



***Promoting* Safeguarding**  
***Preventing* Abuse**  
***Protecting* The Vulnerable**

# ***Safeguarding Policy***

*Christ Church URC, Swanley*  
*Southern Synod*

2019

***Safeguarding in the United Reformed Church (URC) is underpinned by Jesus' command to his followers to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34-35).***

***Above all, the URC aspires to be a loving community, offering a welcoming environment in which people can flourish, safe from harm.***

# Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	Purpose Of This Policy .....	4
3	Who This Policy Applies To.....	4
4	Confidentiality .....	5
5	What Are We Protecting From? .....	5
6	Preventing Abuse .....	7
6.1	Safe Recruitment .....	7
6.2	Supervision and Training .....	7
6.3	Activities and Events.....	7
6.3.1	Indoor Activities .....	7
6.3.2	Outings and Residential Events .....	8
6.3.3	Safeguarding Area .....	9
6.3.4	Safe Communications between Workers and Group Members.....	10
6.3.5	Behaviour and Relationships .....	10
7	Allegations, Disclosures And Concerns .....	11
7.1	Procedure in the Event of a Disclosure or Allegation.....	11
7.2	Procedure in the Event of a Concern.....	11
7.3	When a Worker is Implicated.....	12
8	Pastoral Care .....	13
8.1	Supporting those Affected by Abuse .....	13
8.2	Working with Offenders.....	13
9	Review .....	14
10	Version History .....	14

# 1 Introduction

Christ Church United Reformed Church (URC), Swanley agrees that children and adults with care & support needs have a right to live in a way that does not cause them harm or impede their human rights.

We will follow statutory, denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults with care & support needs.

Child protection is activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

More than simply child protection, the practice of safeguarding children seeks to promote the safety and welfare of children by being preventative as well as reactive.

Adult safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding is taken seriously by all at Christ Church.

We will organise activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment and minimise the risk of harm to children and adults with care & support needs.

We will follow a safe recruitment and selection process for the appointment of people to work with children or adults with care & support needs.

We are committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and adults with care & support needs.

All concerns, disclosures and allegations of abuse will be responded to appropriately, and we will co-operate with the Police, Children and Adult Services in any investigation, will follow multi agency decisions and will maintain confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

A Safeguarding Co-ordinator is the person to whom all concerns, disclosures or allegations of abuse within Christ Church must be reported.

If the Safeguarding Co-ordinators are unreachable, please contact the Minister or Church Secretary (in absentia).

Co-ordinator	Telephone	Mobile
June Wilson	■■■■■ ■■■■■■	■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■
Mark Price Haworth	■■■■■ ■■■■■■	■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■
Position	Name	Mobile
Church Minister	Position Vacant	
Church Secretary	Phil Goddard	■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■

If nobody above is reachable, then the URC Southern Synod must be contacted.

Safeguarding Link Person	Telephone
Revd Roger Jones (Children)	■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■
Revd Colin Telfer (Adults)	■■■■■ ■■■■■■
Revd Hilary Nabarro (Adults)	■■■■■ ■■■■■■

## **2 Purpose Of This Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of how Christ Church will promote safeguarding by preventing abuse and protecting both children and adults.

To achieve this, and when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and/or adults within Christ Church, or those who attend our activities and events, internal procedures are to be implemented and followed.

This policy document includes some, but not all, of the procedures we will be using.

## **3 Who This Policy Applies To**

This policy applies to those who attend Christ Church, our trustees, our workers (both paid and volunteer, lay and ordained) and those who hire our building.

A worker is a person who is appointed by Christ Church to work with children or adults on behalf of Christ Church, on a paid or voluntary basis.

Any organisation or group that hires our building for activities with children or adults with care & support needs must have a Safeguarding Policy that is accepted as adequate by Christ Church, or adopt this safeguarding policy as a condition of their letting agreement.

The legal definition of a child is someone under the age of 18. Some legislation in the UK allows young people from the age of 16 to make certain decisions for themselves (e.g. getting married), but safeguarding legislation applies to anyone under the age of 18 because this is the legal definition of a child.

**Throughout this document when we refer to a child our meaning (unless otherwise stated) is a person under the age of 18.**

It follows that some adults because of circumstance or particular vulnerability or risk may be in need of protection. Such adults are also known as ‘adults with care & support needs’.

This is defined in the Care Act 2014 (that came into effect in 2015), as an adult, aged 18 or over, who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

**Note: Since the Care Act 2014 came into effect the terms ‘vulnerable adult’, ‘adult at risk’ and ‘adult in need of protection’ are no longer used and have been replaced with the term ‘adult with care & support needs’.**

## 4 Confidentiality

All concerns, disclosures and allegations will be treated confidentially, but this does not restrict Christ Church from passing this information on to statutory agencies that have a legal duty to investigate.

However, certain people will need to be told of all concerns, disclosures and allegations in order for them to fulfil their role of safeguarding children and adults with care & support needs at Christ Church. These are:

- Minister (Church Secretary in absentia), Christ Church URC Swanley
- Safeguarding Co-ordinators, Christ Church URC Swanley
- The appropriate URC Southern Synod Safeguarding Link Person(s)

In addition, the Christ Church Eldership team will be informed that a safeguarding case is being dealt with and the actions being taken, without divulging confidential details of the case, such as the people involved or the precise nature of the issue.

## 5 What Are We Protecting From?

The definitions of abuse and neglect differ between children and adults.

Brief definitions have been included here to demonstrate the level of training required for those who work with children and adults, most of which is not common knowledge.

***These definitions are not to be used for training purposes in isolation.***

### For Children

Physical abuse 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 is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child 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.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women also commit acts of sexual abuse, as do other children.

Neglect of a child is the persistent failure to meet their basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

## **For Adults**

**Sexual abuse:** This includes any form of sexual harassment, inappropriate touching or looking, indecent exposure, sexual teasing or innuendo, being subjected to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, and any sexual act that the person did not agree to, or felt pressurised into consenting to, as well as rape.

**Physical abuse:** Physical abuse can include assault, being hit, slapped or restrained. Misuse of medication and failure to conduct physical care is also physical abuse.

**Psychological Abuse:** Sometimes called 'emotional abuse' and can involve threatening to hurt someone, to abandon them, preventing access to visitors, friends, and family. Being humiliated, insulted, blamed, controlled, intimidated, bullied, or harassed can constitute emotional abuse.

**Domestic Abuse:** Domestic abuse and/or intimate abuse is when a form of violence, or other type of abuse, is inflicted by a partner or family member aged 16 or over.

Forced Marriage and so called 'Honour Based' Violence are also forms of domestic abuse.

**Discriminatory Abuse:** This involves unfair treatment because of a person's race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion.

**Financial Abuse:** This occurs when monies and valuables have been stolen, or where someone uses coercion or deception, to gain access to money and possessions, and uses them in ways that the person does not wish.

**Neglect:** Neglect occurs when there is a deliberate withholding of help, care or other basic requirements, with the intention of causing harm or abuse.

**Institutional Abuse:** Institutional abuse occurs when a place, company, organisation or charity undertakes practices which cause harm and abuse.

**Forced Marriage:** When an adult is coerced, pressurised or deceived into a marriage, to which they would/do not consent, this is a forced marriage. It differs from arranged marriages, which are agreed to by both parties.

**Trafficking/Modern Slavery:** Involves the purposeful movement of an adult for economic benefit to a third party, often involving forced labour, unpaid labour, sexual exploitation, rape or prostitution.

**Online Abuse:** Cyber bullying, internet fraud and stalking through social media.

**Self harm:** Self harm is any form of self-inflicted injury or hurt.

**Hoarding:** Hoarding is a form of self-neglect, because it can arise from a neglect of home and surroundings and may be illustrative of mental health concerns

**Spiritual Abuse:** A form of psychological/emotional abuse that is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour within a religious context, as well as the misuse of scripture, applied theology & doctrine.

There is no specific reference to Spiritual Abuse in The Care Act 2014.

## **6 Preventing Abuse**

### **6.1 Safe Recruitment**

We are committed to safe recruitment and selection of all paid and volunteer workers, as laid out in our “Safer Recruiting” policy<sup>1</sup>.

The procedures include, but are not limited to:

- Providing role/job descriptions and person specifications
- Asking candidates to complete an application form
- Interviewing candidates
- Obtaining Disclosure checks
- A probation period

### **6.2 Supervision and Training**

Training in safeguarding will be provided and volunteer and paid workers will be given support and supervision in their role.

Training must be renewed every 3 years.

All trustees, our workers (both paid and volunteer, lay and ordained) must comply with the URC Code of Conduct for Working with Children or Young People<sup>2</sup> and understand that action will be taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working/volunteering with us.

The same action will also be taken should staff not renew their Disclosure checks or fulfil their training requirements.

### **6.3 Activities and Events**

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC Good Practice <sup>3</sup> so as to promote a safe environment and minimise opportunities for harm.

#### **6.3.1 Indoor Activities**

For indoor activities such as Spectrum Meetings (Sunday School) or other Youth Group meetings the following, minimum good practices apply:

- A register of those attending is kept
- A brief program summary is recorded
- A safeguarding log is made of any concerns or incidents
- Adults to children ratios are appropriate
- No adult is to work alone with a group or an individual child/adult with care and support needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Christ Church URC, Swanley Safer Recruiting Policy, Version 4, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Appendix A3, URC Good Practice 4: Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (June 2015).

<sup>3</sup> URC Good Practice 4: Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (June 2015).

### **6.3.2 Outings and Residential Events**

Outings and residential events organised by Christ Church or Christ Church Groups require the same good practice as for Indoor Activities, with the following additional requirements:

- Risk Assessments
- Financial planning
- Parental consent and medical forms
- Adults to children ratios are reviewed
- Insurances checked
- Publicised program
- Emergency contact arrangements

For detailed check lists for planning any activity or event, refer to the URC Good Practice Guidelines as referenced in Section 6.3 above.



### **6.3.3 Safeguarding Area**

To ensure that the Youth & Family Centre is a safe environment for Children it has been designated as a Safeguarding Area when groups with Children are running.

This specifically applies to our Spectrum groups and Galaxy Club, but also to Swanley Kindergarten, Swanley Dance Academy and the Hyo Gen Do Karate Club.

So, on Sundays when Spectrum Groups are meeting in the Youth & Family Centre, members of the congregation are required to adhere to the following:

- Parents & guardians taking children to their groups are to return to their seats in the Church as quickly as possible, and not to loiter in the Youth & Family Centre or use the toilet facilities there.
- When a parent/guardian needs to stay with a child in a Spectrum group, and at the leader's discretion, they must stay in that group's room until the end of the meeting and only tend to their own child.

Arrangements for children with other requirements will be made in advance on a case by case basis.

- No members of the congregation, including parents & guardians, are to then enter the Youth & Family Centre until after the Service has finished.

The only exception being the members on the Tea & Coffee rota towards the end of a Service, who are asked to restrict themselves to the kitchen & lounge area. Again, until after the Service has finished.

- As far as possible, members of the congregation requiring toilet facilities are to use those by the front entrance of the Church.
- Any member of the congregation found within the Safeguarding Area by a Spectrum leader or helper will be asked to return to the Church.

On Mondays to Thursdays in term-time during and before school hours, i.e. before 15:15, access to any part of the Youth & Family Centre must be through the Church Office and under escort of the Church Administrator or Premises Manager.

The only exceptions to this is are our cleaning staff, who work before or after Kindergarten, and for members of the Handicraft & more! Group, who meet after Swanley Kindergarten has finished on Monday afternoons.

During term-time, from 15:15 to 19:00 on weekdays, access to any part of the Youth & Family Centre must be arranged in advance with the Church Administrator.

However,

- Parents & guardians taking children to weekday, late afternoon/early evening groups are permitted to enter the Youth & Family Centre through the main entrance, but are to leave as quickly as possible and not to loiter in the Centre or use the toilet facilities.
- For groups where it is acceptable for parents & guardians to remain in the Youth & Family Centre then, as far as possible, they must not use the toilet facilities.

Note: Access to any part of the Youth & Family Centre at other times must still be arranged in advance with the Church Administrator as it may have been booked for other activities.

### **6.3.4 Safe Communications between Workers and Group Members**

Up until the very recent past, the only way that paid and volunteer workers could communicate with children and adults with care & support needs outside of Christ Church Group meetings was by the household telephone or a newsletter.

It is now possible to easily communicate with children and adults with care & support needs through text messages, instant messaging, e-mail or social networking websites to name just a few of the common methods of new media communication.

At present, Christ Church sees no reason why paid and volunteer workers should have any regular requirement to communicate with members of their Groups outside of meetings.

However, for those instances when it is required the URC Online Safety policy<sup>4</sup> must be followed.

### **6.3.5 Behaviour and Relationships**

All adults working with children and adults with care & support needs are in positions of trust. It is therefore vital workers ensure they do not, even unwittingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately.

Workers should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted. Any kind of sexual relationship between an adult and a child is never acceptable, and if concerns arise in this area this should be recorded and reported to a Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Some behaviour such as cuddling a child when they are hurt or distressed or spontaneous activity such as celebratory embraces would not normally be construed as sexual. However, this should generally be initiated by the child and be for their benefit and not the adult's.

There must be an appropriate age gap between workers and the age range of children or adults with care & support needs in their Group.

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix C, URC Good Practice 4: Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (June 2015).

## **7 Allegations, Disclosures And Concerns**

### ***7.1 Procedure in the Event of a Disclosure or Allegation***

If a child or adult makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child to you, it is important that you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Do not question what they are saying, even for clarification.
- Avoid passing judgement on what you are told.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Never promise confidentiality.
- Explain what you intend to do (the remainder of this list), and do not delay in taking action.
- Contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as soon as possible.  
If they are implicated in the disclosure or allegation refer to another Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Link Person as detailed in Page 3 to this policy.
- Preferably within an hour, write down the content of your conversation.  
Where possible use a URC Incident Recording Form.
- Sign, date and keep safely.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) will then liaise with the Minister (Church Secretary in absentia) and the Synod Safeguarding Link Person(s) and make the necessary referral(s) to the Police and/or Social Services (Adult's or Children's) as required.

### ***7.2 Procedure in the Event of a Concern***

If any member of the Church congregation or family members has a concern of abuse of child or an adult, it is important that they should:

- Contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) or Minister (Church Secretary in absentia) as soon as possible.  
If they are implicated in the allegation refer to another Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Link Person as detailed in Page 3 to this policy.
- The concern will then be discussed between the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) and the Minister (Church Secretary in absentia) and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory agencies.
- Where the concern of abuse is sexual the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) should respond as for a Disclosure or Allegation as above.
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and circumstances surrounding it. This record will be kept securely and a copy passed to statutory agencies if a referral is made.

### ***7.3 When a Worker is Implicated***

Most staff work well and safely with children. However, it is a sad fact that some people will cause harm to those they work with. On occasion, this is intentional and, regrettably, a part of their motivation to work with children. For others, it may be as a result of poor attitudes, low standards of care or inadequate awareness of professional boundaries.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding harm caused to children by workers, the United Reformed Church believes it is never acceptable.

A referral of concerns about workers' (paid and unpaid, lay and ordained) conduct with children to the Local Authority Designated Officer (DO) in England must be made without delay where it is alleged a worker has:

- behaved in a way which has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- has, or possibly has, committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

The appropriate URC Southern Synod Safeguarding link person(s) must be informed in respect of any referral made to a DO. The Moderator must also be informed if the allegation relates to an ordained minister. Moderators will inform the General Secretary as appropriate.

Where there is potential reputational risk to the Christ Church and/or the URC, the URC Press Office must also be informed.

The worker concerned will only be informed as soon as possible after consultation with the DO, but with due regard to protecting evidence. A decision about who will inform the worker will be made in consultation with the DO and the appropriate URC Southern Synod Safeguarding link person(s)

The Charities Commission may also need to be contacted.

Concerns which fall outside of the above criteria may nevertheless amount to inappropriate conduct. The church should seek advice from the appropriate URC Southern Synod Safeguarding link person(s) to decide whether to handle this by way of advice, supervision, training, disciplinary processes or a combination of some or all of these.

A record will be kept of all allegations made.

## **8 Pastoral Care**

### ***8.1 Supporting those Affected by Abuse***

The Christ Church Eldership team is committed to offering pastoral care, working with appropriate statutory agencies, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of Christ Church.

### ***8.2 Working with Offenders***

If we become aware of someone in our congregation who is known to have harmed children or adults, or is known to be a risk, we will inform the URC Southern Synod Safeguarding Link Person(s) and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory agencies to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children and adults.

The Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults, will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

This will be in the form of a formal Safeguarding Agreement signed by both the individual and Christ Church, and will be tailored to the specific circumstances.

No-one who is known to have harmed children or adults, or is known to be a risk, will be permitted to be involved in work with children or adults with care and support needs.

## 9 Review

This policy was approved and endorsed by the Christ Church Elders at their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and approved by the Christ Church Members at the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 meeting.

After the above meetings, a copy of this document was sent to the URC Southern Synod Safeguarding Team and a copy with contact details redacted was made publicly available on-line at <http://christchurchswanley.org.uk>.

Updates and amendments will be made when necessary, and the policy will be reviewed no later than the end of the first quarter of 2020 and then re-presented to the Christ Church Elders and Christ Church Members.

## 10 Version History

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Ratified by Elders</b>	<b>Date Adopted by Membership</b>
1	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2008
2	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2014	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
3	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	20 <sup>th</sup> September 2015
4	10 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2016
5	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
6	17 <sup>th</sup> April 2018	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2018