

OAKHALL CHURCH, CATERHAM

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

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Definitions

The term “**Leadership**” in this document refers to the Elders and Trustees of Oakhall Church.

The term “**Workers**” refers to volunteers and those who are part of the staff team at Oakhall Church.

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Section 1

Our commitment

Oakhall Church has long-established ministries with children, youth ministries and adults. We recognise our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all those entrusted to the care of the Church and to provide a safe and caring environment for anyone who may be a victim of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect. Jesus said “Let the little children come to me ...” (Mark10:14), so emphasizing his care and concern for children and those who are vulnerable. He also spoke directly to warn against those who harm children (Mark 9:42).

We believe in a God-given imperative to seek the well-being of everyone, showing them Christian love without distinction.

This policy is based on safeguarding standards published by thirtyone: eight, the “umbrella body” we use for processing DBS checks. All workers are expected to follow this policy.

The procedures set out here are consistent with biblical principles and in accordance with statutory guidance. We adhere to UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child and Human Rights.

We are committed to building constructive links with parents, carers, statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to international conventions.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and to review operational guidelines.
- Ensure that Church premises are welcoming and inclusive and meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator in any action needed for the protection of children and vulnerable adults with care and support needs.

Section 2

Prevention

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What is meant by abuse and neglect?

A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Abuse of children and adults may take place within a family, an institution or a community setting. An abuser is often known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

Detailed definitions, and indicators of abuse and neglect, and our response to disclosures of them, are included in Appendix 1.

How we recruit our workers

The Leadership will ensure that all **staff workers** will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description/ person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self- declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check has been completed
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

We require all **volunteer workers** to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check and to confirm that they have read this policy and undertake to follow it. Written references will be obtained, and followed up, where appropriate

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Our commitment to training of workers

The Leadership:

- Is committed to regular safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone.
- Will ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Management of Workers

The Leadership is committed to support all workers, ensuring they receive support and supervision.

Section 3

Good Practice Guidelines

We wish to operate and promote good practice for working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

Specific good practice guidelines are attached as Appendix 2.

Working in Partnership

We will discuss with all partners, whether in the UK or elsewhere, our safeguarding expectations. Any organisation using our premises, as part of a letting agreement, will have to demonstrate they have a safeguarding policy that meets our standards.

Section 4

Responding to concerns

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator (or Deputy where necessary) acts on behalf of the Leadership in dealing with any allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referral of the matter to the statutory authorities.

Any allegations or suspicions of abuse should be reported as soon as possible to her. A volunteer or worker should never carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse

In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to the Deputy.

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If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made to:

thirtyone: eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.
Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact **Social Services or the Police**.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Social Services in the area in which the child or adult lives.

Local authority: Surrey County Council

Children's Social Services

Tel: 0300 470 9100
Out of hours Tel: 01483 517898
E-mail: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk

Adult Social Services

Tel: 0300 200 1005
Out of hours Tel: 01483 517898
E-mail: asc.infoandadvice@surreycc.gov.uk

Police Protection Team Tel: ring 999 in an emergency, otherwise 101

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern e.g...insurance company, Charity Commission or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) tel. 0300 123 1650 option3).

If the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18, the statutory agencies have a legal duty to investigate.

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone: eight.

The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need- to- know basis.

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Where there is a concern about a child:

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

- Contact Children's Social Services (or thirtyone: eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone: eight if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

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

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone: eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police.

Where there is a concern about an adult:

If there are suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have a responsibility to investigate allegations of abuse.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury, contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

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- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone: eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action.

Where there is a concern about a person who works with children/young people

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who handles allegations against adults who work with children and young people, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred. A referral should be informed by the LADO, if they are involved.

Where there is a concern about a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services regarding suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, following the advice of Adult Social Services
- Adult Services have a duty to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. A range of options include action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

Section 5

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

Working with statutory agencies as appropriate, the Leadership will offer pastoral care and support to anyone affected by abuse who has contact with the Church.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the Church is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs, the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. It will set boundaries for that

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person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Adoption of the policy

This policy has been agreed by the Leadership and will be reviewed regularly:

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APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adults or children.

Physical abuse: this 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: this is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Spiritual Abuse: this is a form of emotional or psychological abuse of power: a systematic pattern of coercive, controlling behaviour in the name of God or religion. It can be seen in enforced accountability, a requirement for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform and misuse of scripture. There may be a requirement for excessive commitment and obedience to the abuser, and an over-reaching into the lives of people. The danger signs may include an unwillingness of leadership to be open to question, challenge or being held open to account, and an excessive influence on decision-making by a strong or influential leader. There may be a fear of challenging a domineering leader who practises intimidation and overbearing power. There are Scriptural warnings against overbearing leadership that lords it over people (Matt. 20:25; 1 Peter 5:3)

Spiritual abuse does not include the upholding of Biblical convictions or faithful Gospel teaching that may be offensive to some.

Sexual abuse: this 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

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activities, such as involving children in viewing or 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 can be perpetrated by adults and children.

Child sexual exploitation: this 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 in exchange for something the victim needs or want or 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. It can involve physical contact or through the use of technology

Neglect: this is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, resulting in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. After birth, 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 care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Extremism: this targets the vulnerable by sowing division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination. Extremists may justify discrimination towards women and girls, persuade others that minorities are inferior, or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

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APPENDIX 2

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

We have a duty of care for children who attend our activities, therefore:

- No team member should be alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen by others
- Always treat children with respect and dignity in our speech and actions, taking care to avoid sarcasm
- Ensure that more than one person is present if a child needs to be washed or helped in the toilet
- Avoid having children sitting on your lap (unless they've been upset and need to be comforted), any hugging or rough-and-tumbling behaviour
- Any form of physical discipline is unacceptable. Any exceptional intervention to prevent inappropriate behaviour should be minimised, witnessed by another team member (if possible) and recorded
- If a child discloses any information of a worrying nature (e.g. abuse), do not encourage the child to talk further (e.g. ask questions) but report to the team leader. We cannot promise confidentiality
- It is not appropriate for individual team members to keep in contact with individual children who come to church activities by means of phone, text messages or e-mail. To avoid allegations of favouritism or exclusivity, children should be encouraged to come to regular clubs at church, where contact can be maintained
- The ratios of adult workers to children in different age groups are below:

0 - 2 years - one adult to three children.

2 - 3 years - one adult to four children.

4 - 8 years - one adult to six children.

9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children.

13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children.