking place and with whom
- A worker should set an agreed time limit prior to the conversation and stick to it! It is the responsibility of the worker, as the adult involved, to set this ground rule and to end the session at the designated time. Make another appointed time to continue if necessary.

- A youth worker should not invite a child or young person to their home alone nor go to the child or young person's home if they are alone.

Children and young people will want to speak to the person they most trust when looking for help and support. It is therefore important that all workers are aware of these guidelines so that they are able to respond appropriately when the situation arises. However it should be recognised that these guidelines are specifically designed for workers to respond to requests made by children and young people. If it is felt to be appropriate for workers to be more proactive in working one to one with young people, the guidelines in the next section should be followed.

### **Recognition**

Although any youth or children's worker may find themselves in a situation where a child or young person wants to confide in them and a one to one conversation is appropriate there are some for whom it may be appropriate to work more regularly in one to one settings. Often this is more likely to feature as a component of the work of paid workers, but not exclusively so.

We recommend that any who works in this way in the church should:

- have proved their willingness to work within the policy and procedures of the church's Safeguarding Policy.
- have demonstrated their capacity to respect appropriate boundaries in their relationships with children and young people.
- be formally recognised as someone who has the trust of the church to engage in one to one working with young people.

All workers should be aware that they need the specific permission of the church to work one to one if this is to be a routine part of their interaction with children and young people.

### **Accountability**

A simple log sheet should be kept regarding who, where and when workers and young people have met. This gives opportunities for other workers to raise a concern about a particular worker's allegiance to a young person.

Written notes should be made following the meeting, recording the essence of the conversation, advice given or recommendations made and what was agreed. Notes should be securely stored and young people should be aware that they have a right to see any records kept about them.

### **Supervision**

Supervision of workers should be used to monitor the frequency of appointments as well as the content of meetings, ensuring a worker isn't 'getting in over their head', and a young person is not becoming too dependent on the worker.

### **Maintaining Distance**

Workers need to maintain a healthy self-awareness when working one to one. Phrases such as, "You're the only one who understands me," may be flattering but should ring alarm bells. Is there a possibility of drawing someone else in to

work alongside you or having a cooling off period of a few weeks whilst they reflect upon advice given to them?

Workers need to maintain a professional distance, and not be at the beck and call of the individual young person. Workers need to have adequate knowledge of where to refer a young person, if necessary. It is the worker's responsibility to know what to do with the information given to them and when to involve other agencies.

### **Confidentiality**

Appropriate confidentiality is necessary. When young people share personal information, they will need to know that the worker is not going to share that information with others in the church – particularly as the workers can be friends of the young person's parents. However, workers must understand that if they believe the young person they are talking to, or other young people, are at risk of harm then they have a responsibility to pass that information on. Great care should therefore be taken before promising confidentiality.

What is most important is that the young person knows what the boundaries of confidentiality are. There may be times when the worker believes that it would be helpful to talk to others about the matters that have been shared. In this situation, the worker should talk this through with the young person.

### **Venue**

Any contact with young people should be in a public place, at an appropriate time and in view of another adult (ie early morning, late night or whilst they should be at school is not appropriate). For example you could meet with a young person in a one to one situation

- At the end of a youth group event whilst others are clearing up
- During a youth group session, in a side room with the door open and others knowing that the meeting is taking place
- At a coffee shop after school.

One to one work can be an essential part of youth work, but there are risks involved with this type of working for both the young person and the youth worker. One to one work must be practised safely, appropriately and within agreed guidelines. Whatever age group we are working with, one to ones must not operate outside of the law.

A good resource for further thinking about one to one working is: *Can We Have a Chat? Working safely with young people one to one*, John Langford, Grove Publications, 2006. From the Baptist Union - Safe to Grow Guidelines

### 5.3 SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNICATION VIA TECHNOLOGY

#### 5.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Internet and other forms of technology have become an essential part of the lives of children and young people today. Therefore it is important that children and youth workers are conversant with these technologies and at the same time ensure that they are used appropriately and responsibly. This section sets out guidelines and procedures, which will help to protect young people and safeguard the integrity of workers.

#### 5.3.2 Reasons for contacting a young person via the internet or email

Workers should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to work with children and young people and not for building relationships or general socialising.

Parental agreement should be obtained. It is important to explain the policy and practice to parents and carers and to ensure that they are happy and aware of the type of electronic communication that will be used.

When using email to communicate with children and young people:

- Email should be used to communicate specific information (e.g. times and dates of events).
- Workers should use a shared email address and not individual addresses.
- Email history should be kept and dated.
- All language should be appropriate, and where possible, standard responses should be used. Workers should take great care over the language used to reduce misinterpretation.
- Whilst it is appropriate to offer general advice and support, counselling should only be done by those qualified to give it.

#### 5.3.3 Chat facilities / Messenger

The use of chat facilities (such as Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook) between workers and children and young people is not permitted.

#### 5.3.4 Skype & other visual methods

The use of Skype, facetime and other web camera or visual communication via the Internet is not permitted.

#### 5.3.5 Mobile Phones

It is not encouraged for workers to give out their personal mobile number to young people, but acknowledge that this may be needed at times. Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to the Safeguarding Co-ordinators. Many mobile phones have digital cameras. Workers should ensure that they only take photographs of children and young people in accordance with the LABC Safeguarding Policy and the Church GDPR policy.

### 5.3.6 Hours of communication

When using email / Internet and mobile phones for communication with young people it is advised that communication should not take place between the hours of 10.00pm and 8.00am.

### 5.3.7 Social networking (e.g. Facebook)

Volunteers/Workers should not add children and young people under the age of 18 to their personal social networking pages. Instead youth workers should use the specified LABC Youth account.

(Note that the current required minimum age limit for Facebook is 13).

## 5.4 WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding Children and adults with care and support needs. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse. We therefore have clear guidelines in regard to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding. Our commitment to safeguarding will be displayed publicly on notice boards in our church building.

### **MEMBER OR EMPLOYEE TRANSFER**

For employees and members transferring to another church we will inform of any safeguarding issues.

## Section 6. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

### Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Elders and deacons recognise the importance of its ministry / work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the Elders & Deacons on: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Limes Avenue Baptist Church is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.

### We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship / organisation affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by the Churches' safeguarding advisory service. ("THIRTY-ONE-EIGHT")

### We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

### **We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.**

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for Limes Avenue Baptist Church.