



BRINGING TRANSFORMATION

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

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The Well Community Church has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people they come into contact with. The need for guidelines and procedures is important to ensure that this is done with understanding and clarity. The Leadership & Trustees of The Well Community Church fully endorse and support the safeguarding policies for children, and adults at risk, that are implemented across the charity's projects and congregations.

The definition of a child for this policy is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

We uphold the legislation regarding children such as

- The Children Act 1989; and government guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023/2024 updates

As of April 2022 it is illegal (England and Wales) for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision. Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, has been broadened to include "sport" and "religion". This includes anyone who: 'coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs someone under 18, on a regular basis, in a sport or a religion'. [Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Safeguarding contact points within our church

The church has appointed the following individuals to form part of the church safeguarding team:

Sarah Plummer, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

They will advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Alison Murr, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

They will assist the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in helping the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Caroline Boxall, Safeguarding Trustee

They will raise the profile of safeguarding within the church and oversee and monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policy and procedures on behalf of the church trustees.

Email address: safeguarding@thewellcc.org.uk

Our church Leaders also have an important part of the Church Safeguarding Team. Where possible, the Church Safeguarding Team will work together if and when issues arise. However, each person has a responsibility to report allegations of abuse as soon as they are raised.

All staff and volunteers are made aware of this policy, and the process for reporting concerns, by issuing the policy at induction and having regular safeguarding training.

Putting our policy into practice

- A copy of the safeguarding policy statement will be displayed permanently on the church notice board and church office and is available on our church website.
- Each worker with children and/or adults at risk will have access to a copy of the safeguarding policy and procedures and will be asked to sign to confirm that they will follow them.
- A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any

member of, or other person associated with the church.

- The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually, and any necessary revisions adopted into the policy and implemented through our procedures.
- The policy statement will be read annually at the church AGM, together with a report on the outcome of the annual safeguarding review.

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1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

The Well Community Church is committed to keeping the welfare of any child or young person who is involved at any point of our services paramount, ensuring that they are valued, listened to and respected.

All children or young people, whatever their gender, disability, racial or ethnic background, religious beliefs or sexual orientation have a right to a safe and caring environment when participating in any activities run by The Well and to equal protection from any form of exploitation or abuse.

Everyone working or volunteering with us, including its trustees, employees and volunteers is responsible for ensuring all children are safe.

We consider anyone aged under 18 to be a child for the purposes of this child protection policy. This includes the children of adult members, or service users of (the Well Community Church).

We will promote the welfare of all children participating in our services by:

- Implementing a robust recruitment and selection process with new staff or volunteers.
- Identifying a designated lead person for each project for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and a clear referral process.
- Providing training for all who work with us so that they are clear about their responsibilities especially regarding safeguarding best practice.
- Ensuring that any concerns of possible abuse are referred appropriately and co-operating with the work of statutory agencies as necessary.
- Structuring our services to help children to protect themselves and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Identifying and implementing good practice in relation to the care, protection and welfare of children.
- Encouraging parents and carers to be involved with the programmes and develop a relationship with The Well Community Church which promotes their child's welfare.
- Providing a **Whistleblowing Policy** that allows for an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour.
- Developing a listening culture where children feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.

2: Roles and Responsibilities

The Well Community Church aims to establish clear roles and responsibilities for all its staff and volunteers and clarify what is expected from **everyone** in the organisation regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.

a) The Church Leadership and Designated Lead will provide:

- A Safeguarding policy for protecting children, and a procedure for what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare.
- A named person for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and step-by-step guidance on what action to take.
- A rigorous recruitment and selection process for paid staff and volunteers who work with children.
- A written code of behaviour that outlines good practice when working with children.
- A training plan and regular opportunities for all those in contact with children to learn about safeguarding and health and safety.
- A whistle-blowing policy that allows for an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice any concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour.
- Information for young people and for parents or carers about their safeguarding policy for protecting children, and where to go for help.
- A protective culture that puts children's interests first – children must feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.
- Guidance on taking children away on trips and on internet use: social networking policy, use of photographs and guidance on chatrooms, websites.
- Policies on bullying, cyberbullying and on health and safety.
- Policies and guidelines for those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored.
- Working practices when dealing with sex offenders in church.
- Pastoral support for those affected by abuse.

b) Children's Workers/Youth Leaders will ensure:

- All volunteers working with children and young adults are safely recruited, using DBS checks where appropriate. Enhanced DBS from other organisations will be accepted.
- All volunteers have completed an application form and applied for 2 references.

- Adults awaiting DBS checks or references are sensitively supervised, never left alone with a child or children and always have a safely recruited/DBS cleared member of the team in the room or toilet area with them.
- Volunteers receive induction training regarding policies and specific group practices before they start on rota.
- All volunteers complete Level 1 Safeguarding training as soon as possible and ongoing training is monitored. This may be training received from other organisations, from the Safeguarding Coordinator or update training sessions from Children/Youth Leader. Training should be recorded for each volunteer.
- Records of DBS dates, and training received by volunteers, are up to date.
- Adults are not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- Parents/carers are clear when responsibility for their child's care transfers from them to the children's worker and is returned to them at the end of the session.
- Parents of all children attending our groups complete a Registration and Consent Form giving contact details, outlining medical needs, any food allergies and giving consent, or denying permission for photographs to be taken.
- Parents can nominate other adults to collect their child if they are unable to collect them.
- Children with special needs are fully integrated and protected within the church community.
- The register for each session is kept up to date and includes adults and children present in session.
- Children's Workers/Youth Leaders attend further training regarding child protection.

c) Volunteer workers will always:

- Abide by the policies outlined in this policy, and by the specific guidelines of their groups individual working practices. The day-to-day practicalities will vary within different groups, but will never conflict with the core values and guidelines contained in this handbook.
- Attend regular safeguarding training. This may mean attending a course run by the Safeguarding Coordinator and/or periodic training from the Children's Worker or Youth Leader. If you have attended safeguarding training in other organisations then please inform your leader. This will assist us in tailoring training for you accordingly.
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watching their language, tone of voice, body language and non-verbal signals.
- Control and discipline children and young people without using physical punishment or derogatory names. The behaviour policy or code of conduct will be adhered to and promoted with the children/youth.

- Report any concerns to a leader on the team or to the leadership if necessary.

3. Definitions of harm - taken from Working Together Guidance 2023/2024

Abuse

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

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 a child 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 a 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 cyber bullying), 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.

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.

Neglect

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) • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment • provide suitable education It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

This is not an exhaustive list and it must be recognised that it is not the role of staff or volunteers to make an assessment of whether children or young people have suffered harm. Staff, volunteers and designated safeguarding leads do have a duty to report any concerns about harm in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Guidelines and Procedures.

4. Other forms of abuse

There is a brief overview at the end of this policy of other forms of abuse that can affect the children that come under our care and use our services. Having an awareness of these other types of abuse is useful, they are areas of abuse that are growing in significance as more cases come to light.

See Appendix 2: *Other forms of abuse for more information, along with contact numbers to get specific help and support.*

5. Recognition of harm

Recognising physical abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury;
- Several different explanations provided for an injury;
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment;
- The parents / carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury;
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment;
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a 'cry for help' and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury);

- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments;
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

All bruising in non-mobile children should be considered to be non-accidental and should be referred for an assessment.

Bite marks, scars and fractures are all indicators of concern.

Burns and scalds can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine);
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements;
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area;
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of its own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks);
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.
- Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Recognising emotional abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay;
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment;
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach;
- Aggressive behaviour towards others;
- Scapegoated within the family;
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in preschool children;
- Low self esteem and lack of confidence;
- Withdrawn or seen as a 'loner' - difficulty relating to others.

Recognising sexual abuse and exploitation

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and exploited and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and a full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child / family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional / behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexual conduct;
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age;
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation;
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts;
- Indiscriminate choice of sexual partners;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for - e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties);
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education;
- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area;
- Blood on underclothes;
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed;
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted infections, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing.

A child under 13 years is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child aged under 13 years is very serious and should be taken to indicate that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm. Cases involving children under 13 years old will always be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, penetrative sex with a child under 13 years old is classed as rape. Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm. There should be a presumption that the case will be reported to Children's Services/MASH.

Sexual activity with a child aged **under 16 years** is also an offence. Where it is consensual it may be less serious than if the child were aged under 13 years but may, nevertheless, have serious consequences for the welfare of the young person. Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13-15 as to whether there should be a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to Children's Services/MASH.

Sexual activity involving a **16 or 17 year old**, even if it does not involve an offence, may still involve harm or the likelihood of harm being suffered. It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.

Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care;
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause;
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss;
- Child thrives away from home environment;
- Child frequently absent from school;
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent;
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods.

The harm or possible harm of a child may come to the church's attention in a number of possible ways:

- Information given by the child, his/ her friends, a family member or close associate.
- The child's behaviour may become different from the usual, be significantly different from the behaviour of their peers, be bizarre or unusual or may involve 'acting out' a harmful situation in play.
- An injury which arouses suspicion because:
 - It does not make sense when compared with the explanation given.
 - The explanations differ depending on who is giving them (e.g., differing explanations from the parent / carer and child).
 - The child appears anxious and evasive when asked about the injury.
- Suspicion being raised when a number of factors occur over time, for example, the child fails to progress and thrive in contrast to his/her peers.
- Contact with individuals who pose a 'risk to children' ('Guidance on Offences Against Children', Home Office Circular 16/2005). This replaces the term 'Schedule One Offender' and relates to an individual that that has been identified as presenting a risk or potential risk of harm to children.
- The parent's behaviour before the birth of a child may indicate the likelihood of significant harm to an unborn child, for example substance misuse, or previous children removed from their carers.

6. Acting on concerns – recording what you see, or are told by a child

If a member of staff or a volunteer has minor concerns about a child's welfare, they should record this on the Safeguarding Incident Report form and inform the Lead Children's Worker. (Appendix 4)

There will be children who are not suffering from significant risk of harm or abuse, perhaps you notice small one-off concerns, but over time it might be that a pattern of small concerns become a worry. Those children who are in need of extra support and care can be helped through support offered to parents who may be struggling with a wide range of issues. Poor parenting can come from many pressures on families, and with the help of universal services in the area, go on to improve and provide a good home for their family. Tracking concerns will monitor this. However, if there is no improvement due to the parent not engaging, and a child continues to struggle and not thrive then this will need to be recorded more formally and referred to Children's Services.

See Appendix 4: Safeguarding Incident Form

No professional, staff or volunteer should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe.

Managing a disclosure

If a child tells you they are suffering from abuse, then you will need to manage that disclosure sensitively and record what you were told ready to refer to the police or children's services as needed. Remember to record what the child told you in their own words, stay as close to what you were told without adding your opinions.

- Listen to what the child has to say with an open mind.
- Do not ask probing or leading questions designed to get the child to reveal more.
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, as well as what was said.
- Do not ask children to write a statement.
- Never promise the child that what they have told you can be kept secret. Explain that you have a responsibility to report what the child has said to someone else.
- The designated lead for child protection in your church or project must be informed immediately, and/or a member of the leadership team.
- 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.

7. Referring or reporting concerns about a child

If any member of the team believes a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, then they should record the information on a **Safeguarding Incident Report Form** and share the information with the DSL or if not available, the local authority children's services (Working Together 2023).

See appendix 4 Safeguarding Incident Report Form

The designated safeguarding lead who will act on behalf of The Well Church in referring concerns or allegations of harm to:

Southwark Child protection referral and assessment team

0207 525 1921 Office hours

Out of office hours 0207 525 5000

Email MASH@ Southwark.gov.uk

We commit to ensure that any significant concern will be passed on to the appropriate agency, such as the police or Children's Services.

Urgent referrals relating to Child Protection

If anyone at The Well Community Church believes that urgent action is needed because, for example, a child is in immediate danger please call children's services or 999 if necessary.

It is not the role of the designated safeguarding person to undertake an investigation into the concerns or allegation of harm. It is the role of the designated safeguarding person to collate and clarify details of the concern or allegation and to provide this information to our local children's services whose duty it is to make enquiries in accordance with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

If there are situations where the nominated people are not available to take the concern to the relevant agencies, then every member of the public has a duty to report a concern, so please feel free to contact Children's Services or the Police directly.

Seeking Medical Attention

If a child has a physical injury and there are concerns about abuse:

If medical attention is required then this should be sought immediately by phoning for an ambulance, attending the Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit depending on the severity of the injury. You should then follow the procedures for referring a child protection concern to Children's Services as before. Any safeguarding concerns should be shared with the Ambulance staff/ Medical and Nursing staff in order that they can appropriately assess and treat the child and share relevant information.

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 Designated Safeguarding Person/Deputy will contact Children's Services as before but will not tell the parents or carers unless Children's Services have advised the church to do so.

Allegations of sexual abuse

If there are concerns regarding sexual abuse or a disclosure from a child regarding sexual abuse, then the Designated Safeguarding Person/Deputy will immediately contact the police or children's services. This must not be shared with the parent/carer and the professional agencies will take over this process.

If there is concern about an adult also suffering from abuse in the situation you are dealing with for the child, then the Designated Safeguarding Person/Deputy must be informed and if necessary, will contact Southwark Council Adult Safeguarding Services

To report a concern about an adult with care and support needs who is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, contact Southwark Adult Social Care. There are a number of ways you can do this:

- for adults with a physical or sensory disability and older people (65 years and above):
 - Email: OPPDContactteam@southwark.gov.uk
 - Phone: 020 7525 3324
- for adults (aged 18 to 65) with a mental illness:
 - Email: MHContact@southwark.gov.uk
 - Phone: 020 7525 0088
- for adults with a learning disability:
 - Email: LearningDisabilitiesDuty@southwark.gov.uk
 - Phone: 020 7525 2333

The procedures remain the same for recording and reporting: a record must be made of the concerns seen, or of the disclosure of abuse recorded. A call must be made to the Adult Safeguarding Team, or the emergency services if they need medical attention or a crime has been committed.

Please refer to our Safeguarding Adults Policy for further information under the Care Act 2014. This also includes the many different forms of abuse adults face such as domestic violence, financial abuse, hate crime and institutional abuse, and others.

Consent (See appendix 1: 7 golden rules on information sharing)

Professionals should seek to discuss any concerns with the family (including the child where appropriate) and where possible seek their agreement to making referrals. This should only be done where such discussion and agreement seeking will not place the child at an increased risk of significant harm.

It should be noted that parents, carers or children may not agree to information being shared, but this should not prevent referrals where child protection concerns persist. The reasons for dispensing with consent from the parents; carer or child should be clearly recorded.

In cases where an allegation has been made against a family member living in the same household as the child and it is your view that discussing the matter with the parent would place the child at risk of harm, or where discussing it may place a member of staff / volunteer at risk, consent does not have to be sought prior to the referral being made.

8. Recruitment and selection

It is important when recruiting paid staff and volunteers to adhere to |The Well Community church safer recruitment policy. This will ensure potential staff and volunteers are screened for their suitability to work with children and young people.

The Well Community Church recognises its staff and volunteers being essential to its success. As well as appointing staff and volunteers with the right skills and attributes to fulfil our strategic aims and values, we also provide a robust recruitment and selection process to ensure all who are appointed are safely recruited to work with both vulnerable adults and children.

We work with the standards and processes outlined by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

A person who is barred from working with children or adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer or try to work or volunteer with those groups.

The Well Community Church understands they should never knowingly employ someone who is barred to work with these groups as they would be breaking the law. If there is an incident where a member of staff or volunteer has to be dismissed because they have harmed a child or adult, or would have been if they had not left, The Well Community

Church will notify the DBS. Our full recruitment and selection process is available on request and is covered in safer recruitment training.

Recruiting ex-offenders

We do not discriminate against those who have other criminal offences that do not bar them from working with children. We will always assess the risk in any situation and look to place those that have previous convictions or cautions in roles that best suit them.

9: Code of Practice/Behaviour Code

The Well Community church issues a code of conduct to all staff and volunteers during their induction period outlining expectations of conduct during their time serving or ministering. The code of conduct we adhere to is at **Appendix 7**

10. Managing offenders who pose a risk

For those that do pose a risk to children or adults through convictions that include sexual or violent crimes, the Well Community Church will work with all agencies and the advice given either by police or probation, or Multi Agency Public Protection Agency advice (MAPPA). Each offender will be discussed with the Hub and safeguarding teams to confirm how their attendance at church will be managed. This might involve having an escort, restrictions on movement around the building along with further assessments made for other events such as a Church BBQ's or home groups.

11. Allegations against staff members / volunteers

If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the group or organisation including:

- Behaving in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children the nature of the allegation or concern should be reported to the Designated Officer for dealing with allegations within the organisation immediately.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The member of staff who has a concern about a team member, or to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further.

The Designated Safeguarding Person for The Well Community Church will report the matter to the Designated Officer within Children's Services at the Local Authority.

The Southwark [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) can be contacted on:

- 0207 525 0689 (LADO)

The Well Community Church will always report any member of staff or volunteer they have concerns about to the appropriate authorities depending on the seriousness of the situation. We will take all advice offered to us and co-operate fully.

Appendix 1: Seven Golden rules of information sharing

In May 2024, the government published revised practice guidance “*Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers*”. Below are the 7 golden rules of information sharing that this guidance recommends in line with the new data protection laws.

1 All children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect. Protecting a child from such harm takes priority over protecting their privacy, or the privacy rights of the person(s) failing to protect them. The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) provide a framework¹ to support information sharing where practitioners have reason to believe failure to share information may result in the child being at risk of harm.

2 When you have a safeguarding concern, wherever it is practicable and safe to do so, engage with the child² and/or their carer(s), and explain who you intend to share information with, what information you will be sharing and why. You are not required to inform them, if you have reason to believe that doing so may put the child at increased risk of harm (e.g., because their carer(s) may harm the child, or react violently to anyone seeking to intervene, or because the child might withhold information or withdraw from services).

3. You do not need consent to share personal information about a child and/or members of their family if a child is at risk or there is a perceived risk of harm. You need a lawful basis³ to share information under data protection law, but when you intend to share information as part of action to safeguard a child at possible risk of harm⁴, consent may not be an appropriate basis for sharing. It is good practice to ensure transparency about your decisions and seek to work cooperatively with a child and their carer(s) wherever possible. This means you should consider any objection the child or their carers may have to proposed information sharing, but you should consider overriding their objections if you believe sharing the information is necessary to protect the child from harm.

4. Seek advice promptly whenever you are uncertain or do not fully understand how the legal framework supports information sharing in a particular case. Do not leave a child at risk of harm because you have concerns you might be criticised for sharing information. Instead, find out who in your organisation/agency can provide advice about what information to share and with whom. This may be your manager/supervisor, the designated safeguarding children professional, the data protection/information governance lead (e.g., Data Protection Officer⁵), Caldicott Guardian, or relevant policy or legal team. If you work for a small charity or voluntary organisation, follow the NSPCC's safeguarding guidance.

5. When sharing information, ensure you and the person or agency/organisation that receives the information take steps to protect the identities of any individuals (e.g., the child, a carer, a neighbour, or a colleague) who might suffer harm if their details became known to an abuser or one of their associates.

6. Only share relevant and accurate information with individuals or agencies/organisations that have a role in safeguarding the child and/or providing their family with support, and only share the information they need to support the provision of their services. Sharing information with a third party rarely requires you to share an entire record or case-file – you must only share information that is necessary, proportionate for the intended purpose, relevant, adequate and accurate.

7. Record the reasons for your information sharing decision, irrespective of whether or not you decide to share information. When another practitioner or organisation requests information from you, and you decide not to share it, be prepared to explain why you chose not to do so. Be willing to reconsider your decision if the requestor shares new information that might cause you to regard information you hold in a new light. When recording any decision, clearly set out the rationale and be prepared to explain your reasons if you are asked.

Appendix 2: Other forms of abuse

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021²³⁶ introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse (section 1 of the Act). The statutory definition is clear that domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct which can encompass a wide range of abusive behaviours, including a) physical or sexual abuse; b) violent or threatening behaviour; c) controlling or coercive behaviour; d) economic abuse; and e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.

Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be “personally connected” (as defined in section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021). The definition ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.

All children can experience and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members, including where those being abusive do not live with the child. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (0 to 18), as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as teenage relationship abuse. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of domestic abuse (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

The ‘Domestic Abuse Act 2021: statutory guidance’ provides further advice for frontline professionals who have responsibility for safeguarding and supporting victims of domestic abuse, including children. This guidance provides further information about the different forms of domestic abuse (including teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse) and the impact of domestic abuse on children.

Forced Marriage

Children from some communities in the UK are still being forced into marriage at a very young age and those of any age, especially those without mental capacity to make a choice. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. This includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry

(whether or not the forced marriage takes place); marrying someone who lacks mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured or not); Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order. Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

Honour Based Abuse

Honour based abuse is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.

It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, honour based violence might be committed against people who:

become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion; want to get out of an arranged marriage; want to get out of a forced marriage; wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based abuse however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

- domestic abuse
- threats of violence
- sexual or psychological abuse
- forced marriage
- being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go
- assault

(Safe.Met.Police.UK)

Honour based abuse will commonly start when children try to live and fit in a more westernised culture, starting relationships which causes shame and distress to the family. Take any concerns a person may have about their safety seriously and seek professional help immediately. Do not try to resolve this in anyway yourself.

Female Genital Mutilation

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to: practice FGM in the UK; take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM, whether or not it is lawful in the country of destination; aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.

If you are concerned a child may be taken abroad for FGM, or that it may have already occurred please contact support helplines in Appendix 5.

Child Criminal Exploitation

As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy²³⁰, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child sexual exploitation - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) 230 Serious Violence Strategy 155 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

County Lines

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

Children and young people may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime (see below). County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.

Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs (National Crime agency, 2018). Young people do the majority of the work and take the most risk.

Dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines” are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police. Gangs use the phones to receive orders and contact young people to instruct them where to deliver drugs. This may be to a local dealer or drug user, or a dealer or drug user in another county.

Once a child is part of a county lines gang their loyalty and commitment will be tested. The gang will begin to trap the child by making them feel powerless to leave. This might include threats of violence if they leave, making the child feel like they are betraying their new

'family', or telling the child they will get in trouble if they seek help because they have committed a criminal offence (Children's Society, 2019).

For more information on these and other related abuses go to the NSPCC website link below

[Protecting children from county lines | NSPCC Learning](#)

Trafficking

Human trafficking is essentially the recruitment, movement or receipt of a person by deception or coercion into a situation of exploitation, this may include:

- prostitution (or other forms of sexual exploitation)
- forced labour
- slavery
- servitude, or
- the removal of organs¹.

[Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence involves the exploitation of susceptible people who are drawn into violent extremism by radicalisers. Violent extremists often use a persuasive rationale and charismatic individuals to attract people to their cause. The aim is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. The Prevent Strategy, launched in 2007, seeks to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is the preventative strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

[Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[CONTEST 2023 leaflet \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

¹

APPENDIX 3 – DETAILED GUIDANCE ON REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

STAGE 1 – THE WORKER

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk is to RECOGNISE the concerns, make a RECORD in writing and RESPOND by passing on their concerns to the DSL. If he/she is not contactable, or they are implicated in the situation, another member of the church Safeguarding Team should be contacted instead.

Concerns should be passed on to the DSL within 24 hours of it being raised. If anyone is considered to be in imminent danger of harm, a report should be made immediately to the police by calling 999. If such a report is made without reference to the DSL, they should be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

A written record using the standard incident report form should be made as soon as possible after a child or adult at risk tells you about harmful behaviour, or an incident takes place that gives cause for concern.

The record should:

- be hand-written as soon as possible after the event
- be legible and state the facts accurately (when hand-written notes are typed up later the original hand-written notes should be retained)
- include the child or adult at risk's name, address, date of birth (or age if the date of birth is not known)
- include the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure
- include a description of any bruising or other injuries that you may have noticed
- include an exact record of what the child or adult at risk has said, using their own words where possible
- include what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported
- include any action taken as a result of the concerns
- be signed and dated
- be kept secure and confidential and made available only to the church Safeguarding Team (including the church minister), representatives of any statutory authorities involved and the local Baptist association.

If concerns arise in the context of children's or adult at risk work, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk it through with their group leader, where appropriate. However, such conversations should not delay concerns being passed on to the DSL. It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and pass on their concerns to the DSL.

If an issue concerns an adult at risk who does not give permission to pass on the information to anyone else, the worker should explain that they will need to speak with the DSL, who will have greater expertise in dealing with the issue at hand.

If a concern is brought to the attention of a group leader by one of the workers, the leader should remind the worker of their duty to record and report, and will also themselves have a duty to pass on the concern to the DSL.

STAGE 2 – THE DESIGNATED PERSON FOR SAFEGUARDING (DSL)

The duty of the DSL on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that they have received and REPORT the concern on to the appropriate people, where necessary.

The duty to REVIEW

In reviewing the report that is received, the DSL:

- should take into account their level of experience and expertise in assessing risk to children or adults at risk.
- must take into account any other reports that have been received concerning the same individual or family.
- may speak with others in the church where appropriate (including the Minister and church Safeguarding Team, unless allegations involve them) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision being made. Such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.
- may consult with other agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

The duty to REPORT

The DSL will decide who the report should be referred on to, working in conjunction with the church Safeguarding Team where appropriate. They may:

- refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child or adult at risk is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation.
- refer the concern to others who work with the child or adult at risk in question, asking for continued observation where appropriate.
- Inform parents / carers under certain circumstances, where doing so would not present any further risk of harm.
- Make a formal referral to the police or local Social Services team. With adults at risk, confidentiality means that someone's personal business is not discussed with others, except with their permission. This is not always possible when considering passing relevant information about abuse or concerns to the statutory authorities, however, it is possible to keep the information confidential to the relevant parties. This means not telling or hinting to others what has been disclosed, not even for prayer ministry purposes. For adults at risk, concerns will only be referred to the police or Social Services without consent where:
 - the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice
 - there is a risk of harm to others
 - in order to prevent a crime
- If an allegation is made against someone who works with children* the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or equivalent. The LADO is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

- If an allegation is made against someone who works with adults at risk*, it should be reported to the police or Adult Social Services.

**If a worker has an allegation made against them, they should step down from all church duties until the incident has been investigated by the statutory authorities. It may also be appropriate to put a Safeguarding Contract in place; this should be discussed with the local Regional Safeguarding Lead.*

- Whenever a formal referral is made to the police, Social Services or LADO, the DSL should report the referral to:
 - The Safeguarding Trustee
 - The Leaders or the Church

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy. All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the DSL and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

STAGE 3 – THE NEXT STEPS

Responsibilities to **REPORT** and **SUPPORT** in stage 3 of the process are shared by the church Safeguarding Team and the Minister.

The duty to SUPPORT

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected, including:

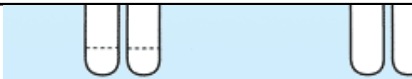
Victims; Alleged perpetrators; Children; Adults at risk; Other family members; Church workers; Church Safeguarding Team; Minister; Leadership Team.

The duty to REPORT

If a church worker has been accused of causing harm to children, young people or adults at risk this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission by those churches that are registered with the Charity Commission.

If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post because of the risk of harm that they pose to children, young people or adults at risk, there is also a statutory duty to report the incident to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Appendix 4: Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Details of Child and their parent/carer		
Name of child:		
Gender:	Age:	Date of birth:
Parent/carer name(s):		
Home address		
Contact numbers:		
Your details:		
Your name:	Your role:	
Report:		
Date and time of incident:		
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?		
Responding to my own concerns <input type="checkbox"/>		
Responding to concerns raised by someone else <input type="checkbox"/>		
If responding to someone else's concerns please give their details:		
Name:		
Role in church:		
Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates or other relevant information (describe any injuries)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember to include the 4 W's – Who, What, Where, When. Be clear whether this is something you have been told about or something that you have observed directly. Include names of anyone else who witnessed the incident or is aware of the concern. Refer to the church safeguarding policy if you are unsure what to include. 		
(please continue on additional paper if necessary)		
Please use the body map to indicate the location of an injury if appropriate.		
Childs Name		
The child's account of what happened and how (please use their words)		

Please provide details of the person alleged to have caused the incident/injury:
Please provide details of any witnesses to the incident:

<p>HAVE YOU CONTACTED ANYONE ELSE (SOCIAL SERVICES, POLICE, LADO, REGIONAL SAFEGUARDING LEAD, MINISTER)?</p> <p>Please give details of who and when below:</p> <p>Organisation: _____</p> <p>Name of contact: _____</p> <p>Date of contact: _____</p>
--

This Incident Form should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within 24 hours of any incident or concern arising. Do not delay reporting your concerns to the DSL because you do not have all the information requested in this form. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, please call the DSL straight away and use this form to follow up on that call. Remember if they are not available call the police or social services, do not wait for the DSL to be available.

Remember: Treat this information confidentially. Do not discuss the contents of this form with anyone other than the DSL, not even for prayer purposes.

Signed

Date

Appendix 5:

Safeguarding Incident Report Form for follow up by Designated Safeguarding Lead

<p>Have you spoken to the parents?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>If yes, please provide details of what was said:</p>	
<p>Have you spoken to the child?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>If yes, please provide details of what was said:</p>	
<p>Have you spoken to the person against whom the allegations are being made?</p> <p>Yes</p> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If yes, please provide details of what was said:</p>	
<p>Further action taken to date:</p>		
<p>What other agencies are you aware of that are involved with the family, and have you contacted any of them? E.g. school, GP, Health visitor, preschool etc.</p>		
<p>Have you informed the statutory authorities?</p> <p>Children’s Social Care:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please provide name and number of person contacted: <input type="checkbox"/> No <p>Police:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please provide name and number of person contacted: <input type="checkbox"/> No		
<p>Data protection As the person completing this form, you must notify each person whose information you include about what will happen to their information and how it may be disclosed except to the extent that doing so would prejudice either the prevention or detection of a crime or the apprehension or prosecution of an offender</p>		
<p>Signature</p>		
<p>Your signature</p>	<p>Date</p>	<p>Time</p>

APPENDIX 6 - Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Each church needs to identify and fill several important posts that underpin effective safeguarding in the church. These notes outline the main responsibilities relating to safeguarding connected with key leadership roles.

Trustees

- Ultimately responsible for safeguarding
- Responsible for the implementation of policy and procedures
- Responsible for supporting the church workers
- Responsible for raising awareness about best practice within the church
- Responsible for ensuring that the relevant people have received the appropriate training

Safeguarding Trustee

Not necessarily the person who heads up safeguarding in the church – could be a trustee with an interest and willingness to learn.

- Takes a lead on safeguarding matters for the trustees.
- Is the point of contact with trustees for safeguarding issues
- Ensures church policy and procedures are reviewed annually

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Receives all reports of concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- Listens, observes and passes on those concerns appropriately, having taken advice from the relevant people
- Acts as a link between the church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding matters

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Verifier

- Responsible for all aspects of processing DBS checks for church staff and volunteers (with the exception of the accredited minister who is checked by the regional association)

The Church leaders

- Shares with the trustees the general responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the church's safeguarding policy
- Takes responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral needs of all are being met
- May need to be made aware of safeguarding issues in line with the guidance

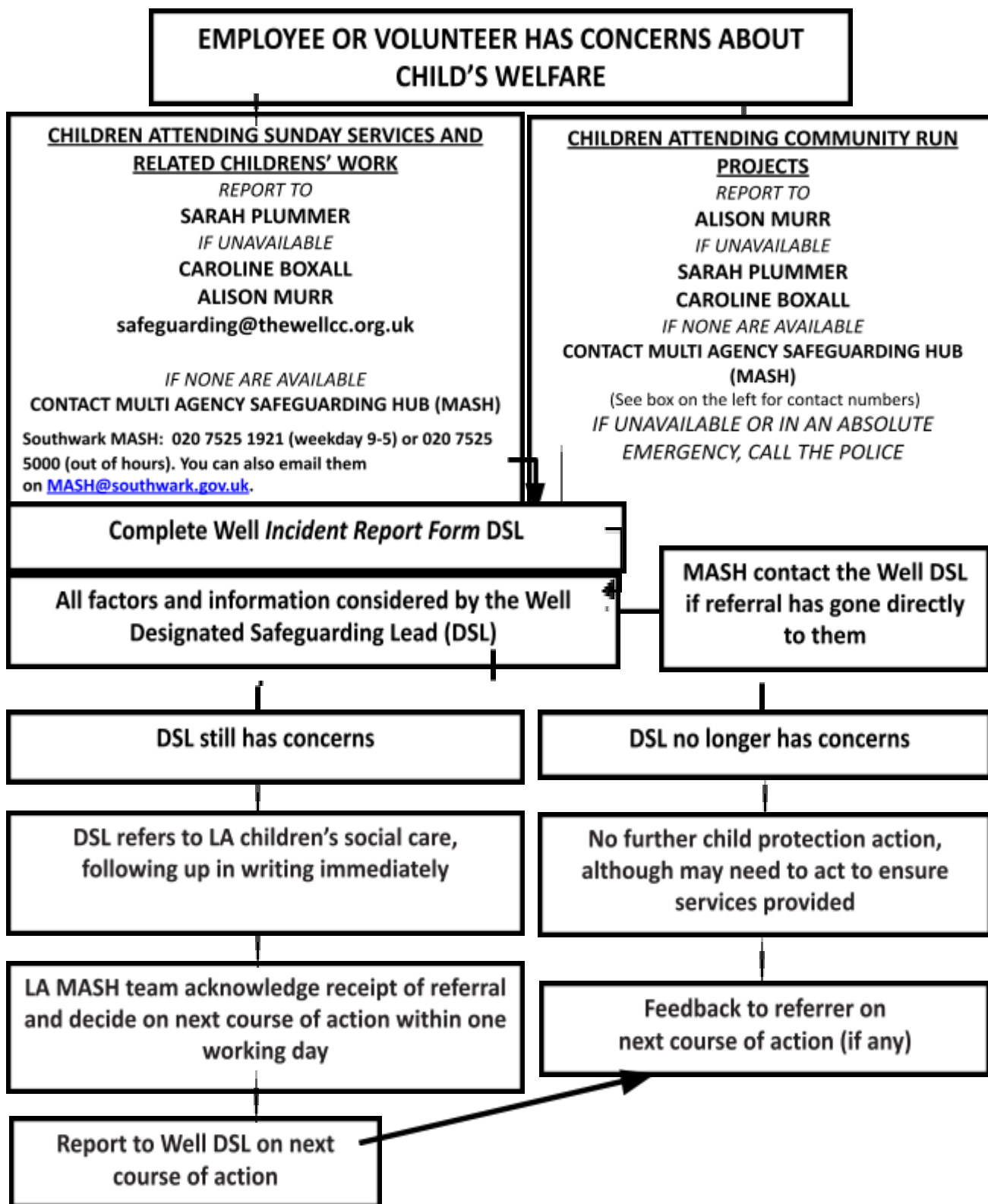
Appendix 7: Useful contact numbers and websites

Organisation	Tel	Website/ Email	Notes
Childline	0800 1111	www.childline.org.uk	24 hour line for children and young people to talk about things worrying them
NSPCC – Child Protection helpline	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk	24 hour line for adults worried about the safety of a child
Thirtyone:eight	0303 003 1111	thirtyoneeight.org	Offers help, information and advice to churches and other faith organisations.

Type of Abuse	Organisation	Number	Email/ Website	Notes
Domestic Violence	Women’s Aid	0808 2000 247	Womensaid.org.uk	24 hour National DV helpline
Forced marriage and HBV	Forced Marriage Unit	020 7008 0151	Safe.met.police.uk fmufmu@fcdo.gov.uk	Website has links to other support organisations
Female Genital Mutilation	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	0207 008 1500	fgm@fco.gov.uk	If you are concerned that a British citizen may be taken overseas for the purpose of FGM
Female Genital Mutilation	NSPCC FGM helpline	0800 028 3550	fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk	
Female Genital Mutilation	Forward	07834168141	www.forwarduk.org.uk	Provide support, counselling and safe space for girls and women to talk about their FMG experiences.
Human Trafficking	NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk	Monday – Friday 09:30am -4:30pm
Human Trafficking	Salvation Army Trafficking helpline	0800 813 3733	www.salvationarmy.org.uk/r/escue	24 hour/ 7 days a week. Call this number if you suspect someone is a victim of Human Trafficking.
Human Trafficking	NRM – National Referral Mechanism for Human Trafficking		www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk	National Crime Agency gives more details on their website of referral agencies that can be used to support those affected by Human Trafficking

APPENDIX 8

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD



In circumstances where a child has an unexplained or suspicious injury that requires urgent medical attention, the referral process should not delay the administration of first aid or emergency medical assistance.

If a child is thought to be at immediate risk of serious harm, urgent Police intervention should be requested.

Referrals to MASH will usually be made by the The Well Community Church DSL. If referrals are made to MASH, the local authority is expected to make a decision within one working day of the referral being made. The DSL will follow up the outcome if information is not forthcoming.



**THE
WELL**

BRINGING TRANSFORMATION

APPENDIX 9: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

**The Well Church
Wells Way
Camberwell
SE5 7SY**

admin@thewellcc.org.uk

DRAFTED BY:	Sarah Plummer	DATE:	August 2024
TRUSTEE APPROVAL:		ISSUE:	v1
REVIEW DATE:	August 2027	STATUS:	Required

The Well Community Church Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct for working with children

SAFER BEHAVIOUR

The church has a code of behaviour for all those working with children and/or adults at risk so that everyone is shown the respect that is due to them:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Think about the language and tone of voice that you are using when engaging with children, young people and adults at risk. Be aware of your body language and the effect you are having on those you are working with. This applies to both in person and online interactions.
- Listen well to everyone. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or adult at risk is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is being spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the individual's body language to better understand what is being said.
- Be aware of any physical contact you may have with a child or adult at risk and record it when necessary. For instance, if you need to stop a fight, administer First Aid, give a hug to someone in distress, or protect yourself or others from danger.
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or adult at risk, even in 'fun'.
- Do not scapegoat, belittle, ridicule or reject a child or adult at risk.
- Keep a record of any significant incidents or concerns on a Safeguarding Incident Form). Enter the names of all those present and anything of note which you observe, e.g. details of any fights broken up by the workers, allegations made, etc. All workers who witnessed the incident, overheard it or responded in any way should record the details and sign and date the form.

Specific considerations when working with children:

- Do not invade the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or showering.
- The level of assistance with personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Avoid rough games involving physical contact between a worker and a child.
- Avoid sexually provocative games.
- When it is necessary to discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment. There may, however, on the rare occasion be circumstances where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.
- Only invite children and young people to your home or on trips in groups IF there is another worker who has been safely recruited to work with the children present.
- Notify the Safeguarding lead of any children's trips which take place in the name of the church. Parental permission must always be sought.

No one should normally be left working alone with children, young people or adults at risk, but should instead work as part of a team. If there are insufficient leaders for groups:

- Internal doors should be left open.
- At least two people should be present before external doors are opened for an event.
- Consider whether you could combine groups together or rearrange planned activities.
- Reconsider whether you can run the group safely, carrying out a Risk Assessment to record your findings.

If workers do find themselves on their own with children or adults at risk, they should:

- Assess the risk of sending the child or adult at risk home.
- Phone another team member and let them know the situation.
- Train additional leaders as soon as possible.

If a child or adult at risk wants to talk on a one-to-one basis you should make sure that:

- You try to hold the conversation in a corner of a room where other people are present.
- You leave the door open if you are in a room on your own.
- Another team member knows where you are.
- You do not promise confidentiality.

Consideration should be given to how many workers should be involved with a group and whether they should be male or female workers, or both. See section 1 for recommended ratios. A couple or immediate family members should be considered to count as only one person when planning events or activities and the distribution of workers through different groups; for example if a couple or immediate family members want to work together then a third person will need to be assigned to that group. Wherever possible couples or people who are related to each other should work with separate groups.

The only adults allowed to participate in children's and adult at risk activities are those safely appointed and appropriately trained. The leader of the activity should be aware of any other adults who are in the building whilst the activity is running.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The church is in an amazing position in society, with the opportunity to minister to individuals from the whole community, from the very young to the very old. These best practice guidelines are in place to help those working on behalf of the church to do it well, prioritising the safety and well-being of those they are working with. Whilst this section is divided into adults and children, some aspects of good practice will overlap.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Section 1: Ratios

When working with children the following recommended minimum ratios of workers to children apply:

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	1:4 (minimum 2)
4 – 7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
8 – 12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

This does not take into account special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability and so on, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratios. In calculating the ratios of workers to children, young helpers who are under the age of 18 should be

counted as one of the children, not one of the workers. These ratios will be adjusted on trips according to need.

Children with Additional Support Needs

Children and young people who have additional support needs can be at greater risk of abuse. They could require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility, etc. Some children may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age-appropriate way. Please speak with the parents/carers of children/young people with additional support needs and find out from them how best to assist the child or young person. Older children will have their own views of how they can be best supported.

Visiting Children or Young People at Home

It is unlikely that workers will need to make pastoral visits to children and their families at home on behalf of the church. If a situation occurs where it is needed then it should be done in pairs, and with the prior agreement of a Church leader. A married couple would normally count as one person.

Section 2: Physical Contact

- Keep everything public. A hug within a group context is very different from one behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the workers.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Workers should avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure their personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances such as when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream, etc), workers should encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- If a team member is unsure about whether the actions of another volunteer or worker constitutes a concern, they should raise this with the Designated Lead for Safeguarding.

Whilst this section relates specifically to physical contact with children the same consideration should be given to interactions with adults in the church, especially those who might be considered Adults at Risk. Not everyone is comfortable with physical contact such as a hug and all those working and volunteering in the church should be mindful of this.

Section 3: Digital Communication with Young People

Safe Communication

Volunteers and staff should primarily only be communicating with children and young people through contact with parents/carers.

Young people also need to be aware of the protocols that workers follow in relation to electronic communications. It is important to remember that as well as the parent/carer, young people have a right to decide whether they want a worker to have their contact details and should not be pressured otherwise.

Email

Email should be limited to sharing generic information, for example, to remind parents/carers about meetings. If email is being used, workers will ensure that they are accountable by copying each message to a designated email address. It is important that workers use clear and unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation, for example, avoiding inappropriate terms such as 'love' when ending an email.

Communicating using Instant Messaging (e.g. Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram)

Instant messaging should be kept to an absolute minimum and used only to communicate with parents/carers. Workers should save significant conversations and keep a log stating with whom and when they communicated. Instant messaging should not be the primary means of communication between workers and those they are supporting.

Mobile Phones

Workers need to be cautious and careful in using mobile phones to communicate with young people:

- Mobile phone use should primarily be for the purposes of information sharing in exceptional circumstances.
- Workers should keep a log of significant conversations/texts.
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be passed on to the worker's supervisor.
- Workers should use clear language and should not use abbreviations like 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love'.
- Workers should not take photos of children, young people or adults at risk unless permission is sought in advance and should not store such photos on personal phones.
- Where the youth and children's work is primarily delivered by volunteers the church should consider having a central mobile phone used for communication. This should be held centrally and not by one individual.

Social Media

- Workers should have social media accounts that are used solely for children's / youth work communications and are totally separate from their own personal accounts. This is to

ensure that all communication with children and young people is kept within the public domain.

- Workers should not send private messages to children on social media. Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Workers should not accept 'friend' or 'following' requests from children on their personal accounts, nor seek to be 'friends' or a 'follower' of any child known to them in a church context.

Section 4: Taking Videos and Photographs of Children

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches must be very careful if they use still or moving images of clearly identifiable people. Previous legislation was reinforced through the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018. There are several issues to be aware of:

- Permission must be obtained, via the consent form, of all children who will appear in a photograph or video before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- It must be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this is regarded as a public area and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details, including email, postal address or telephone number.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.

Consideration of safeguarding when live streaming church services and events

When a service or event is being live streamed or recorded to be shared online at a later date we will ensure people are aware that they are being recorded and appropriate consent will be sought from those who participate in the service, or who may be visible to the camera.

Where children and young people are participating in services or events, we will ensure that appropriate parent or guardian consent is in place. Where children and young people are unable to be shown on camera consideration will be given to how else they can participate in the service.

Section 5: Transport

These guidelines apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children, young people and adults at risk on behalf of the church. They do not apply to private arrangements, for example, transport arrangements made between friends.

- Only those who have gone through the church's safer recruitment procedures for workers will transport children and adults at risk (within the DBS eligibility criteria).
- All drivers will have read the church's Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by it.
- Drivers will be aged 21 or over and have held a full driving licence for at least two years.
- Drivers must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and that the vehicle being used is road worthy.

- All hired minibuses will have a small bus permit, the necessary insurance and a driver with a valid driving licence that entitles them to drive a minibus.

Our practice specifically for transporting children is as follows:

- Parental consent will be given for all journeys.
- All children and young people should be returned to an agreed drop off point. At collection or drop off points, children should never be left on their own; make sure they are collected by an appropriate adult.
- At least two workers (unrelated to each other) should be present when transporting children as part of a church role.

Statement: I am signing this Code of Conduct to agree that I have read and understood what is expected of me.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

OR if sending electronically, please reply to the email this was attached to and cut and paste the statement above.