

Safeguarding Policy

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Children (aged 0-11)

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Safeguarding Policy Aims

As a church, we desire to bring glory to God by knowing Jesus and making him known.

To that end, the aims of our Safeguarding Policy are:

1. To uphold the honour of God's name
2. To keep the gospel from disrepute

We do this by:

1. Protecting the children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our care
2. Protecting the caregivers who serve in this ministry

Safeguarding is an important part of our service in the gospel and one which we take seriously, aiming for a standard of excellence as we implement this policy.

The Directors of the St Nicholas Cole Abbey Centre for Workplace Ministry Ltd (“**SNCA**”) have adopted “Promoting a Safer Diocese: A Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of London.” (the “Diocesan Safeguarding Policy”). It can be accessed in full on the website below:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/>

The Directors of SNCA have also adopted and have due regard to the House of Bishops’ “Promoting a Safer Church” safeguarding policy statement (“House of Bishops’ Policy”). It can be accessed in full on the website below:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Parish%20Safeguarding%20Handbook%20March%202019.pdf>

The SNCA safeguarding policy applies the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and House of Bishops’ Policy to the particular situation of SNCA and its various ministries.

There are seven parts to the SNCA Safeguarding Policy:

1. The General Policy
2. The Children’s Policy – for those working with children (0-11),
3. The Young People’s Policy – for those working with young people (11-18),
4. The Vulnerable Adults Policy
5. The Record Keeping Policy
6. The Domestic Abuse Response Policy
7. The Safeguarding for Small Group Leaders Policy

The full SNCA policy can be found here:

<https://www.stnickschurch.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Key Safeguarding Roles

The names and contact details of individuals with responsibility for safeguarding within the various SNCA ministries are set out at the end of this document.

(1) The Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

- a. is the individual given responsibility for safeguarding within SNCA and all its various ministries;
- b. will assist and advise if a Safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed;
- c. may delegate some of their responsibilities to ministry leaders but will assist and advise ministry leaders if a safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed;
- d. will also be included in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children where their DBS check is blemished, or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme.

(2) The Ministry Leaders

are responsible for safeguarding in their respective ministry areas. This includes:

- a. ensuring all caregivers within their area are recruited in accordance with this safeguarding policy and,
- b. acting as safeguarding officers for any disclosures of abuse within the relevant ministry.

(3) The Children's Champion

is tasked with ensuring that the needs of the children and young people in the church are recognised and addressed.

(4) The Vulnerable Adults Champion

is tasked with ensuring that the needs of vulnerable adults attending any of our meetings are recognised and addressed.

(5) Caregiver

refers to anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults. All caregivers share a particular responsibility for:

- a. loving the person as Christ loves them
- b. setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- c. praying for those in their care and pointing them to God's word

Every applicant who wishes to serve in any ministry area involving children or young people must complete a screening process prior to serving.

IMPORTANT:

- All caregivers must read **Section A** of this policy
- They must then read any additional information from **Section B** that is relevant to the area of ministry they are serving in
- A list of key **Contact Details** can be found on the last two pages of this policy

If an existing caregiver moves to serve in a different ministry area, they must read the relevant information for the new area before commencing their role. All caregivers are encouraged to complete the online Diocesan safeguarding training. We are working towards implementing regular safeguarding training more widely.

Section A

Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Child Abuse

Child abuse is serious. All caregivers need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

1. Definitions

Who is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

What is abuse?

*Working together to safeguard children*¹ states that 'somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.' It recognises four areas of potential abuse for children: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Abuse can be described under any one of these four categories or a combination of categories, and can be carried out by an adult or another child.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying).

Sexual abuse: involvement of children or adolescents, in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect: including failure to meet the basic essential needs of a child, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to provide adequate supervision and / or access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Although not formal categories of abuse, it is important to be mindful of the danger of spiritual abuse and bullying.

Spiritual abuse: is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to 'force' religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God's name.

Bullying and Cyber Bullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can

¹ Published by HM Government, 2013, quoted in *Policy for safeguarding in the Diocese of London*, 2015.

hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

2. Recognising signs of abuse

Warning signs: these are not necessarily proof of abuse, but they should signal a warning.

Physical abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Bruises, black eyes, broken bones Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly Untreated or inadequately treated injuries Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks Cigarette burns, human bites, scalds and burns	Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed Having trouble sleeping Behaving aggressively or being disruptive Showing fear of certain adults Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem Using drugs or alcohol

Emotional abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Speech disorders Delayed physical development Substance abuse Ulcers, severe allergies	Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting) antisocial, disruptive Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) Passive and aggressive – behavioural extremes Delinquent behaviour (especially adolescents) Developmentally delayed

Sexual abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas Genital discharge or urinary tract infections Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting Sexually transmitted infections	A marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. They may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically A young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so their school work is affected They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person

Neglect	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Abandonment Unattended medical needs Consistent lack of supervision Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene Lice, distended stomach, emaciated Inadequate nutrition	Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep during activities Steals food, begs from classmates Reports that there is no carer at home Frequently absent or late Self-destructive School dropout (adolescents) Extreme loneliness and need for affection

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of abuse.

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be seriously considered. They should make us stop and think - not jump to conclusions inappropriately.

3. Guidelines for when a child tells us they have been abused

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may be of help:

General points

- (1) Above all else, listen, listen, and listen!
- (2) Keep calm, and show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
- (3) Let them know you will need to tell someone else – **do not** promise confidentiality
- (4) Be aware the child may have been threatened
- (5) Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen
- (6) Avoid leading the child and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said - you might put something into their mind that was not there. If the case were to end up in court, the case could be thrown out if it is thought that the child had been led to say something.

Helpful things you might say or convey

- (1) I am glad you have told me
- (2) It's not your fault
- (3) You will be taken seriously
- (4) I will help you

Concluding / Next Steps

- (1) Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that you believe them
- (2) Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent the child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- (3) Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what the child said and when they said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times, including when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto Chris Fishlock (or if not appropriate, to the Safeguarding Officer).
- (4) **Do not** confront the alleged abuser. Confronting the alleged abuser could make the situation worse for the child.

4. Responding to concerns of abuse

If you suspect or witness abuse, or someone discloses information about a safeguarding concern or allegation:

- (1) If a child is in immediate danger or emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctors of any suspicions you may have.
- (2) You must contact Chris Fishlock. If the allegation is against Chris Fishlock or a member of his family, contact the Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO). Their contact details can be found on the back page.
- (3) At all stages in the reporting process, you retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact Chris Fishlock / the CSO.
- (4) Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate concerns of abuse themselves. Our responsibility is (in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST)) to refer concerns to statutory authorities who will do the investigating required.
- (5) Apart from telling Chris Fishlock or the CSO, this information must be treated as confidential. Do not inform/confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances.
- (6) You should also consider your own feelings and ask Chris Fishlock / a staff member for pastoral support if needed.

Even if you may feel the child's story is unlikely, this must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that they have been abused by a younger person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or a close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

5. Procedures for responding to abuse – outcomes

When a safeguarding concern is reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) by a ministry leader or CSO:

- (1) If the DSO advises further action, the ministry leader or CSO must act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given.
- (2) If the DSO advises no further action required, this is not the end of the process. The Church Safeguarding Officer or the relevant ministry leader must arrange a further meeting to discuss whether alternative action should be taken or whether to accept that no further action is required.
- (3) This meeting should include the CSO and the ministry leader, and they can involve others as necessary.

Guidelines for responding to a disclosure of historic abuse

In the course of their work ministers and those offering pastoral support may hear disclosure from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.

The Church is required to take advice from the Diocese and may need to report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the Police.

When someone tells you they have been abused, or have committed abuse, whether recently or many years ago:

General points:

- (1) Above all else, listen
- (2) Keep calm, and show understanding/acceptance of what is said, however unlikely it seems. Reassure the individual that they were right to tell you.
- (3) Never push for information. Avoid leading questions and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
- (4) Let the individual know what you are going to do next and that you will keep them informed. Let them know that you will need to tell someone else - **don't promise confidentiality.**

Action you must then take:

- (1) You must contact Chris Fishlock and tell them what you know (you do not need to disclose any names at this stage unless told otherwise). If the allegation is against Chris Fishlock or a member of his family, contact the Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO). Their contact details can be found on the back page.
- (2) You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact either Chris Fishlock / the CSO.
- (3) Apart from telling Chris Fishlock / the CSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with co-leaders, SLOB leaders or other church members.
- (4) Under no circumstances should you investigate concerns of abuse yourself.
- (5) Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto Chris Fishlock / the CSO.
- (6) Consider your own feelings and ask Chris Fishlock / a staff member for pastoral support if needed, and consider with them what pastoral support is needed for the individual involved.

SECTION B

Supplementary Information for Specific Ministry Areas

(1) Sunday Crèche & Sunday School

(a) Safeguarding children as they arrive and depart

The SNCA Safeguarding Policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of the leaders of the advertised activity. This time period is clearly marked at the beginning and end by a formal system of handover between parents/guardians and the caregivers. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children before they are taken to their groups and once they have been collected from their groups or returned to them by caregivers.

Transition of children from parents/guardians to caregivers

(i) Crèche & Sunday School

Parents/guardians, if unaware, should be told when and where the group happens.

Parents/guardians should take their crèche and Sunday School aged children there just before the service. This marks the official start of the caregiver's responsibilities.

At the end of the service, a parent/guardian should pick up their child from the room. If the parent/guardian is unknown to the caregiver then another known adult (preferably a DBS screened leader) must vouch for them being the parent/guardian of the child.

Other adults are not able to take someone else's child from the group unless the parent of the child has expressly given permission in advance.

If parents/guardians are more than 10 minutes late, caregivers should try to get the attention of someone who can ask the parent to come and collect their child, e.g. another parent / staff member in the office, or caregivers can call the parent/guardian.

Failing that, caregivers can together take any remaining children down to their parents as long as they deem it safe to do so.

This marks the official end to the caregivers' responsibility for the child.

Registering

All children and caregivers present in each group must be registered. Completed registers will be filed and kept secure for an indefinite period. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come then the church will be able to find out who was present on a given date.

A child registration form should be filed for each new child in crèche/Sunday school. These forms should be completed by a parent/guardian and available in registration folders for the leaders to consult. Leaders should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their specific group.

(b) Safeguarding children whilst they are in our care

Caregiver ratios

Two caregiver rule: Two caregivers must be present in each room at all times.

It is not necessary for the two caregivers to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting, the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, children should not be left unattended in a room. At other times, with some planning this scenario need not occur.

In addition to always having two caregivers present, we endorse the Church of England **minimum** requirements which are:

0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children	1:3
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children	1:4
4-8 years	1 adult to 6 children	1:6
9-12 years	1 adult to 8 children	1:8
13-18 years	1 adult to 10 children	1:10

Each group should have at least two workers, even for smaller groups, and if possible one male and one female. Staff ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. For example, staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved. Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested but the individual group may have fewer adults.

If there are not enough caregivers on a given day, the caregivers must either:

- (1) recruit another DBS-screened individual to help or;
- (2) meet in the same venue as other screened caregivers, in full view of those caregivers.

For all groups and activities: -

1. A health and safety risk assessment must be undertaken.
2. A registration form must be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. This should include up-to-date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and any special needs.
3. An attendance register must be kept and be available at all group meetings.
4. A first aid kit must be available on any premises that are used by children.
5. An accident and incident logbook must be available, and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Any significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between children).
6. There should be access to a telephone, if possible.
7. In premises where children's groups meet, the Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers should be displayed.
8. Parents must sign a consent form before children are transported in a private car, and before any photography or images are taken.

In addition, when taking children offsite:

1. The church leadership must be informed and agree to the activity.

2. Details of the activity and any itinerary must be given in advance to parents and consent forms received in advance of the activity taking place.
3. Details of the activity and a list of contacts must be left with someone in the church.
4. Details of the activity and arrangements must be given to the incumbent and/or CSO.
5. A risk assessment must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is covered by PCC insurance.
6. A leader must be designated to take responsibility for First Aid.

Discipline

All caregivers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating them from the group for a brief time (particularly if the behaviour is endangering or upsetting other children).

Caregivers should never use any form of physical punishment. If behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents/guardians will be contacted. Caregivers should never yell at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

Acceptable touch

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate.

The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- (1) Always ask permission.
- (2) Be mindful of your body position.
- (3) Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- (4) Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church helper.
- (5) Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- (6) Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- (1) You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- (2) You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- (3) You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.

- (4) You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- (5) You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I have a child sit on my lap when we're all sitting on the floor?

You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.

Can I play rough and tumble games with children?

Yes you may – as long as the child is willing to play such games, it is being done in a safe/light-hearted and friendly manner, you are in public, and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. If the child becomes distressed while playing such games, stop immediately and ensure they are adequately consoled by you or another adult. Bear in mind that the chummier you are with children in this way, the less likely you are to have any authority in their eyes. Remember too that they are not as strong as you.

Can I hold hands with a child?

Yes you may, but only if there is a clear reason to do so, you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Reasons could include walking a child across a road, or to the bathroom, playing a game requiring hands held. For younger children this might happen frequently. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

Can I ever hug a child?

Yes you may if a child is clearly distressed - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. There may be other occasions when this might be appropriate, like congratulating them. Bear in mind your normal character – if you rarely hug anyone you should probably not ever hug a child in your care. If hugging is one way you interact with all kinds of people you might need to rein yourself in a bit but not necessarily completely. Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's, and should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker. Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.

Can I ever tickle a child?

It is difficult to see why a child would *need* to be tickled by a caregiver. It is best avoided when acting as a caregiver. This is not to say that a child should not be tickled but there is a time and a place.

Can I ever physically restrain a child?

Yes. If a child is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should be required rarely.

Can I take a picture of a child in my care?

No. Care givers must never take any pictures of children they are caring for unless they have received explicit permission from the child's parents / guardians. For the avoidance of doubt, care

givers must also never post any pictures of the children in their care on social media platforms including but not limited to Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and or Snapchat.

Toileting

A caregiver may change the nappy for any baby if required.

If a child needs to use the toilet, in situations where the group is small, it is best for leaders to take a whole group trip with all leaders and all children. If the group is too large for this and a potty cannot be used, one leader may take up to three children to the toilet if it is expected to be quick. If it is not likely to be quick, the help of another DBS cleared leader should be asked of (e.g. via a steward) to maintain ratio numbers.

If a preschool (typically 3+ years old) or school-aged child requires assistance in going to the toilet, it is best for assistance to be given by a caregiver of the same gender where possible.

The caregiver should prepare the toilet with the child seat and step and then wait outside the closed/ajar cubicle door unless the child requires more assistance. The cubicle door must not be closed with the caregiver and child inside.

Food

The only foods caregivers can give to children are:

- (1) Cake or biscuits or fruit provided by the church
- (2) Food provided by a parent/guardian for a specific child

No other food is given. Food for a specific child must not generally be shared with any other child (except with permission of the child parent/guardian). Some children in our care may have severe allergies to certain foods and giving them the wrong food could be serious.

Risk management / illness / accidents

Caregivers should consider the health and safety of all children and caregivers when organising activities or planning games.

Children with infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the children's groups. If a young person appears ill whilst in the church's care, caregivers will use their discretion to determine whether the young person should be isolated from other young people by a caregiver, (who will remain with them) and whether parents/guardians should be contacted to collect their child.

A basic first aid kit must be readily available at all times. All caregivers should be familiar with its location. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called first and the parents will be located and informed immediately. Caregivers will report all injuries, whether major or minor to the Children's Coordinator.

Caregivers should be familiar with evacuation procedures, including where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound.

(c) Safeguarding children with special education needs and disabilities

Safeguards for children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are essentially the same as for all children. Children with SEND have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, and to be protected from harm as other children.

However, research suggests that children with SEND may be generally more vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect than other children. Children with SEND can be abused and neglected in ways that other children cannot, and the early indicators suggestive of abuse and neglect can be more complicated. They face an increased risk of abuse and neglect, including bullying, for a variety of reasons including:

- (1) Greater dependency on parents/ carers for practical assistance in their day to day lives, such as feeding or personal care;
- (2) Impaired capacity to recognise, resist or avoid abuse, or feeling too scared to report abuse/ bullying;
- (3) Speech, language and communication needs/ barriers which can make it more difficult to tell other adults what is happening and get them to understand;
- (4) Increased likelihood of social isolation, with fewer outside contacts than non-disabled children, resulting in less access to someone they trust to disclose abuse to;
- (5) An embedded cultural/ societal assumption that abuse and neglect does not happen to disabled children, leading to a lack of vigilance, spotting of the signs of abuse and reporting of concerns;
- (6) Empathy on the part of professionals/ practitioners with parents/ carers, who are felt to be under considerable stress, leading to certain behaviour/ treatment being accepted by other adults rather than concerns being raised;
- (7) Behavioural/ physical indicators, such as (self-)injury or withdrawal, can be interpreted as part of the child's disability or condition rather than as the result of abuse/ neglect (or vice versa), and therefore abuse/ neglect can be missed and go unreported;
- (8) Being perceived as physically or behaviourally different from others, and therefore more likely to be the victim of bullying or intimidation.

Where the participants in a group or activity at SNCA includes a child with SEND, caregivers must be especially vigilant to the potential increased risk of abuse and neglect, and the additional action that will be needed to ensure this policy and procedure is enacted for that child as it would be for any other child.

Caregivers must be additionally aware of the following possible indicators of abuse or neglect for a child with SEND:

- (1) A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on a non-disabled child, such as the shin, might be of concern on a nonmobile child;
- (2) Malnourishment, potentially due to not getting enough help with feeding;
- (3) Force feeding;
- (4) Unjustified or excessive use of restraint;
- (5) Rough handling or extreme approach to behaviour modification (e.g. withholding of liquid, food, medication, clothing);
- (6) Poor grasp of a child's means of communication;
- (7) Ill-fitting equipment, e.g. callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting;
- (8) Misappropriation of a child's finances;
- (9) Invasive procedures that are unnecessary or carried out against the child's will;
- (10) Misuse of medication, or deliberate failure to follow medication or therapeutic programmes;
- (11) Age or culturally inappropriate care and support.

Even subtle changes in behaviour may be a child communicating that something is wrong and/ or that they are being abused. It is vital caregivers for children with SEND are aware of changing patterns of behaviour and potential causes. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a child with SEND, caregivers should act upon them in accordance with this policy as they would for any other child.

Where a child with SEND has communication needs, special attention should be paid to gaining a clear understanding of the child's perception of events, wishes and feelings. This may require the involvement of children's social care or speech and language clinicians for non-verbal children.

(d) Communicating electronically with children

Do:

1. Only use an approved church / ministry account to communicate with children. Chris Fishlock / the CSO should be able to access this and review conversations where applicable, and the account should be visible to children and their parents. Children must be made aware that any communication will be viewed by all users. Save any messages and threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to Chris Fishlock / the CSO of your exchange when required.
2. Have your eyes open and be vigilant.
3. Maintain the utmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with children as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
4. Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to Chris Fishlock / the CSO.
5. Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.
6. Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church accounts and profiles separate from your personal social media accounts e.g. only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, while keeping a separate Facebook profile for private life.
7. Always ask parents/carers for written consent to:
 - a. Use and store photographs of children from activities or events in official church publications, or on the church's social media, website and displays.
 - b. Use telephone, text message, email and other messaging services to communicate with young people.
 - c. Allow young people to connect to the church's social media pages.
8. Avoid one-to-one communication with a child.
9. Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
10. Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to Chris Fishlock / the CSO.
11. Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

Do not:

1. Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with children.
2. Add children as friends on your personal accounts.
3. Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them).

4. Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper.
5. Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your church role.
6. Use visual media (e.g. Skype, Facetime, Zoom) for one-to-one conversations with children – use only in group settings.

In particular, do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:

7. Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements;
8. breaches of copyright and data protection;
9. material of an illegal nature;
10. offensive sexual or abusive references;
11. inappropriate language; or
12. anything which may be harmful to a child or which may bring the church and gospel into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, no communication with a child should occur between 10pm and 8am.

(2) Weekends Away

If any weekend away advertises childcare, or if provision is made for volunteers to help in addition to parents or designated guardians, then the childcare for that weekend comes under our Safeguarding Policy and must be run accordingly, following the same procedures as Sunday Crèche & Sunday School.

All caregivers must be screened as outlined in the main policy, and the same regulations concerning ratios, registration, discipline, toileting, food and accidents must be followed as in Sunday Crèche/Sunday School, with the following alterations/additions:

Registering

Children are registered for the weekend when initially signed up so no further registration is needed when their specific groups meet. However, parents must drop off and collect their children at the beginning and end of the advertised children's programme slots. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

Night patrol (if offered)

Parents/guardians are responsible for putting their children to bed. Once children are in bed, their parents/guardians may leave them at their own discretion.

During night patrol parents/guardians are still responsible for their children.

Between the advertised times pairs of volunteers will patrol the corridors of sleeping areas listening for any children who are disturbed. If volunteers hear of a child who is disturbed they will contact a parent/guardian immediately to ask them to return to their child.

Volunteer pairs must always stick together. Volunteers must not at any time enter a child's bedroom. Volunteers are merely providing a listening service to be the first point of contact if a child needs their parent/guardian. Volunteers do not need to be DBS screened as volunteers

should not come into direct contact with children. All night patrol volunteers and parents must be informed of this guidance before night patrol can begin.

(3) Women in the Word on Fridays (WWF)

WWF meets most Fridays in homes throughout London. Women are free to bring their own children to a local group, yet they remain responsible for their own children throughout the time the group meets.

Women in a local group are free to join together amongst themselves and co-ordinate childcare for their own children whilst the group meets. This may include using an au pair or nanny, or arranging for additional volunteers to cover childcare.

This is a private arrangement happening in a home and is akin to babysitting. The women in the group must take responsibility for assessing the suitability of any volunteer.

WWF is not covered by the SNCA safeguarding policy, and as such it is not guaranteed that a volunteer from the congregation is DBS-checked (although they may be).

(4) Other Events/Activities

From time to time there may be extra events where children may be present.

(1) Midweek Small Groups

Crèche-aged children are welcome to the small group evenings at the discretion of the small group evening leader, but remain in the care of their parents/guardians throughout.

(2) Occasional Courses/Seminars/Training days

(For example Christianity Explored, Evangelism Training, Marriage/Parenting Days)

Childcare may be provided if required. All caregivers must be screened in accordance with the SNCA Safeguarding Policy. Caregiver ratios must be maintained.

A parent/guardian must drop off and collect their children at the pre-arranged venue. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

(3) Babysitting

Babysitting is an area in which we are unable to provide formal provision. Families can make informal arrangements within the congregation and must take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of the volunteer.

(4) External Events

Some children may attend City Summer School, whose children's programme is run and covered by St Helen Bishopgate Church and their Safeguarding policy.

Contact Names and Details

Safeguarding Committee

Frank Owusu-Sekyere (Chair)
Church Safeguarding Officer
safeguarding@snca.co.uk

Tom Wright
Assistant Minister (Ministry Leader for London Bridge Talks & Victoria Talks)
Children's Coordinator; Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Champion
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SNCA Staff

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Carrie Fishlock
Finance Manager
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National Contacts

Thirtyone:Eight

Helpline: 0303 003 11 11

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

City of London Corporation Children and Families Team

020 7332 3621 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

020 8356 2710 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

City of London Social Care Services

020 7332 1224 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

020 8356 2300 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

Child Line

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR

Tel. 0800 1111

(full number is just these 8 digits)

NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline,

0808 800 5000

Family Lives (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222

Domestic Violence Helpline (for females) 0808 2000 247

Mankind (for males) 01823 334244

Police Non-Emergency Phone Line: 101

Further resources

'Protecting all God's children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England', 2010

'Policy for Safeguarding in the Diocese of London', 2015

'The Church of England, House of Bishops, Parish safeguarding handbook' – promoting a safer church, October 2018

'The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016' (Chapter 14)

London Multi Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures 2015

www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding