

Grace Church Green

# Safeguarding Policy Supplement

Children and Young Children

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## Version Control

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This supplement must be read in conjunction with the Grace Church Greenwich Safeguarding Policy.

If a safeguarding concern is reported to, or identified by, someone within the church and the child is at immediate risk dial 999 and follow the advice given.

If the child is not at immediate risk inform the Church Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.

If your concern is about Andrew Latimer contact the Church Safeguarding Officer directly. If your concern is about the Church Safeguarding Officer contact Andrew Latimer directly.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. What is safeguarding?

The broader activities through which we are vigilant and responsible for promoting the welfare of our children and young people and protecting them from potential harm.

This is demonstrated through carefully planned activities for children, offering them support, responding to safeguarding concerns and working with official bodies. It also involves caring for those hurt by abuse and managing the behaviour of those in our church who have caused or may cause harm to others.

## 1.2. How might children be harmed?

Children can be harmed in many ways. Maltreatment of a child occurs where: their health, physical, emotional, intellectual, sexual, spiritual or social development is damaged by other people. All abuse is a betrayal of trust and a misuse of relationships and power. Church communities must be particularly vigilant to identify the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically. Abuse can be an act of commission, such as sexual abuse, or omission such as neglect or failure to report suspected abuse.

Child abuse can affect girls and boys, babies and young people including those with learning difficulties, physical disabilities <sup>1</sup> and those from all kinds of family backgrounds. It occurs in all cultures, religions and classes. Abuse may happen in the home, at church or in peer relationships.

Digital technology such as the internet and mobile phones are being increasingly used as a medium for abuse. Amongst their peers, children may experience 'sexting' or be enticed to take or send explicit photographs of themselves. With adults it may also take the form of the production and distribution of photographs or videos displaying abusive images of children. Children can be entrapped by these practices.

## 1.3. Who might harm a child?

Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children including bullying and abuse through the use of digital technology. Most child abuse (c.70%) is perpetrated by an adult, male or female, who is well known to the child, often a family member. Such adults may be professionals, trusted members of the community and /or leaders or members of the child's church.

## 1.4. What is the impact on children?

Abuse can result in a child suffering significant harm and the need for court proceedings to safeguard their welfare. Abuse prevents children from achieving their full potential and undermines their dignity and rights. The harm it causes will affect children both while it is happening and in later life. It can be educational, emotional, psychological, physical and relational. Reports of historic abuse should therefore be responded to with the same diligence. When abuse occurs within the context of the church or is perpetrated by a Christian it may affect the person's faith and spiritual development.

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<sup>1</sup> Research shows that disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse: NSPCC Protecting Deaf and Disabled Children [www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform)

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic abuse. Domestic abuse includes any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults or young people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of gender and sexuality. Domestic abuse will always include at least emotional abuse of any child in the household and there may also be direct abuse of them.

### 1.5. Why should the church be concerned?

Churches are places where everyone should be able to flourish in God's love. Sadly research from the Lucy Faithful Foundation has indicated that a higher proportion of convicted offenders against children may be found in church congregations than in the population generally. It is therefore likely that congregations may include people who have abused children among them. Not all will have committed sexual offences, some will have been guilty of neglect, physical or emotional abuse. They may still present a risk to children. The church is a community of sinners and has a duty to minister to all people. This imposes a particular responsibility not to place people in the way of temptation and not to compromise the safety of children.

### 1.6. Why children don't tell and adults don't act.

It is commonly believed that a child or young person would resist abuse at all costs or immediately tell a trusted adult. In fact, children usually need to overcome a number of barriers which may be emotional or intellectual but are very real for them. The majority of children and young people don't tell because often they:

- Are scared because they have been threatened;
- Believe they will be taken away from home and put into care;
- Believe they are to blame;
- Think it is what happens to all children;
- Feel embarrassed and /or guilty;
- Don't want to get the abuser into trouble;
- Have communication or learning difficulties;
- May not have the vocabulary to explain what happened;
- Are afraid they won't be believed.

All of us have a natural revulsion upon hearing someone has maltreated a child, especially if it is someone we know and we must resist our inclination to dismiss its possible truth in favour of a more comfortable rationale. Reasons adults do not share their concerns may be because we:

- Find it hard to believe what we are seeing or hearing;
- Cannot believe that someone we know / respect may have behaved in this way;
- Fear we might 'get it wrong';
- Fear we might make it worse;
- Don't want to be involved; and/or

- Don't know what to do or who to contact.

The purpose of the Grace Church Greenwich Safeguarding Policy and this supplement is to educate caregivers about all forms of child abuse and their responsibilities when caring for children.

## 2. Regular Ministry

On a Sunday afternoon all children begin with their parents/guardians in Grace Church Greenwich. After the first few minutes of the main church meeting they leave to go to Sunday school (including kids@church) or crèche.

Two exceptions to this are:

- Family Services; and
- If a parent / guardian were to decide to keep a child in the main church meeting.

For each exception, for the duration of the service the child/ren remain officially in the care of their parents/guardians even when participating in activities related to the service.

### 2.1. Consent

It is important to ensure that children and young people are able to make an informed choice about whether to be involved in specific church activities. Children and young people should be given an option at any time before or during an event or activity to say if they feel unhappy or uncomfortable with what is happening.

Parental / guardian consent must be obtained for all children and young people up to the age of 18 years unless: i) they are 16 years or over and living and working independently from their parents / guardians; or ii) they are part of the looked after system in which case the local authority should be approached.

General consent is required for participation in Creche and Sunday School (including Kids@Church).

Particular consent should be sought in the following circumstances:

- Taking children off site;
- Teaching on controversial topics;
- Taking and subsequent use of photographs / video clips;
- Use of private cars to transport children for church events;
- Use of electronic means of communication with children (for example, but not limited to, email, text and social media sites).

### 2.2. Safeguarding children as they arrive and depart

### 2.2.1. Transition of children from parents/guardians to caregivers

The Grace Church Greenwich Safeguarding Policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of caregivers (as defined in the Grace Church Greenwich Safeguarding Policy). This time period is clearly marked at the beginning and end by a formal system of hand over between parents/guardians and the caregivers. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children once they have been collected from their groups or returned to them by caregivers.

### 2.2.2. Registration

The registration process described below performs a vital threefold function:

- Protecting children from abduction;
- Demarcating responsibility for the children; and
- Providing information in the event of future allegations of abuse.

Performing each step thoroughly is essential for all caregivers for the reasons above, even if you know the child and parent/guardian. A robust registration process also helps visitors know that their children are safe.

All children and caregivers present in each group must be registered. Completed registers will be filed and kept secure for an indefinite period ensuring that should any allegation of abuse is made in future the church has records of attendance.

A Child Registration Form must be completed and filed for each child attending Sunday School. These forms will be sent to parents of regular attendees with spares available in registration folders for visitors. Information such as health issues, allergies and contact information will be tabulated and stored in each registration folder. Caregivers should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their group.

Crèche and Sunday School will be located in breakout room(s). Parents/guardians should take their children there at the point indicated in the service.

Upon arrival, the parent/guardian of each child must sign their signature on the register and handover the child to the caregiver. This marks the official start of the caregiver's responsibilities.

At the end of the service a parent/guardian must pick up their child. They must wait outside the breakout area and sign their signature on the register. Only then will the caregiver release the child to the parent/guardian. This marks the official end to the caregivers' responsibility for the child.

## 2.3. Safeguarding children while they are in our care

### 2.3.1. Caregiver Ratios

**Two caregiver rule: Two caregivers must be present in each room at all times.**

It is not necessary for the two caregivers to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting the emergency takes priority over the ratios however children should never be left unattended in a room.

In addition to having two caregivers present at all times we endorse the OfSTED minimum requirement ratios which are:

Age of children	Adults : Children
0-2 Years old	1:3
2-3	1:4
3-8	1:8
8+	1 : 8 for the first 8 children 1 : 12 thereafter

### 2.3.2. Discipline

All caregivers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include:

- correcting the child verbally;
- withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time; and/or
- separating the child from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behaviour is endangering or upsetting other children).

Caregivers should never shout at or hit a child. If behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above the parents/guardians should be contacted.

### 2.3.3. Appropriate contact and conversation

Caregivers need to be above reproach in all that they do and wisdom is often required to know what that looks like in different situations. Two good questions to ask in any situation are 'What is the worst that could happen?' and 'What is the worst way this could be perceived?' All caregivers must be willing to receive advice from a fellow caregiver about their behaviour. Conversations should be appropriate for the age of the child.

### 2.3.4. Can I have a child sit on my lap when we're all sitting on the floor?

Yes you may - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Consider the age of the child and, as always, contact should be directed by the needs of the child rather than the adult.

### 2.3.5. Can I play rough and tumble games with children?

Yes you may - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Bear in mind, however, the desirability of maintaining children's respect for you as a leader and their physical limitations.

### 2.3.6. Can I hold hands with a child?

Yes you may if there is a clear reason to do so - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Reasons could include walking a child across a road or to the bathroom or playing a game requiring hands held. For younger children this might happen frequently. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

### 2.3.7. Can I ever hug a child?

Yes you may if a child is clearly distressed - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. There may be other occasions when this might be appropriate like congratulating them. Contact should be directed by the needs of the child not the adult so consider your personality type and be very aware of over-familiarity.

### 2.3.8. Can I ever tickle a child?

It is difficult to see why a child would need to be tickled by a caregiver and it is probably best avoided.

### 2.3.9. Can I ever physically restrain a child?

Yes. If a child is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should not be required.

### 2.3.10. Toilets

A caregiver may change the nappy for any baby if required.

A caregiver of either gender may accompany a young child to the toilet. The caregiver should wait outside the closed cubicle door unless the child requires assistance. The cubicle door must not be closed with the caregiver and child inside. The child and caregiver must wash their hands with soap before returning to the class group. School aged children should be able to take themselves to the toilet without assistance. If a school aged child requires assistance then it is best for assistance to be given by a caregiver of the same gender.

### 2.3.11. Food

The only foods caregivers can give to children are:

- age-appropriate biscuits provided specifically for crèche
- food provided by a parent/guardian for a specific child

No other food should be given.

Food for a specific child must not be shared with any other child. Be aware that children may have allergies to certain foods and that giving them the wrong food could have serious consequences.

#### 2.3.12. Risk management / Illness / Accidents

Caregivers should consider the health and safety of all children and caregivers when organising activities or planning games.

Children with serious infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the children's groups.

Children who appear ill whilst in the church's care will be isolated from the other children by a caregiver who should remain with them whilst their parents/guardians are contacted.

A basic first aid kit will be readily available at all times. All caregivers should be familiar with its location, contents and use. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services should be called first and the parents then located and informed immediately. Caregivers should report all injuries, whether major or minor to the Church Safeguarding Officer who will file an incident report if required.

Caregivers should be aware of where the fire exits are located and of the meeting point should the fire alarm sound.

## 3. Occasional Ministry

### 3.1. Weekends Away:

Children are registered for the weekend when initially signed up however, for the reasons given above, a register of children and caregivers should be taken for each session. Parents/guardians must drop off and collect their children at the beginning and end of the advertised children's programme slots. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for children.

### 3.2. Other Events

For the duration of other church events or other times before, during or after the church service, unless otherwise specified, children are in the care of their parents/guardians. The children may mingle freely with any adults in the building at the discretion of their parents/guardians.

- If childcare is offered at other events / times the following principles apply:
- All caregivers must be screened in accordance with the Church Safeguarding Policy.
- Caregiver ratios must be maintained.
- The registration process described above should be used.
- A parent/guardian must drop off and collect their children at the prearranged venue. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

