

Larkfield Community Church Safeguarding Policy

Name of Organisation: Larkfield Community Church

Meeting on Sunday mornings at Brookfield Junior School, Swallow Road, Larkfield, Kent



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Membership of Denomination/Organisation: Assemblies of God in Great Britain & Ireland

Charity Number: 1120956

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This policy is in five sections:

[Section 1](#) **Our Commitment to Safeguarding**

[Section 2](#) **Pastoral Care**

[Section 3](#) **Definitions**

- Definitions of child and adults in need of protection
- Definition of abuse and neglect
- Signs and indicators of abuse in children
- Signs and indicators of abuse in adults

[Section 4](#) **Practice Guidelines**

- Safer Recruitment
- Guidelines for workers and volunteers
- How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse
- What to do once a child has talked to you about abuse

[Section 5](#) **Procedures:**

- Procedure for responding to a disclosure (what you must do)
- Procedures for when there is concern about the welfare of a child (What the co-ordinator will do)
- Procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection
- Procedure for when there is a concern about abuse by those who work with children (allegations of abuse against a person who works with children)
- Procedure for when there is a concern about abuse by those who work with adults (allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs.)

Date reviewed and approved by Larkfield Community Church Leadership Team - March 2023

Next review: March 2024

Section 1 – Our Commitment to Safeguarding

As the Leadership, we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We recognise the importance of our ministry with children, young people and adults and our responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm. All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse. Adults in our church should be enabled to live fulfilling, autonomous lives, and should have access to every aspect of church life. The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in church is the responsibility of the whole church. As a leadership, we endeavour to make our church a safe environment for all.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “*all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status*”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “*all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.*” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance.

The following statement was agreed by the church leadership:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the abuse and neglect of children and adults and to report any such abuse or neglect that we discover or suspect.
- We are committed to the safeguarding of children and adults and ensuring their well-being. We recognise that children and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as financial and discriminatory abuse and other forms of harm such as exploitation and neglect.

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding. We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

The Leadership undertakes to:

1. Promote a safe and healthy church culture:

We understand the importance of creating a welcoming and inclusive, safe and healthy environment and are committed to ensuring that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, implementing all other relevant legislation as part of safeguarding.

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures and practice guidance reflect this, so that adults can have access to every aspect of the life of our church.

We are committed to supporting parents and families and ensuring that our church is a safe place for all.

The church has appointed a Safeguarding Coordinator and a Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator as points of reference, to act on all allegations or suspicions of abuse in reporting to the statutory safeguarding authorities. In our commitment to openness, should anyone have a concern that our church or the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) have not dealt appropriately with a safeguarding concern we would encourage that person to make a direct referral to Social Services or the Police.

2. Work with Safeguarding authorities

We recognise the role that the statutory safeguarding authorities (Social Services and the Police) have in investigating all suspicions and allegations or discovery of child abuse and the abuse of adults and will cooperate fully with all agencies to protect those at risk of harm or abuse:

- Children's Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there is a concern about a child.
- Adult Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse when concerned about the welfare of an adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.

We will follow the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations. We will act in accordance with national and local safeguarding guidance such as laid out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and acknowledge that "safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility" and that "everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play".

We will liaise with the local statutory safeguarding partnerships such as the Kent Safeguarding Children Multiagency Partnership (KSMP), Kent & Medway Safeguarding Adult Board (KMSAB) or any other local safeguarding mechanisms.

We will seek to ensure that our premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.

3. Support those in our Church who serve Children and Adults

The Leadership have appointed a Safeguarding Coordinator and a Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator to respond to any safeguarding concern or suspicion of abuse. The Leadership fully supports them in their role of acting in the best interest of the child or adult and reporting to the statutory authorities all allegations or suspicions of abuse.

We commit to providing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all our workers (paid and voluntary). We will also support, resource, and monitor all those who undertake work with children or adults, and those in positions of trust.

All our workers will receive induction training and undertake appropriate safeguarding training regularly according to 'good practice' guidelines, and training will cover signs and indicators of abuse and how to respond as a minimum. This training may be provided either by the Safeguarding Coordinator (*if confident and competent to do so*) or by a professional safeguarding organisation via their training programme(s), or another recognised body, organisation or qualified individual. In addition, the Leadership are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers shall be issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with additional care and support needs.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs have access to information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

We take seriously our responsibility for ensuring that everyone is safe in our care and that their dignity and rights are maintained.

4. Safeguarding in Practice

We commit to supporting, listening to, and working towards healing for everyone affected, either directly or indirectly by any form of abuse.

We are a welcoming Church, which recognises that in following our mission, we may have sexual offenders join us. In such circumstances we will talk with the person concerned, and with any safeguarding professional involved to ensure that their involvement in church does not compromise the safety and well-being of children or adults. To ensure this we will take appropriate and

proportionate measures, including working with relevant partners to complete a risk assessment and asking the individual to adhere to a safeguarding agreement.

We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.

Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be closely managed by the Church Leadership Team reporting to the Trustees where appropriate. Any safeguarding concerns will be managed using our safeguarding procedures and through obtaining professional guidance where appropriate.

All safeguarding concerns should be immediately reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator in the church. No one in receipt of a disclosure of abuse, or suspicion of abuse should investigate the matter.

We will review our policy and procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs, then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this organisation.

Jude Johnson, Safeguarding Coordinator
Pam Bedford, Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator

safeguarding@larkfieldcommunitychurch.org.uk

Section 2 – Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care

With the various activities we are involved in as a church, we understand the safeguarding considerations and shall undertake risk assessments where appropriate for the various activities, enforcing clear guidelines for all in positions of trust in church.

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care and support, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with, or are part of Larkfield Community Church. This will take the form of opportunity to join a small group, times of prayer ministry, practical assistance and fellowship. The Leadership is committed to ensuring that it manages all pastoral matters appropriately, including the signposting of those in need to specific support as well as seeking advice and support as a management body.

Working with offenders

When someone attending Larkfield Community Church is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults with additional care and support needs the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. Guidance will be sought from Thirtyone:eight and an individual plan will be tailored specifically to the individual circumstances and informed by risk assessments from the statutory agencies and advice from Thirtyone-eight.

Local church events

Safeguarding the vulnerable is no less important at one-off events as it is in regular local, regional or national activity. In many ways there is greater need to ensure that the planning of such events includes awareness of safeguarding and adherence to our safeguarding policy. The maltreatment of children and young people is contrary to Biblical values and practices and therefore cannot be tolerated. This safeguarding policy therefore applies to all our events and any employees or volunteers who participate in local, regional or national activity.

Section 3 Definitions

Definition of a child

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) defines a child as everyone under 18 unless, "under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". In England a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. Child protection guidance points out that even if a child has reached 16 years of age, they are still legally children and should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other child, even if they are living independently, in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital; or, in custody in the secure estate

Definition of an adult in need of protection

As adult safeguarding systems have developed there has been a move away from using the term 'vulnerable adults', whilst recognising that certain pieces of legislation (e.g. the Police Act 1997) and different agencies use this term. The term 'adult at risk' is generally now replacing the previously used term 'vulnerable adult' (focusing on the situation rather than the characteristics of the adult themselves). The label 'vulnerable adult' may wrongly imply that some of the fault for any abuse lies with the abused adult. The Care Act 2014 does not use the word vulnerable, but rather an 'adult with care and support needs', who is, or is at risk of abuse or neglect. Other descriptions include 'adults at risk' (the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership, July (DHSSPS)) and 'adults in need of protection'. 'Adults' is used in this policy to mean adults in need of protection.

These safeguarding policy and procedures will use the various terms interchangeably except where referring to specific legislation or government guidance

Definitions: Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

The four main categories of child abuse are physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. It is important to note that a child may be suffering from more than one form of abuse. Safeguarding professionals must assess if they need to intervene in order to protect a child and this is based on whether it is felt a child is suffering from, or likely to suffer from, significant harm. There are other forms of abuse (such as child sexual exploitation) which come under these four main headings when instigating a child protection plan.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Adults are in need of protection due to physical, sexual, psychological (which includes emotional abuse) and neglect (including self-neglect) as well as financial, institutional, discriminatory abuse, modern slavery, trafficking and domestic violence. For adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 states: *No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Definitions of abuse for children

What is abuse and neglect?

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. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting 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 injury

A form of abuse that 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 also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another individual. It could involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), frequently causing children to feel frightened or in danger, as well as 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.

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 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.

Sexual abuse

Whether or not the child is aware of what is happening or not involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. It does not necessarily involve a high level of violence. 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. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Adult males do not solely perpetrate sexual abuse; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE):

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) 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.

Extremism:

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable, including the young, by seeking to sow division between communities because of race, faith or denomination. 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. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This includes calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

Signs of Possible Abuse (children and young people)

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life:

Physical

- injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, or usual children's activities
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse (these can also be indications of self-harm)

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse.
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Depression, aggression, or extreme anxiety
- Nervousness or frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away, stealing or lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses
- Inadequate care

Signs of Possible Abuse in Adults

Physical abuse

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries.
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems left unattended.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Bruising and discolouration - particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Recurring injuries without plausible explanation
- Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite
- Person flinches at physical contact &/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather;
- Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people

Domestic violence

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars
- Controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation.

Sexual abuse

- Pregnancy in a woman who lacks mental capacity or is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming
- Emotional distress
- Mood changes
- Disturbed sleep patterns

Psychological abuse

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia
- Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour, excessive fear or anxiety
- Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Helplessness or passivity
- Confusion or disorientation
- Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour
- Low self-esteem

Financial or material abuse

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents or loss of money
- Sudden inability to pay bills, getting into debt
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property
- Missing personal belongings
- Inappropriate granting and / or use of Power of Attorney

Modern slavery

- Physical appearance; unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours.
- Few personal possessions or ID documents.
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people.

Discriminatory abuse

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance care
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality

- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves

Institutional Abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn
- Anger
- Person puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality
- Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves
- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users.
- Neglectful or poor professional practice.

Neglect and acts of omission

- Deteriorating despite apparent care
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support.
- Lack of medication or medical intervention

Self-neglect

- Hoarding inside or outside a property
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs
- Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene
- Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food
- Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment
- Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example not heating or lighting)
- Depression

Section 4 – Practice Guidelines

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all paid workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safer 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 shortlisted have been interviewed by a panel, where at least one member has completed Safer Recruitment training.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been obtained in accordance with the position that the person has applied for, where necessary, and in accordance with any obligations of external agencies (e.g. AoG)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable induction and training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has access to, and has read the church safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- Suitable ongoing support and supervision is provided
- An annual suitability declaration is completed where necessary

The process for volunteers will ensure:

- There is an understanding by all parties of the requirements of the role and personal attributes required through informal interview.
- An application form and a self-declaration form is completed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at informal interview and on appointment to volunteer role.
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary
- Suitable training is provided for the volunteer
- The volunteer has completed a probationary period and had opportunity for discussion.
- The volunteer has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Guidelines for workers and volunteers

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

We have specific good practice guidelines for the activities we are involved:

- Consent forms are an integral part of keeping children safe and parents will be required to complete a consent form before their child can take part in activities where their parent is not present or on the premises.
- As far as possible ensure that a worker is not alone with a child. Sometimes it is advisable to leave doors open or for a group to share the same accommodation. Where confidentiality is important, ensure that others know that the interview is taking place and that someone else is around in the building.
- No person under 16 years can be approved as a Children's worker. As helpers and under the direct supervision of an approved Children's worker, they must not be left in charge of any children of any age; neither should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.

- Whilst physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy and acceptable in public places, it is discouraged in circumstances where adult/child is on his/her own.
- Unless in exceptional circumstances, workers and volunteers should not transport a child on their own. If there is no alternative, then it is better that the young person occupies the rear seat. Inform another adult when you leave and when you arrive.
- On residential holidays, adults should not share sleeping accommodation with children.

Workers and volunteers must not:

- spend excessive time alone with children.
- take children to their personal home, or to stay overnight, especially where they will be alone with the individual.
- leave any person under 16 in charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending any group be left alone at any time.
- hit or otherwise physically assault children.
- develop physical/sexual relationships with children. (Legal definition of a child is up to the age of 18 years.)
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive.
- use language, make suggestions, or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive.
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle, or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse, discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children to the exclusion of others.

How to Respond to a Child Wanting to Talk About Abuse (a disclosure)

General points

- Accept what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Be honest.
- Don't promise confidentiality.
- Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful things you may say or show

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says).
- Thank you for telling me.
- It's not your fault.
- I will help you.

You may wish to use the acronym 'TED' as a reminder that the child can be encouraged to 'Tell', 'Explain' and 'Describe' the concern. If it is necessary to seek further clarification, you should keep to open questions such as What? When? Who? How? Where? It is important to remember that questions should only be asked to help clarify whether the child is at risk of harm. Once clarification is achieved, no further questions should be asked.

Don't say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Never make false promises.
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else".

Concluding

- Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
- You might have to consider referring straight to the Police and/or Social Services to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse or self-harm.
- Contact the person in your church/organisation responsible for co-ordinating child protection concerns or contact an agency such as Thirty:one eight for advice or go directly to Social Services/Police/NSPCC.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

What to do Once a Child Has Talked to You About Abuse (made a disclosure):

1. Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of the interview), writing down exactly what the child said, what you said in reply to the child, when the child said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand written notes, even if these have been typed subsequently, for an indefinite period.
2. Report your discussion as soon as possible to the Co-ordinator. If the latter is implicated report to the Deputy Co-ordinator. If both are implicated, report to Thirty:one eight or to Social Services if preferred.
3. You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in the above point.
4. Once a child has talked about abuse, the worker and leader may consider it unsafe for the child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact the Social Services and/or Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home or go missing/flee.

Section 5 - Procedures

Procedure for responding to a disclosure (What you must do)

Under no circumstances should a worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The procedure below should be followed:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Name of Safeguarding Co-ordinator:	Jude Johnson
Contact Details:	07941 431052 safeguarding@larkfieldcommunitychurch.co.uk

This person is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

- 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:

Name of Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator:	Pam Bedford
Contact Details:	admin@larkfieldcommunitychurch.co.uk

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

Thirtyone:eight, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0303 003 11 11.
Alternatively contact Kent Social Services or the police.

- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services.

The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 03000 41 11 11.
The out of hours emergency number is 03000 41 91 91.

- Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services or take advice from Thirtyone:eight as above.

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 03000 41 61 61.
The out of hours emergency number is 03000 41 91 91

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator **may** need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern. This may include the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 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.
- 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.

- The Leadership must consider any duty regarding informing the church's insurers and the charity commission (if a registered charity) of offences committed by staff and volunteers
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of Larkfield Community Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We believe by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/ Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. **It is not necessarily the role of the Safeguarding Coordinator to investigate allegations and concerns.**

Procedures for when there is concern about the welfare of a child (What the co-ordinator will do)

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

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

- Seek medical help if needed urgently via phoning 999.
- 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 (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

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. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.
- **Under no circumstances** will the Co-ordinator attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Co-ordinator is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Police Child Protection Team/Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Co-ordinator, the absence of the Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to the Police/Social Services Department.
- Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Co-ordinator or Deputy as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Police/Social Services Department, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Police/Social Services Department, and should do so without hesitation.
- The Leadership Team will support the Co-ordinator or 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.

Procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse:

The Care Act 2014 places the duty upon **Adult Services** to investigate situations of harm to adults. This may result in a range of options including 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.

If an adult with additional care and support needs has a physical injury or indicator of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life. Advice needs to be sought from the statutory agencies if it is felt that their choice might contradict their welfare needs.
- If the adult with additional care and support needs is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
- For advice contact the appropriate Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse.
- The Police Public Protection Unit will also provide advice and will need to be contacted where the concerns are of a serious nature.

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

- 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 with regards to the scale of the concern.

Procedure for when there is a concern about abuse by those who work with children (allegations of abuse against a person who works with children)

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, will:

- inform the Operations Manager at AOG National Office if the allegations concern a Status Minister or other Senior Minister responsible for the church in question regardless of status;
- liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of being informed of the incident/allegation.

The role of the LADO is set out in HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) Chapter 2 Paragraph 4 and is governed by the Authorities duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. This guidance outlines procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children who are paid, unpaid, volunteers, casual, agency or anyone self employed.

The LADO works 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/ren in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

The LADO role applies to paid, unpaid, volunteer, casual, agency and self-employed workers. They capture concerns, allegations or offences emanating from outside of work. The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. They will provide advice, guidance and help to determine whether the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures.

Contact details for the Kent LADO are:

Telephone: **03000 41 08 88**

Email: **kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk**

If a call is urgent i.e a child is in immediate danger and requires safeguarding, call **03000 41 11 11**.

If a call is urgent and outside of office hours call **03000 41 91 91**.

In addition to this, whether or not there are such mechanisms in operation, consideration will be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. Where we are liaising with a Designated Officer we will discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS. If a Designated Officer is not involved, we will contact the DBS if the situation is that the nature of concern leads us to end the employment of the worker or volunteer or would have made this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

Procedure for when there is a concern about abuse by those who work with adults (allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs.)

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, will contact Kent Adult Social Services for advice and guidance and act in accordance to their direction.

In addition to this, whether or not there are such mechanisms in operation, consideration will be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. Where we are liaising with a Designated Officer we will discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS. If a Designated Officer is not involved, we will contact the DBS if the situation is that the nature of concern leads us to end the employment of the worker or volunteer or would have made this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

Appendix 1 – statement is displayed on our website and in our buildings

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Elders and Trustees of Larkfield Community Church, hereafter referred to as “The Leadership”, recognises the importance of its ministry/work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care. Whilst recognising that the very nature of safeguarding means that we have to respond to allegations both sensitively and confidentially, this does not mean secretively. We strive to be open, transparent and accountable. This means seeking advice and liaising with Social Services, Police and other agencies as necessary.

This organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being. Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe in the necessity of creating a healthy culture in our church where the value of all people is recognised, and challenges are responded to appropriately.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/adults with care and support needs.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this organisation.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the ‘Safe and Secure’ safeguarding standards developed by Thirtyone:eight.

We recognise:

- Children’s Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency’s headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.