

Caring for Children and Young People



ashwood
church

Charity Number 517739

**Safeguarding
Children, Young
People and
Vulnerable Adults
Policy**

Our Values

This policy has been prepared to ensure the protection, well-being and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Ashwood activities and those working with them.

As an organisation we believe that:

- Children young people, and vulnerable adults should be respected and valued as individuals.
- We should provide a safe, caring environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere
- We have a responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults and report suspected or disclosed abuse to the appropriate statutory authorities
- We have a responsibility to support and train those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to provide ongoing support and supervision
- We have a commitment to best practice as far as our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is concerned

Vulnerable Adults

The term “**vulnerable adult**” refers to a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability, illness, old age, emotional fragility, distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired. They will not always regard themselves as vulnerable. Factors which MAY increase vulnerability include:

- A mental illness, chronic or acute
- A sensory or physical disability or impairment
- A learning disability
- A physical illness
- Dementia
- An addiction to alcohol or drugs
- Failing faculties of old age
- Those who are homeless
- Refugee families or individuals (including those seeking asylum)
- Victims/survivors of domestic abuse – direct violence and/or significant emotional coercion
- Those who have suffered historic abuse in childhood
- A permanent or temporary reduction in physical, mental or emotional capacity brought about by life events – for example bereavement, abuse or trauma

Good Practice and expectations of workers

These lists aren't exhaustive, but do give you an idea of how you should be acting when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in your role at Ashwood.

You should...

- treat all people with respect
- provide an example of good conduct you'd like others to follow
- ensure that any on or off-site activities are planned in accordance to guidance provided by Ashwood Church

- respect people's right to privacy
- encourage people to feel comfortable and care enough to talk about attitudes and behaviours they don't like
- remember that someone else may misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- be aware that even compassionate physical contact with a young person could be misinterpreted
- recognise that caution is required at times when you are discussing sensitive issues with service users
- always act within Ashwood Church Safeguarding policies and the expectations documents for your team

You shouldn't...

- discuss service users in front of other service users
- have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults (see later in policy for more details)
- allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour
- make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of service users
- jump to conclusions about others without checking the facts first
- exaggerate or trivialise a person's welfare or abuse issues
- show favouritism to any individual
- rely on your reputation or that of Ashwood Church to protect you

The legal context

The Children's Act (1989) clearly established in law that the welfare of a child is always paramount and takes precedence over everything else.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

- Children must be kept safe from harm
- They must be given proper care by those looking after them
- They have the right not to be punished cruelly or in a way that belittles them

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN SAFEGUARDING?

As a volunteer or staff member, you can play your part in many ways:

- Prevention - you may provide support for children and families that need early help
- May be a protective factor – you see children and families every week
- Spot when something may be going wrong
- By taking action when you have concerns that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm whether that be from within the family or outside the family

You may think it is apparent that a child, young person needs help, but this could come in a variety of ways, so what should we do if a child needs help?

1) Is the child in immediate danger? – if so call the police – and let the Safeguarding Officer know

(for steps 2-5 please collaborate with the Safeguarding Lead whenever possible who will take action on your behalf)

2) Is the child or family in need of early help services?

➤ For advice contact the Nottinghamshire County Council Early Help Unit on 0115 804 1248

3) Is social care already supporting the child? If so, contact the social worker for the child directly

4) Make a safeguarding referral via Notts MASH if child is at risk of significant harm

➤ Gather as much information as you can beforehand including full names, dates of birth, addresses, school attended, ethnicity, religion, language

5) Consider if advice should be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (if the concern is about an adult working/volunteering with children)

ABUSE

How to deal with abuse

As an organisation we have a duty to prevent abuse and to report any abuse suspected or discovered.

Abuse of Children and Young People:

Physical abuse

Actual or likely injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury.

Possible signs include unexplained injuries or those which have received no medical attention e.g. Bruising in unusual places, finger marks, bite marks, burns, scars, allegedly unnoticed fractures.

Sexual abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child.

Possible signs include allegations made by the child or young person, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults.

Emotional abuse

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child.

Possible signs include regression in behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention-seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared-for.

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect them from danger, leading to a serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect can take place pre-birth as a result of maternal substance abuse.

After birth, neglect includes the 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem.

Children and young people who are neglected might have:

- Poor appearance & hygiene
- Health & development problems
- Housing & family issues
- Change in behaviour

Possible Indicators of Neglect:

- children whose personal hygiene and state of clothing is poor
- untreated medical problems
- failure to thrive with no medical reason
- children who are constantly hungry and frequently tired
- poor concentration
- developmental delay
- frequent accidents and/or accidental injuries
- low self-esteem
- social isolation
- eating disorders
- poor skin tone and hair tone
- begging and stealing

Domestic Abuse - Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Sexual Exploitation - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Bullying and Cyberbullying - 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 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.

Online Abuse - With the ever-growing use of the internet, mobile telephones and online gaming (e.g. Xbox/ PlayStation), there has been a corresponding rise in the use of the internet and other electronic communication to target, groom and abuse children. Adults may target chat rooms, social networking sites, messaging services, mobile phones, online gaming sites and the internet generally. Children are particularly vulnerable to abuse by adults who pretend to be children of comparable ages when online and who try to obtain images or engineer meetings.

Electronic Images - The downloading, keeping or distributing of indecent images of children are all classified as sexual offences. Such offences are sometimes referred to as non-contact sexual offences. However, it must be remembered that children will have been abused in the making of the images. The texting of sexual messages and photographs can be particularly problematic and abusive amongst children and young people.

(please also see the Ashwood use of mobile phone and use of social media policies)

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults:

The UK central government categorises and defines adult abuse in terms of:

- **Physical abuse** including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- **Sexual abuse** including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial or material abuse** including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect or acts of omission** including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Discriminatory abuse** including racist, sexist, that is based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Domestic abuse** that is usually a systematic, repeated and often escalating pattern of behaviour by which the abuser seeks to control, limit and humiliate, often behind closed doors.
- **Organisational abuse** including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
- **Modern Slavery** including human trafficking; forced labour and domestic servitude; traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at

their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

If you suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being abused

1. Do not delay – act quickly.
2. Seek an explanation of your concerns from the parent, carer of the child without raising the question of abuse.
3. Carefully make a hand-written, dated note of your observations, and pass to the Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible. Do not keep a copy of the notes.
4. Talk to the group/activity leader or to the Safeguarding Coordinator. Do not discuss with anyone other than this.
5. If you remain suspicious, you have a personal responsibility to refer to Social Care Services or the Police, although we would expect that the Safeguarding Coordinator would be informed of your decision.
6. Please note that it is not your role to interrogate or investigate suspected abuse and this could compromise any subsequent legal action that might be taken.
7. If there is a concern regarding the Safeguarding Officer, please contact Social Care or the police directly.

It is important to note that a disabled child or young person may be at increased risk due to their greater vulnerability or lack of or limited verbal communication.

If a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

- Find a quiet, appropriate place to talk.
- Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly.
- Let them know why you need to tell someone else, do not promise confidentiality, being clear about 'no secrets' is really important.
- Be aware that they may be being threatened.
- Listen carefully but never push for information. Do not ask leading questions or suggest abusive actions that may have happened.
- Don't speculate or accuse anybody. Do not put words into their mouth or finish their sentences.
- Don't make promises that you can't keep.
- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you.
- Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens. Make sure you do this.
- Do not confront the person who is alleged to be responsible for the abuse.
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand-written record, even if these are subsequently typed up, for an indefinite period. These notes should be given to the Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible. Do not keep a copy.
- Report immediately to the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if they are not available, the designated trustee. If neither are available, immediate contact should be made with Social Care Services.
- Offer ongoing support to the child/young person.

Any worker, staff or volunteer can bypass the procedures and share concerns with an outside agency – Social Care Services, Churches Child Protection Advisory Service or the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children – if they feel that the company/charity is not dealing adequately with their concern or that people concerned (e.g. Trustee, Member or Employee) are implicated in some way.

We wish to encourage people to voice their concern should they have any reason to do so. Please contact the Safeguarding Coordinator if any matter comes to light which you think needs acting upon.

Prevent Duty

Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, charities are encouraged to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of our wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children’s behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views. Staff and volunteers should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

General safeguarding principles as set out in the rest of this policy apply to keeping children safe from the risk of radicalisation.

Confidentiality

All reports of safeguarding concerned made to the Safeguarding Officer will be treated with confidentiality, and it is expected that the reporting staff member or volunteer will treat it as such. Any concerns or risks will be shared on a need to know basis, decided by the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding Officer will make regular Safeguarding reports to the Trustee’s via the designated trustee, headlining any concerns. More details will be made available to the Trustees in the case of a serious incident or notifiable event where there is or may be:

- Harm to people who come into contact with your charity
- Harm to your charity’s work or reputation
- Loss of your charity’s money or assets
- Damage to your charity’s property

Storage of Safeguarding Recordings

All recording of Safeguarding incidents and concerns, however small, will be kept indefinitely in a locked, secure location. This should not be in a home. Only the Safeguarding Lead and the designated trustee will have access to this.

Guidelines for appointing workers

Care should be exercised in the appointment of workers, both voluntary and paid, who will have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by:

- Asking the potential worker to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Check with the DBS. This will be updated every 3 years.
- Asking the potential worker to complete a form giving their name, current address and telephone number. These forms will be kept up to date by the Safeguarding Coordinator. Workers may be asked to produce their birth certificate or other proof of identity
- Talking to a potential worker and finding out about any past experiences which may affect their ability to work with young people
- Talking to others who may know the person
- Making all appointments, paid and voluntary, conditional upon the satisfactory completion of a period of probation
- Only confirming appointment after due review and consultation with the worker and any other interested party e.g. Other workers, leaders
- Taking references, particularly when the potential worker is unknown

Note: Individuals who have a previous record of abusing children or vulnerable adults will not be allowed to work with children and young people or vulnerable adults. Nor will they be permitted to be present when youth and children's activities are taking place.

Support, training and supervision of workers

All those working with children and young people will be expected to undertake regular training and updates in safeguarding issues. Workers should be clear about their roles and responsibilities. They should have read the safeguarding policy and accompanying policies which are available from the Safeguarding Coordinator.

All workers should be aware that their contact with children and young people puts them in a relationship of trust (i.e. In a position of power and influence) both within and outside the activity/group concerned.

Regular opportunities should be made for workers to meet together to review and plan their work, to share their experiences, to receive training and to talk about their relationships with the children and young people.

Where possible, those with overall responsibility for a group should take opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work.

A Safeguarding Coordinator will be appointed to have responsibility for the coordination and implementation of Ashwood's Safeguarding policy and procedures.

Leadership of activities

Records should be kept detailing the name and address of children and young people under 18 attending groups, as well as the name and contact number of a parent/guardian. These should be available at each session.

As far as possible, no activity, group, or event with children or young people is to take place where there is not at least one male and female worker present, unless the group of young people concerned is made up of the same sex whereupon these shall be not less than two workers present of this sex.

If counselling or one-to-one work is to take place, other workers should be informed when and where this is taking place, and take place in a public setting. Where the young person and their family is new to Ashwood, or is of different gender to the worker, another worker should always be present.

Children and young people are to be treated with respect and dignity, with importance being given to appropriate use of language, touch and attitude.

If a young person or child is to be taken home on their own, they should occupy the rear seat of the vehicle.

Consent should be sought for those under 18 wishing to participate in activities taking place off site.

Activities should be planned in ways which minimise risk to children and young people.

Wherever activities are taking place there should be a trained and designated first aider on site.

The minimal staffing levels for activities should be as follows:

- 0 - 2 years - **one adult** to three children.
- 2 - 3 years - **one adult** to four children.
- 4 - 8 years - **one adult** to six children.
- 9 - 12 years - **one adult** to eight children.
- 13 - 18 years - **one adult** to ten children.

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:

- **Always** ask permission.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- 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 by yourself
- Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- 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:
 - ✓ You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.

- ✓ You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- ✓ You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- ✓ You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- ✓ You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Known offenders in the church community

Ashwood Church, like other churches, is unique in that, based on the uncompromising message of the gospel, it opens its doors to all. Of course, this means there may be times when a known sexual offender wishes to attend Ashwood Church or one of our activities. If this were to happen in Ashwood, we would take all steps to ensure that Ashwood remains a safe place for children, young people and vulnerable adults. In this situation we would work with Thirtyone:Eight (Our safeguarding umbrella body), LADO, police, and probation services to risk assess and put in place appropriate boundaries to ensure everyone is safe.

Useful phone numbers

Safeguarding Coordinator

Karen Jenner

T: **07579 098031**

E: safeguarding@ashwoodchurch.org.uk

Designated Trustee

Elaine Torr

T: **07973 419084**

Other useful contacts

MASH team for urgent referrals: **0300 500 80 90**

Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team – **0300 456 4546**

Early Help Unit - **0115 804 1248**

thirtyone:eight – (advisory body for church safeguarding)
helpline – **0303 003111**

NSPCC **0808 800 5000**

ChildLine (for children/young people) **0800 1111**

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