

Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults

Policy Statement and Principles

Message Community Church is committed to the safeguarding of all children, young people and vulnerable church members and visitors. The Church is committed to the following safeguarding principles:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

Scope

The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

This Church Safeguarding Policy is therefore applicable to “...everyone associated with the Church, who comes into contact with children, young people and adults.”

Basis of policy and legal framework

The Church’s Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults (hereafter referred to as ‘the Church Safeguarding Policy’) is prepared in accordance with the government legislative framework:

- For child protection: Protecting All God’s Children (4th edition, 2010), Promoting a Safer Church: Safeguarding Policy Statement for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults (2017)
- For vulnerable adults’ protection: Promoting a Safe Church (2006).
- Recruitment: Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (2016).
- Roles and Responsibilities: Key Roles and Responsibilities of Church Office Holders and Bodies Practice Guidance (2017).
- Data Protection: Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

There is nothing in Data Protection legislation that limits appropriate disclosure in order to protect a child, young person or adult who might be at risk; what matters is our information sharing should be reasonable and proportionate³.

This Church Safeguarding Policy is intended to be compliant and consistent with the national policies

Our values and beliefs

Every human being has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation of male and female in His own image and likeness. That image belongs to us by virtue of our creation and is not dependent on age, sex, health, mental health, social status or the like. Though that image is distorted by the fall, it is not destroyed and amongst other things this implies a duty to respect all people and to protect them from harm. We therefore believe that all people should be protected from harm.

A Christian approach to child protection will therefore ask both individuals and communities to create a safe environment for children, to act promptly on any complaints made, to care for those who have been abused in the past and to minister appropriately to those who have abused. The Church must take seriously both human propensities to evil but also the God-given resources of goodness.

A Christian approach to the protection of vulnerable adults begins by recognising that an individual remains fully human even if they are unable to exercise control or care over themselves, and even if they are unable to form or sustain relationships in a normal pattern. It will call individuals and communities to uphold in practice the dignity of a vulnerable adult, to offer support and help in an appropriate and timely way and to care for and to promote the well-being of those in need.

Our responsibilities

In seeking to implement the Church Safeguarding Policy, the responsibilities of the Church include:

- Creating a safe and caring place for all.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Listening to and take seriously all who disclose abuse.
- Appointing a Church Safeguarding Team and a Lead Recruiter to work to implement and review policy, procedures and practice. This will include the following.
 - Displaying the contact details of the Church Safeguarding Team and relevant local and national authorities.
 - An annual review of the implementation of the Church Safeguarding Policy covering:
- Taking steps to protect children and vulnerable adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises. The Church itself will never itself investigate incidents of suspected child abuse.

- Caring for and monitoring any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults – including those on the Sex Offenders Register whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensuring that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments and appropriate insurance for all activities are in place and that these are reviewed annually.

Recruitment Procedure for Volunteers

Every volunteer wishing to serve in any ministry area involving children, young people or vulnerable adults must complete a screening process prior to serving and fulfil the following criteria: ✓ Must be in good standing with the church ✓ Must be 18 years of age or older.

- o Young people who are 14+ may assist with children's work, after discussion with the Youth and Children's Worker. Any volunteers in this capacity contribute towards the number of children not the number of adults with regards to ratios.

The responsibility for the appointment of volunteers resides church leadership. In all cases the recruitment and appointment of volunteers for groups for children, young people and vulnerable adults will include the following:

- A face to face conversation with the designated ministry leader for the applicable area. This can be informal but must happen.
- It will be supplemented by provision of a relevant job description, opportunity to go through the job description, discussion of previous experience (if any) of working with the intended group, and opportunity for the volunteer to ask any questions.
- Completion of a Confidential Declaration Form, requiring the honest declaration of any criminal convictions. This should be returned to the Lead Recruiter in a sealed envelope for safe storage.
- Completion of a Registration Form. Volunteers who are 14+ but under the age of 18 will need to have this form countersigned by parents. This will include a signed declaration of having read the relevant safeguarding policy.
- Provision of two written references. Referees must not be relatives/partners, current parish clergy or church staff. Where a reference appears vague or raises concern the referee will be contacted to discuss the matter further.
- Completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form of the applicable Enhanced level
- Disclosure. Details of how to do this will be sent via email. All DBS checks are made via thirtyone:eight
- Volunteering may commence only once the satisfactory DBS Disclosure outcome has been received from thirtyone:eight. This will be confirmed by the Lead Recruiter.

Data Protection

All completed records created as a result of the recruitment procedure will be kept securely and indefinitely. The Church will retain the following:

- Confidential Self-Declaration Form
- Two personal, written references
- DBS Disclosure Certificate reference number
- Any additional notes related to the above.

Key Safeguarding Roles

The Church Safeguarding Team have been given responsibility for Safeguarding within the church family

Key Contact Details:

Church Safeguarding Team:	Danielle Campsall
Manchester Social Services	<i>Contact us to report abuse or neglect of a child or an adult with care and support needs. Even if you're unsure, report it to us so that we can check. You can report your concerns anonymously if you want. Call: 0161 234 5001 email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk</i>
National Contacts:	Thirtyone:eight (formerly known as CCPAS – the Church’s Child Protection Advisory Service): 0303 003 1111 Action on Elder Abuse Helpline: 0800 0699 784 ChildLine: 0800 1111 NSPCC: Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Further Information

The information in this full policy has been separated into two further documents – one for children and young people, and one for vulnerable adults. Both of these documents provide further detailed information and details of procedures in place pertaining to the safeguarding of these groups.

Signed.....

Signed.....

Signed.....

Date.....