

Grace Church Greenwich

Safeguarding Policy

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Version Control

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Supplements to Grace Church Greenwich Safeguarding Policy

Supplement	Required readers
Children and young people safeguarding supplement	All volunteers and employees working with children and / or young people
Safeguarding oversight supplement	Trustees, staff, Church Safeguarding Officer and Children's Champion

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1. Safeguarding Policy Summary Statement

As a church, we desire to bring glory to God by knowing Jesus and making him known. Grace Church is committed to facilitating an environment in which children, young people and vulnerable adults are able to worship and grow in Christ safely. Abuse and maltreatment in any form is entirely against Scripture and the Church's teachings. In respecting the dignity and value of every person we are committed to:

- The care, nurture of and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and all adults;
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are at risk; and
- Establishing safe, caring communities that provide a loving environment and a culture of 'informed vigilance' and action towards safeguarding everyone.

The aims of our Safeguarding Policy are:

- To uphold the honour of God's name; and
- To keep the gospel from disrepute.

We do this by:

- Protecting the children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care; and
- Protecting the caregivers who serve in this ministry.

We look to fulfil these by seeking:

- The production of a clear policy and procedures with which all will comply;
- The safe recruitment, training and support of those in positions of responsibility and trust;
- To responding without delay (within 24 hours) to concerns and complaints regarding actual or potential harm or maltreatment;
- To cooperate with professionals and processes necessary to ensure proper safeguards and pastoral care;
- The involvement of others on a need to know basis only;
- The early identification and management of actual or potential risks;
- The active commitment of all to promoting and keeping our community safe;
- The provision of care and support to those who have experienced abuse; and
- The provision of supervision and support to those who have abused others.

This Safeguarding Policy is provided for all to follow in working and volunteering with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy represents the behaviours that constitute safe practice. As such it will assist those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults to do so safely and responsibly enabling each to monitor their own standards of integrity and good practice.

Safeguarding is an important part of our service in the gospel and one that we take seriously, aiming for a standard of excellence as we implement this policy.

2. Grace Church Safeguarding – overview of responsibilities

The Trustees have overall responsibility for child protection within Grace Church Greenwich and have sanctioned this policy.

The Church Safeguarding Officer is responsible (in consultation with Trustees) for safeguarding within the church family including the completion of all associated administration (for example recruitment checks, audits and production of ministry-specific safeguarding guidelines) and while they may have access to administrative support they may not delegate safeguarding responsibility to any other person.

The Church Safeguarding Officer owns and monitors the implementation of this policy across all church activities where caregivers have responsibility for children and makes recommendations for changes as appropriate. The Church Safeguarding Officer will advise the Trustees on any matters relating to Safeguarding and will hold the Trustees accountable for policy implementation. The Church Safeguarding Officer will be involved in decisions concerning peoples' eligibility to participate in ministry with children including where individuals' DBS checks are blemished or information is provided about someone under the DBS scheme.

The Children's Champion raises the profile of children within the church and among the Trustees.

Those who are working as volunteers with children, young people and vulnerable adults (referred to in this policy as caregivers) have a responsibility to be familiar with and act in line with this policy.

3. Caregiver expectations

'Caregiver' refers to anyone serving in any role within church that involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

- All caregivers share a particular responsibility for:
- Loving the children, young people and vulnerable adults as Christ loves them;
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct; and
- Praying for those in their care.

4. Screening Procedures for Caregivers

Every applicant who wishes to serve as a caregiver is required to go through a screening process.

To ensure safe and quality care, the church has established several criteria that all caregivers must meet:

4.1. Recruitment

- All caregivers must be people in good standing with the church; and
- All caregivers must be 18 years of age or older.

Young people who are at least fourteen years of age are welcome to assist with any children's work or crèches (subject to the approval and direction of the Church Safeguarding Officer), but are always in addition to the adult caregivers.

4.2. Assessment

- All caregivers must complete a volunteering form, requiring the honest declaration of any criminal convictions.
- All caregivers must provide the name of two people to act as personal referees, which will be followed up.
 - Referees must have known the caregiver for at least two years;
 - One may be a family member;
 - Clergy may not act as referees (but other church staff may); and
 - Church staff must not be referees for each other.
- All caregivers must complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure form, (for an Enhanced level Disclosure) for working with children.

4.3. Appointment

- A caregiver can begin their role only when the following have been completed:
 - The caregiver's volunteering form has been filed as complete;
 - The caregiver's personal references have been sent for by the church and received back;
 - The caregiver's satisfactory DBS outcome has been received from the umbrella organisation;
 - The caregiver has had a face to face conversation with the Church Safeguarding Officer (or leader to whom they have delegated this task) in order to review their completed volunteering form and ask any follow up questions needed to confirm their suitability for the role; and

- The caregiver has affirmed that they have read this Safeguarding Policy and the relevant supplement that provides codes of conduct and best practice specific to the particular ministry area.

4.4. Data Protection

All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely. A policy statement regarding the security of Disclosure information can be seen on request.

5. Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Child Abuse

Child abuse is serious. All caregivers need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

5.1. Definitions

What is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

What is abuse?

*Working Together to Safeguard Children*¹ states that ‘somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or 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.’ It recognises four areas of potential abuse for children: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Abuse can be described under any one of these four categories or a combination of categories.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: children harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.

Sexual abuse: involvement of children or adolescents in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect: a failure to meet basic essential needs of a child, or if a child is left unsupervised at a young age.

¹ Published by the Department of Health, 2010, quoted in *Protecting all God’s children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England*, 2010.

5.2. Recognising signs of abuse

Warning signs: these are not necessarily proof of abuse, but they should signal a warning.

Physical abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Bruises, black eyes, broken bones Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks Cigarette burns, human bites Scalds and burns	Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed Having trouble sleeping Behaving aggressively or being disruptive Showing fear of certain adults Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem Using drugs or alcohol

Sexual abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas Genital discharge or urinary tract infections Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting Sexually transmitted infections	A marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically A young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so their school work is affected They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person

Neglect	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs

Abandonment Unattended medical needs Consistent lack of supervision Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene Lice, distended stomach, emaciated Inadequate nutrition	Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep during activities Steals food, begs from classmates Reports that there is no carer at home Frequently absent or late Self-destructive School dropout (adolescents) Extreme loneliness and need for affection
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Emotional abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Speech disorders Delayed physical development Substance abuse Ulcers, severe allergies	Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting) antisocial, disruptive Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) Passive and aggressive - behavioural extremes Delinquent behaviour (especially adolescents) Developmentally delayed

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of sexual abuse.

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be considered far more than in the past. They should make us stop and think - not jump to conclusions inappropriately.

5.3. Guidelines for when a child tells us they have been abused

General points

- Above all else, listen, listen, and listen.
- Show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
- Keep calm
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a child has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware the child may have been threatened
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful things you might say or convey:

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault

- I will help you

Avoid leading the person and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said - you might put something into their mind that was not there.

Concluding

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and you believe them
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent the child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Contact the Church Safeguarding Officer
- Consider your own feelings and get pastoral support if needed

Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you, but always within 24 hours) writing down exactly what the child said and when he/she said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place.

5.4. Responding to Concerns of Abuse

Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate concerns of abuse. Our responsibility is to refer concerns to statutory authorities who will do the investigating required.

In the case of a disclosure, the fact that you may feel the child's story is unlikely must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that they have been abused by a younger person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or a close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

Core actions checklist

1. Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should be sought immediately, informing the doctors of any suspicions you may have;
2. Contact the Church Safeguarding Officer ² (or Pastor if CSO is inappropriate) immediately ;
3. Make a brief factual note of what you have seen, heard or become concerned about (within 1 hour if possible). Include as much detail as possible: names, addresses, descriptions, dates, time and what was actually said or seen. Distinguish between fact and opinion and between what you have seen and what others have told you;
4. Listen, don't ask any leading questions (i.e. those that suggest a particular answer);

² Whilst church volunteers will normally refer straight to the Church Safeguarding Officer before reporting suspicions of child abuse to Social Services, the volunteer, as a member of the public, retains the right to report serious matters to Social Services directly.

5. Do not inform/confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances;
6. Treat all information confidentially. Tell only those who need to know. Any allegations or suspicions are covered by pastoral confidentiality, so church members have no right to this information.

What will happen next?

- The Church Safeguarding Officer will contact the CCPAS helpline for guidance, inform the designated person on the board of Trustees within 24 hours and / or refer the matter to Social Services.
- Be prepared to have further discussions with social services and / or a police investigation team;
- Continue to support the child / young person / vulnerable adult and ensure that they know what will happen next;
- Be aware that you may need support yourself. Wherever possible seek this from others who know what is happening.

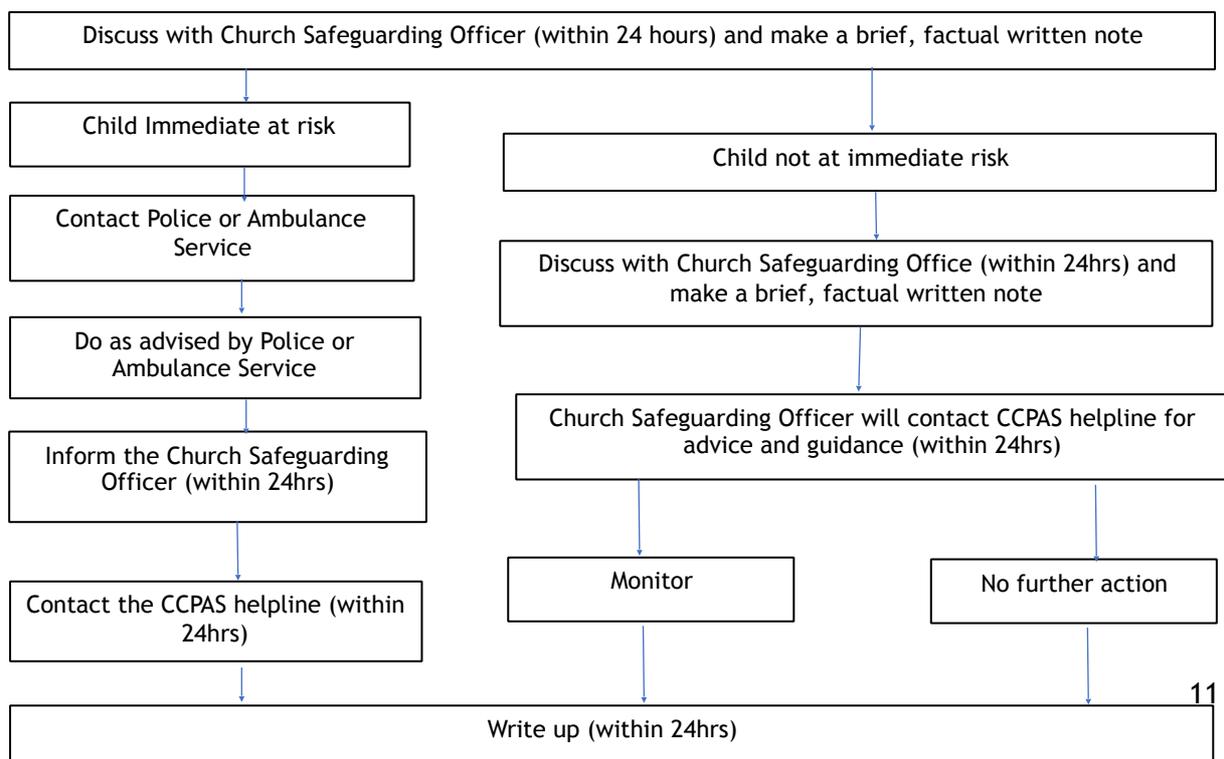
5.5. Practicalities for mutual protection of leaders and children

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and young people as part of their coming to understand human relationships. However there are reports of some people who have decided to avoid having anything to do with children and who avoid any touching or encouraging children. This is an understandable but regrettable response. It also conveys unhelpful messages to children. Caregivers should follow the following guidelines:

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors. Having a child sit on a leader’s lap whilst sitting on the floor during main singing time is okay, having them sit on laps in a less public context should be avoided;
- Touch should be related to the child’s needs, not the caregiver’s;
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the caregiver;
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child;
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they may need medical attention;
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should feel free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misconstrued. Concerns about abuse should always be reported;
- Never smack, hit or physically discipline any child except by “holding” which may be used if there is an immediate danger of personal injury to the child or other person.

5.6. Procedures for responding to abuse - flow chart

If abuse is suspected or disclosed, this flow chart summarises the procedures that should be followed.



6. Guidelines for Responding to a Disclosure of Historic Abuse

In the course of their work, ministers and those offering pastoral support may hear disclosure from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger.

The wishes of an adult disclosing abuse are very important. For some adults, just being able to talk to a trusted person about their experiences can be healing and the pastoral care of the person who has been abused should be a priority.

A referral to the police will not always be necessary unless the individual wishes to report the offence. However, they should be encouraged and supported to do so.

Adults disclosing historic abuse need to be made aware, however, that if the alleged abuser is still potentially working with or caring for children a referral must be made to the Children's Social Care Service.

7. Caring for Those Who May or Who Have Harmed Children

All those who work or volunteer with children and young adults must have a DBS check and all elements of the recruitment process described above must be satisfactorily completed before a person is allowed to commence working as an employee or volunteer.

Where information is disclosed on the certificate (resulting in a 'blemished' disclosure) a risk assessment should be carried out by the Church Safeguarding Officer and Pastor. This should be proportional to the role and the information disclosed.

The Freedom of Information Act 2012 means that many old, minor or unrelated offences will no longer be disclosed as part of this process. Disclosure of past offences does not always mean that the person cannot be appointed to the proposed role.

As well as people with cautions³ and convictions against children there are others whose behavior may be considered to pose a risk to children. A protocol for 'Managing Offenders' must be implemented for all those with cautions or convictions relating to children. Should this circumstance arise guidance will be sought from CCPAS as to what this should include. A 'Covenant of Care' agreement should be completed with those who may potentially present a risk to children, for example if they are the subject of police enquiries (even when they have not been arrested and / or charged with an offence). These agreements will put boundaries in place to protect vulnerable groups and the (alleged) offenders including provision for pastoral care.

³ Acceptance of a caution is an admission of the offence and is, therefore, equivalent to a conviction.

8. Contact Names and Details

Grace Church Contacts

Pastor

Andrew Latimer

andrew.latimer@gracechurchgreenwich.org.uk

Church Safeguarding Officer

Jenny McArdle

children@gracechurchgreenwich.org.uk , jmcardle2016@gmail.com; 07545484585

Children's Champion

[INSERT NAME]

National Contacts

Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)

0845 120 45 51 (24 Hour Helpline) for any query

www.ccpas.co.uk

Child Line

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR

Tel. 0800 1111

(full number is just these 8 digits)

NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline,

0808 731 9256

Family Lives 0808 800 222

Emergency services 999

9. Further Resources

Protecting all God's children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England, 2010

Safeguarding in the Diocese of London, 2012

Guidance to Churches: A Working Manual for Child Protection and Safe Practice, 10th edition, Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), 2003.

Facing the Unthinkable: Child Abuse and the Church, CCPAS, 2001

Facing the Unthinkable Seminar, CCPAS, 3 CDs, 2003

Caring About Abuse: Prevention and Support, CCPAS, 2001

Patrick Parkinson, Child Sexual Abuse and the Churches: Understanding the Issues, 2nd edition, 2003.