



## Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Procedures

### Introduction

In order to fulfill the Rushden Mission Church's (hereafter referred to as 'the church' in these Procedures) policy on the Safeguarding of Children and Young Adults and the policy on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults a set of procedures have been defined that details how the church will comply with these policies.

The procedures are defined within 5 categories that correspond to the churches policy statement for Children and Young People. Where procedural requirements, partial or in full, are also applicable to Vulnerable Adults these are annotated with <sup>VA</sup>.

Each worker working with children, young people and vulnerable adults whether paid or voluntary will be provided with a full and up-to-date copy of these procedures and will be required to follow them.

### Prevention and Reporting of Abuse

#### What is abuse?

Children and young people may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

The various types of abuse defined in the UK Government Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 are as follows:

1. Physical abuse, where children's bodies are hurt or injured.
2. Emotional abuse, where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibility beyond their years.
3. Sexual abuse, where adults (and sometimes other children / young people) use children / young people to satisfy sexual desires.
4. Neglect, where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.
5. Sexual exploitation, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity
6. Domestic abuse, can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse is not limited to physical acts of violence or threatening behaviour, and can include emotional, psychological, controlling or coercive behaviour, sexual and/or economic abuse.

## **Recognising Signs of Abuse<sup>\*VA</sup>**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Child abuse can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing.

The following may indicate abuse, but there could be other explanations. It should never be assumed that simply because the following are present that abuse is taking place.

### ***Physical***

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.

Warning signs: Unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention.

### ***Emotional***

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. 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 cyber bullying), 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.

Warning Signs: Reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, attention seeking.

### ***Sexual***

Sexual abuse 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 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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Warning Signs: Pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually provocative with adults; secretive relationships with adults or children.

### ***Neglect***

Neglect is 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.

Warning Signs: Looking ill-cared for / unhappy / withdrawn or aggressive; having lingering injuries or health problems.

### ***Child sexual exploitation***

Child sexual exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the child or young person needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The child or young person 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.

Warning Signs: Pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually provocative with adults, possibly in conjunction with an unexplained new toy or money.

### ***Domestic***

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and adolescent to parent violence. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Domestic abuse continues to be a prevalent risk factor identified through children social care assessments for children in need. Domestic abuse has a significant impact on children and young people. Children may experience domestic abuse directly, as victims in their own right, or indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on others such as the non-abusive parent.

Warning Signs: The signs associated with other abuse can be present. In particular, a child or young person may become withdrawn or be absent due to issues at home.

## **Procedure for handling allegations or suspicions of abuse<sup>VA</sup>:**

The wellbeing of the child is paramount at all times. The Child Protection Body consists of the current Pastor/Minister, the Safeguarding Trustee and the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

### **If a child chooses to disclose information to a worker whom he/she trusts, the worker should:**

- Be aware the child may have been threatened, intimidated or made to promise secrecy.
- Give the child opportunity to talk freely without interruption.
- Listen carefully; be sensitive, calm and reassuring.
- Feed back to the child what they have said, to ensure you heard them correctly.
- Accept the child's word, whatever the circumstances.
- Tell the child that he/she is not to blame.
- Tell the child that they were right to tell you.
- Avoid saying:
  - "Why didn't you tell anyone before?"
  - "I can't believe it."
  - "Are you sure this is true?"
  - "Why, how, when, who, where?"
  - "Don't tell anyone else."
  - "This is dreadful."
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and why (e.g. tell the Minister)
- Stay with the child until they feel they have said all they wanted to say.
- Helpful things to say:
  - "Thank you for telling me this"
  - "I will have to share this with someone else who can help."
  - "You needn't tell me anymore about it, I've understood what you're telling me."
  - "I'm glad you have told me, it's not your fault, I will help you."
- Ensure the strictest confidentiality is maintained. The worker should not discuss the matter with anyone except a member of the Child Protection Reporting Body. They should not take independent action, nor should they attempt to investigate the allegation themselves.
- Report the discussion to the Child Protection Reporting Body as soon as possible. If a member of the Reporting Body is implicated, report to the Safeguarding Protection Administrator.
- Record exactly what the child said and the date. The record must be signed. This record must be passed to the Safeguarding Protection Administrator.

### **The worker should not:**

- Make promises (e.g. do not promise to keep the information secret)
- Ask questions or probe for information.
- Talk to anyone else about the matter (other than those mentioned above)

## **Responsibility of the worker<sup>\*VA</sup>:**

Every worker has the responsibility to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse so that appropriate action can be taken.

## **The responsibility of the Designated Person for Safeguarding:**

Designated Person for Safeguarding has the responsibility to take appropriate action when any report is made of an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

If the allegation is of sexual abuse, the Designated Person for Safeguarding will contact the social services or police directly. This is to protect everyone involved. The police should be contacted urgently if the abuse is alleged to have occurred within the previous 24 hours. No contact should be made with the parents before doing so. (See note below "Parental Involvement")

The Designated Person for Safeguarding will:

- Record all discussions and action taken
- Contact ThirtyOne:Eight specialist (0303 0031111) to confirm that the situation is being dealt with correctly and merits reporting to the Social Services Department.
- Ensure records of discussions and attendance registers are stored in a secure place for future reference.

## **Parental involvement:**

You do not have to ask permission from the child's parents, or even inform them, before making a referral to one of the lead agencies (Police, Social Services, NSPCC). This is for the lead agency to handle. They will advise you of the correct action to take when the referral is made and they may be consulted if you are unsure how to proceed. Remember, the key principle is to make the child's well-being the first concern. This can be hard on adults involved but this must not prevent referrals being made when this is called for; the lead agencies are responsible for investigating cases fairly, justly and confidentially.

## **Allegations made by a parent:**

If an allegation is made by a parent, the worker should refer them to a member of the Child Protection Reporting Body immediately.

## **Suspicion by a worker about another worker<sup>\*VA</sup>:**

If a worker notices anything that worries him/her or suspects another worker of carrying out abuse, this must be reported to the Child Protection Reporting Body immediately.

## **Suspicious of abuse outside the church:**

If a worker suspects the abuse may be taking place, but the child has not said anything, more detailed discussion and discreet observations need to take place, but the Child Protection Reporting Body must be informed straight away. After careful consideration, the Child Protection Reporting Body will make the appropriate referral.

In any of these situations, if the Minister is implicated, the Designated Person for Safeguarding should be contacted.

## **Safe Recruitment, Support, and Supervision of Workers<sup>\*\*VA</sup>**

The church has to prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people. This applies to regular workers in all groups involving children and young people and to occasional workers (e.g. Holiday Clubs).

If a person expresses an interest in working with children or young people, an informal discussion will take place between themselves and the Minister/Leader with responsibility for youth work.

Anyone wishing to work with children and young people must be known to the Minister/Leader responsible for youth work to ensure their suitability. The Minister/Leader responsible for youth work must be confident that the worker meets the following criteria:

- Has no criminal records which could pose a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Has received a copy of the policy and these procedures referring to children and young people work and has confirmed they have read them
- If required could provide references
- If appropriate and applicable is recruited on a probationary period
- If appropriate is given an induction and initial training

Any appointment will be subject to a DBS Enhanced Disclosure. Anyone wishing to work with children or young people must complete an Enhanced Disclosure form. Once completed, they must be viewed, copied and stored by the Safeguarding Protection Administrator. The Safeguarding Protection Administrator is the person authorised by the Church Business Meeting of Rushden Mission Church.

Every worker will read a copy of the policy statements for working with children and young people. They will be asked to familiarise themselves with the policy and these procedures. Additionally, workers will be required to read and familiarise themselves with the Church's Health and Safety Policy.

A review of training must be made for all workers and workers may be required to attend refresh training.

## Respecting Children and Young People<sup>\*VA</sup>

The church has a responsibility to respect children and young people. The church will adopt the following code of behaviour:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- Use age appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and the effect you are having on the individual child or young person.
- Listen well to children and young people. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or young person is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the body language to better understand what is being said.
- Do not engage in any of the following:
  - Invading the privacy of children or young people when they are using the toilet or showering
  - Rough games involving physical contact between a leader and the child or young person.
  - Sexually provocative games
  - Making any sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in fun.
  - Scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person.
- When it is necessary to control and discipline children and young people, this should be done without using physical punishment, (A situation may, however, arise where a child or young person needs to be physically restrained in order to protect them or a third person).
- Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed, if possible, the child's own parent or carer should be called to carry out such task.

Do not respond to or encourage excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature

- **Visual Images**

While it is not illegal to take photographs of children and young people, such activity is subject to the DPA and GDPR. Workers must read and be familiar with the Church's Data Protection Policy.

Additionally, the taking of photographs and or video during children and young people's activities must be subject to the following:

- Signed consent *should* be obtained from parents/guardians. The worker may use their discretion on whether signed consent or verbal consent is appropriate. The size of the group, nature of the activity need to be taken into account. Such consent should confirm where photographs are likely to be used (e.g. Website, Church Facebook pages, press).
- Photographing children and young people must be conducted with sensitivity and courtesy. There may be times when someone does not want their photo taking. Consent of the child or young person is just as important as parental permission
- When photographs are displayed children and young people must not be identified by name, nor should it be possible to infer the identity of individual children and young people from the photograph.
- Photograph material must be stored securely in a place agreed by the Minister and Leader of children and young people's work.
- Workers must not store images of children and young people on their mobile phones (clearly a worker may store images of their own children or young people subject to standard legal legislation)
- Copies of photographs must not be distributed to other individuals without the permission of the parent of guardian.

## Safe Working Practices<sup>\*VA</sup>

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

### **Maintaining records of children and young person's details:**

An up to date record, held by the Leader of children and young people's work, of the following details will be held for all children and young people attending the church groups:

- Full Name
- Address
- Telephone number(s)
- Date of birth
- Details of any relevant medical conditions the church should be aware of, or any food or drug allergies
- Emergency contact details (these must be available immediately to all workers)

This record will be subject to the Data Protection Act (DPA) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

On joining a group within the church, a form of consent stating the normal activities, meeting times and duration must be signed by a parent, guardian or carer, see procedural documents section. This will include permission for first aid to be given if necessary. Space for the parent, guardian or carer to express concerns over the child's health or diet is incorporated on the form. For specific trips outside the normal activities of the organisation an additional consent should be sought.

Completed consent forms will be securely held in the children and young people's cupboard, with only authorised workers having access to the cupboard.

Where a child or young person is visiting the church and will take part in church activities away from their parent or guardian, the worker must consider the completion of a consent form based on the activity and proximity of the parent or guardian. Where details are retained, consent to retain the completed form must be obtained from the parent or guardian of the child or young person.

An annual review of held consent forms must take place and any form with details of a child or young person who no longer regular attends church activities must be securely destroyed.

### **Meeting and Groups**

During any group or meeting involving children or young people the workers will consist of a minimum of an appointed Leader (18+) and an appointed Helper (16+).

The worker will ensure that a register is taken at the beginning of each group or meeting.

### **The church / worker should:**

- Not normally plan to be alone with children or young people.
- Ensure at least two workers should be present before the doors are opened and as children and young people arrive for a group and at least two people should remain until the last child or young person has left building or room at the end of the meeting.
- The church has agreed the following ratios for workers and children or young people
  - Children 0-2 years: 1 worker to 3 children
  - Children 2-3 years: 1 worker to 4 children
  - Children 3-8 years: 1 worker to 8 children
  - Young people 8-18 years: 1 worker to 10 children



- When there are insufficient workers to have two for each group doors should be left open, or two groups should work in the same room.
- Never invite a child or young person to their home alone. It may be acceptable to invite a group if another worker is in the house. The workers must ensure that each parent or carer of a child or young person is aware where they are and what time they should return home.
- In a counselling situation, where privacy and confidentiality is important, it is recommended that two workers are present, or to meet in a public place, i.e. café. If that is not possible, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. Another adult should be in the building and the young person should know where they are.
- Ensure that the premises are well lit at all times.
- Ensure that there is a mobile phone available in the case of an emergency. If this is not possible, all workers should be aware of the nearest available phone.
- Ensure that no person under the age of 18 is left in charge of a group of children or young people.
- Ensure that a system of support is in place to allow workers to raise any concerns/issues.
- Not let children or young people involve them in excessive attention seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
- Ensure that arrangements for transporting children are in line with the Transport guidelines (see separate section in these procedures), and that the parents have given their consent.
- Keep an accurate register of each session detailing the full name, address, telephone number and date of birth for each child or young person and of the workers present for each session.
- Be aware of which children are collected by a parent / carer and only hand them over to the agreed person (this applies especially to children under five years of age)
- Consider carefully arrangements for residential holidays and the sleeping arrangements for children, young people and workers.
- Ensure that a risk assessment is carried out for any activity/event held away from the usual meeting place.

### **Additional Guidelines for working with children and young people:**

#### **Touch:**

- Keep everything in public – a hug in a group is different to a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the workers.
- Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child.
- Avoid any physical activity which could be misconstrued and sexually stimulating child or adult.
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances e.g. when they need medical attention.
- Workers need to take responsibility for monitoring themselves and one another in the area of physical contact. You should feel free to constructively challenge a colleague if necessary. Allegations of abuse should always be reported.

#### **Toilet:**

- Wherever possible, same-sex worker takes child to the toilet.
- Do not enter the cubicle with the child (unless this is unavoidable e.g. due to the age of the child or disability etc).
- Wait outside the door if the child needs you to be there.
- Leave connecting doors open if possible.

#### **Discipline and rewards:**

- Within children's work, a worker should not be alone with a child to discipline them.
- Never encourage other children or workers to single out or ostracise a child because of their behaviour.
- Never show favour to one specific child or group of children to the detriment of the others.

## **Electronic Communications<sup>\*VA</sup>**

Electronic communications have become ubiquitous in recent times with email, instant messaging, texting, Facebook, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Twitter, TikTok now very popular, in particular with children and young people.

Workers must consider the following guidance:

- Workers must take care not to cross boundaries in their relationships
- Communications can be informal and can create the potential to be misunderstood
- Workers must only use electronic means of communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given
- Workers must never put pressure on children or young people to reveal their email address or other identities
- Direct electronic communications with primary school age children is inappropriate and must be avoided
- Contact with children and young people by electronic communications should generally be for information-giving purposes and not for general chatter
- Workers must not share or request any personal information from children and young people via electronic communications
- Where a child or young person in need or at a point of crises chooses to use electronic communications with a worker, the worker must ensure that significant conversations are saved as a text file if possible and a log kept of when they communicated and who was involved
- Where electronic communications between workers and children or young people need to be used, this must be between the hours of 8:00am and 10:00pm
- Emails to children and young people should include the church header and footer showing this to be an official communication from a youth team member (worker)

## **Health and Safety<sup>\*VA</sup>**

The Leader of children and young people's work must discuss with the Church's Health and Safety Officer to ensure that the Health and Safety Policy is implemented with children and young people in mind.

The Church's Health and Safety Risk Assessment must consider any additional needs of children and young people.

All workers must have read and be familiar with the Church's Health and Safety Policy.

## Transport Guidelines<sup>\*VA</sup>

As members of the church, we commit ourselves to transporting children and young people in the safest way possible.

To ensure this is carried out, the following is a list of guidelines for anyone driving children or young people to or from an organised event or activity:

- The vehicle being used must be roadworthy (hold a current MOT certificate)
- The driver's insurance company must be told that their vehicle is sometimes used to transport children or young people in a youth group setting.
- The car should only carry the number of passengers that fitted fully functional seatbelts will allow.
- The driver is responsible for advising that passengers wear their seatbelts.
- The driver must ensure that appropriate seating is available and installed for children under, the law states:
  - All children travelling in the front or rear seat of any car, van or goods vehicle must use the correct child car seat until they are either 135 cm in height or 12 years old (whichever they reach first)
  - All children whose weight or **height** exceeds the forward-facing limit for the car seat should **use** a belt-**positioning** booster seat.
  - If a child restraint is not available, children under **3** years must travel in the rear, but may be unrestrained. Children **3** years and over, up to 135cm tall must sit in the rear and use an adult seat belt. Children aged 12 years or more, or over 135cm tall, may travel in the front, but must wear the seat belt.
- All speed limits should be kept to.
- Under no circumstances should anyone drive whilst under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication with any side effects that may affect your ability to drive safely.
- It is advised that you carry at least two passengers in your car at one time.
- It is advised that a person of the opposite gender should sit in the back rather than the front.
- If a young person requests a lift home after an event or activity, parental permission should be sought prior to the lift being agreed, and an estimated arrival time should be given.

### ***When using a minibus***

The church is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the hire of the minibus is from a reputable company or organisation.
- Ensuring that the driver is MIDAS (Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme) trained.

The MIDAS trained driver is responsible for:

- Ensuring all checks stipulated by the hiring company when picking up the vehicle are carried out.
- Carrying out all checks in accordance with their MIDAS training.

## Safe Community<sup>\*VA</sup>

The church is committed to preventing bullying of children and young people.

The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children or young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

The Government defines bullying as:

*“Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.”*

Bullying can take many forms and be committed through physical presence or virtually (e.g. Social Media) including, but not limited to:

- Name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking
- Kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating, taking belongings
- Sending offensive or degrading images by phone or over the Internet
- Gossiping, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumors
- Inappropriate text-messaging and emailing

In order to prevent bullying the following procedures will be adopted:

- The children and young people themselves will be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour which is clear that bullying is unacceptable
- Children and young people should know how to report any incidents of bullying
- All allegations will be taken seriously
- Details will be checked carefully before action is taken

Bullying behaviour will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible.

The parents or carer of the bully and of the bullied will be informed.

All allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with actions that are taken.

## **Vulnerable Adults**

While a number of the procedural requirements defined for children and young people are also applicable to vulnerable adults, see sections annotated with <sup>\*VA</sup>, the following must also be adhered to specifically for Vulnerable Adults:

- Where a carer has been assigned to care for a vulnerable person, the carer should be present on church premises where possible
- Consideration must be taken where a vulnerable person requires assistance with bathroom requirements. In standard circumstances this type of activity must be managed by the carer
- Any person known to be vulnerable must not be present on the church premises unless there are also at least two other non-vulnerable adults present
- An emergency contact number must be registered with at least one church leader in the event of a situation that requires specialist assistance

## **Procedural Documentation**

The following Procedural Forms must be used where and when required:

- Grievance Complaints Form to be used to take allegations and actions associated with bullying.
- Children and Young People Parental consent form to be completed by every child and young person's parent or carer.

Blank copies of the procedure documentation will be held within the children and young people's work cupboard.