



Trustee responsible for Safeguarding:

Document log

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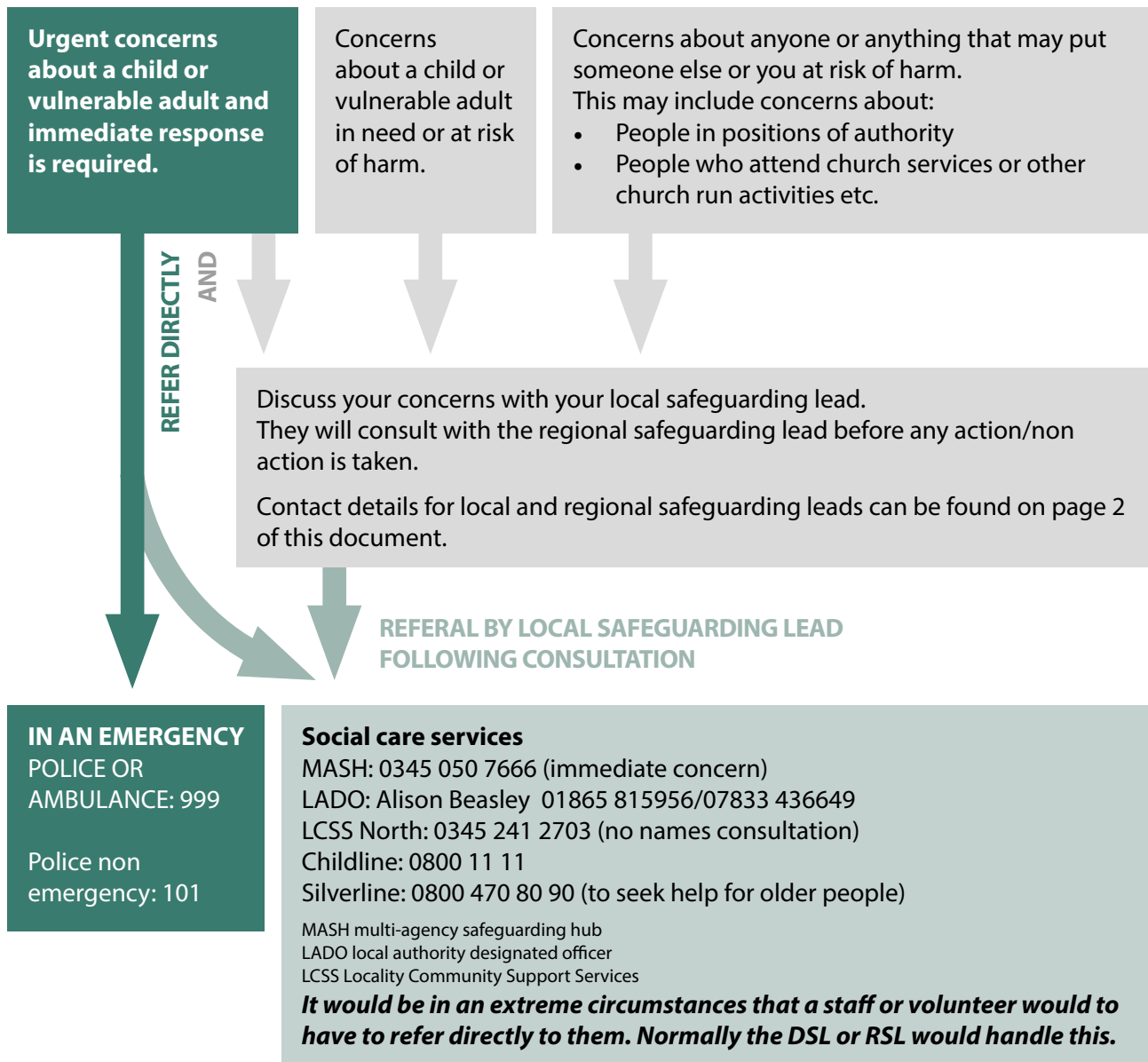
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What to do if you have safeguarding concerns



GENERAL ADVICE

- Your role is NOT to investigate.
- When deciding what to do, ALWAYS put the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult first.
- Listen carefully, make a clear record of what you are concerned about and what you have seen or heard and date and time this.
- If in doubt share with someone who has a Safeguarding role and that you trust.
- If you continue to have concerns, keep raising them, speak to someone listed above.



Contents

1. How to use this document

1.1 Glossary of terms

2. Introduction

2.1 Our view on the value of each person

2.2 Safeguarding Policy statement

2.3 The purpose of this Policy

2.4 The communication of the Policy

3. Code of conduct

3.1 Keeping yourself safe

3.2 Your behaviour

3.3 One-to-one working

3.4 Sexual Health advice

3.5 Physical touch

3.6 Discipline

3.7 Controlled substances

3.8 Electronic communications

3.9 Cameras and videos

3.10 Social media

3.11 Ratios

3.12 Transport

3.13 Toileting

3.14 Additional guidelines for group leaders

3.15 Safer recruitment - a brief summary

4. Recognising child abuse

4.1 Recognising child abuse

4.2 Types of abuse

4.3 Volunteer advice for responding to child protection concerns

5. Good practice guidelines

5.1 Special needs

5.2 Consent

5.3 Safe environment and venue

5.4 First aid

5.5 Residentials

6. Code of Conduct for those working with vulnerable adults

6.1 Vulnerability

6.2 Definitions

6.3 Capacity

6.4 Good Practice

6.5 Forms and signs of harm in vulnerable adults

6.6 Promoting Good Practice

6.7 Responding to abuse

6.8 Guidance in pastoral care

7. Risk Assessment



8. Safer recruitment of staff members and volunteers and Safeguarding appointments

- 8.1** Safer recruitment
- 8.2** Safeguarding appointments
- 8.3** implementation in local churches
- 8.4** Implementation in the regions

9. Dealing with those who may pose a risk

- 9.1** Dealing with those who may pose a risk
- 9.2** Good Practice – a Contract of Agreement
- 9.3** Dealing with Declarations
- 9.4** Offender Contract of Agreement

10. Lone working Policy for those working and volunteering with children or vulnerable adults

11. Application form for working with children

- 11.1** Application form

Appendices

Appendix 1

Proforma Consent Form

Appendix 2

Proforma Driving Details Record

Appendix 3

Proforma Activity Practices (starting and managing existing activities)

Appendix 4

Proforma Declaration of Agreement to Policy

Appendix 5

Appointment of volunteers and staff members checklist

Appendix 6

Vulnerable Adults



1. How to use this document

This document consists of various parts. Depending on the type of work or volunteering you are engaged in, there are specific sections that you are required to need. Each section has a coloured guide to indicate required reading for different positions, however you may find it helpful to read the whole document.

If you are a [staff member](#), a **Trustee**, a **Regional or Local [Safeguarding Lead](#)**, a **member of an eldership or leadership team**, you are required to read the **red sections** (which, you'll be happy to learn, include the whole document!).

SECTIONS READ THE WHOLE DOCUMENT

If you are involved in **working with [children](#)** as a staff member or [volunteer](#), you are required to read the **orange sections**. This includes involvement with children on Sunday mornings (including within worship and other serving teams) and in our mid-week activities. You must also read these sections if [OCC](#) has required you to have a Disclosure & Barring Service ([DBS](#)) check.

SECTIONS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Read the **yellow sections** if you are working with [vulnerable adults](#) in a pastoral capacity or offering one-to-one support, whether as a staff member or as a volunteer. This includes personal pastoring, leading midweek groups or any work with vulnerable adults.

SECTIONS 1, 2, 6, 10

If you **lead a children's or youth team or event**, you are required to read the **blue sections**. These teams may be internal church-focussed ministries, or outreach or social action missions. They include toddler groups, children's church, youth clubs etc.

SECTIONS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

If you **lead an adult-focussed team or event**, you are required to read the **purple sections**. These teams may be internal church-focussed ministries or outreach or social action missions, including parenting and marriage courses, lunch clubs etc.

SECTIONS 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11



Navigation: Summary of your route by colour

At the start of each section and at the bottom of each page the coloured route icon appears. The grey bar indicates the current section.

The end of section icon contains the number for next section of each route. Clicking that number links to the next section on route for that colour.

If your route colour is paled out for a section, it indicates you are not required to read that section.

The chart below also provides a summary of the sections on each route.

SECTION	Red	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Purple
1	Red	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Purple
2	Red	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Purple
3	Red	Orange	Grey	Blue	Grey
4	Red	Orange	Grey	Blue	Grey
5	Red	Orange	Grey	Blue	Grey
6	Red	Grey	Yellow	Grey	Purple
7	Red	Grey	Grey	Blue	Purple
8	Red	Grey	Grey	Blue	Purple
9	Red	Grey	Grey	Blue	Purple
10	Red	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Purple
11	Red	Grey	Grey	Blue	Purple





1.1 Glossary of Terms

Activity leader A volunteer who leads groups or activities

Adult Anyone 18 years old or above and out of secondary education (including College and equivalent training)

Child Anyone under the age of 18 and those in year 13 or equivalent.

Church leader The senior leader of the church (often known as the Senior Pastor)

DBS Disclosure & Barring Service

Lone working A staff member or volunteer working without any other staff members or volunteers present

OCC Oxfordshire Community Churches

Primary ages 0-11 years old and Primary School Year Reception to Year 6

Safeguarding Lead The Volunteer or Staff Member with responsibility for ensuring Safeguarding; Safeguarding Leads are named at different levels - see [Contacts](#) for names and contact details.

Secondary ages 11-18 years old, Year 7-Year 13 (including College)

Staff member Any person paid by Oxfordshire Community Churches who, like a volunteer, has a current and valid DBS check and has been OCC Safeguarding trained

Volunteer Any OCC Safeguarding trained worker who has a current and valid DBS check

Vulnerable adult See [section 6.2](#) for definitions

Young leaders In law, young leaders under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team.

Only volunteers and staff members as defined above may work on OCC projects that relate to children and vulnerable adults.

NEXT SECTION

2

2

2

2

2








2. Introduction

In this section

- 2.1 Our view on the value of each person
- 2.2 Safeguarding Policy statement
- 2.3 Purpose of this Policy
- 2.4 Communication of the Policy

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN
-  VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH ADULTS
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS
-  LEADERS OF OVER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

2.1 Our view on the value of each person

Every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

The Policy and procedure presented in this document are intended to help staff members and volunteers to guard against abuse and respond appropriately when abuse is alleged, disclosed, discovered or suspected.

The nature and diversity of OCC's activities make it difficult to cover all aspects of the work in one policy document. Risk Assessments must therefore be drawn up for each event, group of events and regular activity to ensure that everyone is protected and that staff members and volunteers operate within guidelines approved by OCC. Use the Risk Assessment proforma in [section 7](#).

This Policy is approved by the OCC Trustees, and is subject to annual reapproval.





2.2 Safeguarding Policy Statement

The purpose of this document is to set out policy, procedures and guidance in matters of Safeguarding. All the procedures set out in this document are either requirements in law or a result of OCC's Policy and must therefore be followed. Should **specific** circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which might justify a variation, then the Charity Safeguarding Lead must be consulted at the earliest opportunity (normally before any action is taken and if not within 24 hours) and any variation must be recorded. If the Charity Safeguarding Lead is unavailable then the Regional Safeguarding Leads will deputise as required.

In general, the policy does not pertain to interactions with children and young people *beyond the official organised activity of the church*. Where the organised activity of the church interacts with people's friendships, we have made this clear in the text, e.g.

- Parental lifts (3.12)
- Family friendships (social media, 3.10)

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- That everyone regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation, has the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, vulnerable adults, their parents/carers and their agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.
- OCC has a responsibility to keep staff members and volunteers safe.

The Kings school in Witney is part of the OCC charity, due to the nature of the school, the school has its own safeguarding policy and adheres to that policy.

2.3 Purpose of the Policy

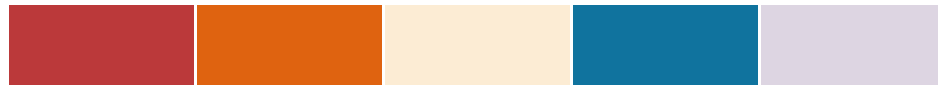
- To provide protection and promote well-being for the children and vulnerable adults who attend, are involved in or served by OCC.
- To provide both staff members and volunteers with guidance on procedures they must adopt in the event that they suspect anyone may be experiencing or at risk of harm.
- To minimise the risk to both staff members and volunteers from malicious allegations.
- To foster a culture of being open to challenge.



2.4 Communication of the Policy

Everyone who is involved with any OCC activities will be made aware of this Policy and is asked to read the relevant sections annually; this will be checked with Local Safeguarding Leads. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians/carers to remove the person they are responsible for from an activity that does not meet their own safety expectations, despite fulfilling the requirements of this Policy.

NEXT SECTION	3	3	6	3	6
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3. Code of Conduct for those working with children

In this section

- 3.1 Keeping yourself safe
- 3.2 Your behaviour
- 3.3 One-to-one working
- 3.4 Sexual Health advice
- 3.5 Physical touch
- 3.6 Discipline
- 3.7 Controlled substances
- 3.8 Electronic communications
- 3.9 Cameras and videos
- 3.10 Social media
- 3.11 Ratios
- 3.12 Transport
- 3.13 Toileting
- 3.14 Additional guidelines for group leaders
- 3.15 Safer recruitment – a brief summary

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

3.1 Keeping yourself safe

Safeguarding is about keeping yourself safe, as well as looking to prevent harm and keeping children safe. Risk Assessments must be carried out for all activities (see [section 7](#)), as well as for any anti-social hours, [lone working](#) or one-to-one working, in order to ensure you have appropriate Safeguarding measures in place, such as letting someone know you are visiting a certain person. All Risk Assessments must be reviewed yearly by the Local Safeguarding Lead and approved by the Regional Safeguarding Lead, or more frequently if circumstances change.



3.2 Your behaviour

You are expected to report any breaches of this Policy to your Safeguarding Lead. Staff members and volunteers who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to OCC disciplinary procedures. Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police or social care team.

DO

Act in accordance with this Policy at all times, and in accordance with any guidelines from your Local Safeguarding Lead.

Be a role model – in language, attitude, behaviour, and modelling how to effectively challenge the inappropriate language, attitude and behaviour of others.

Treat children fairly, without favouritism or discrimination.

Listen to and respect children at all times, taking their contributions seriously.

DON'T

Have a sexual relationship with any of the children that OCC works with. (It is an offence for you to do so, even if the relationship is consensual.) This applies to all under-18s, even if you don't directly work with them.

Don't engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop whilst you are a staff member or volunteer involved in children and youth work. If you are found to be having an intimate/sexual relationship with a child, you will be immediately dismissed. Where a child is involved, the police will be informed and legal proceedings will commence.

3.3 One-to-one working

You must not normally be working in situations which require you to be **alone in private with a child, of either sex**. 'Private' is understood as somewhere where others are not present, e.g. a private room within a public building that does not have a window or visibility to regular passers-by.

One-to-one (1:1) work must take place in a public context, e.g. a café, or another location where others



are aware of the meeting and free to interrupt, e.g. a room where there are windows in the door or the doors remain open.

You must never undertake 1:1 work with under 18's in your own home without another volunteer or staff member present who is not a close relative to you.

DO

If a child wishes to discuss a specific problem, you may find it useful to limit the length of the conversation to one hour. Then, if the conversation is particularly intense or complex, you may be able to arrange a further appointment, or simply take a break before resuming. If you feel out of your depth or want support in this process, ask your supervisor.

DON'T

Enter into or sustain a one-to-one conversation which addresses a child's personal life or problems if the child is of the opposite sex.

Never promise confidentiality to any child. Assure them that anything shared will be handled sensitively within the constraints of our legal responsibilities to inform others. The following are some examples of information that must not be kept confidential:

Child protection issues, e.g. abuse, neglect etc.

- If there is a threat to life.
- If there is a risk to yourself or others.
- If there is a threat to national security.
- If a criminal offence has been committed.

3.4 Sexual Health advice

If a child asks for sexual health advice or assistance in accessing services, you must balance their rights and wishes with our responsibility to keep them safe from harmful activities. Remember that underage sexual activity can be a sign of abuse or exploitation and that children aged 13 and under are legally considered incapable of consenting to sexual activity. It is illegal to have any form of sexual relations if you are under the age of 16 years old.



You may find the [Fraser Guidelines](#) helpful in considering whether the child has the maturity to make their own decisions and understand the implications of those decisions:

- Do all that you can to persuade them to speak with their parents/guardians about accessing sexual health services.
- Assess if they are able to understand any advice given.
- Assess if they will engage in sexual activity with or without contraceptives/ sexual health services – potentially leading to physical or mental harm.
- If they won't speak to parents/guardians and they're going to engage in sexual activity, it may be appropriate for you to support them in accessing relevant services. Staff members or volunteers must not provide contraception.

3.5 Physical touch

Positive physical touch is essential for healthy child development. Some of the children OCC works with will have experienced negative physical touch. Others will have suffered an absence of positive physical touch and will actively seek it, including from members of the opposite sex.

We want to help children understand what types of physical contact are appropriate in different settings, and we want to meet their need for positive physical contact where this is appropriate. However, it is critically important that you follow these guidelines whilst doing so.

1. Physical contact must always be for the benefit of the child, not yours, and normally initiated/requested by them (for example, you may think something they just told you is distressing for them and want to give them a hug. You must not initiate contact – but if they request a hug, you may respond, or if a baby cries in a group then you may comfort the child, or if a child needed first aid treatment and could not communicate, we would carry out first aid).

2. Full hugs and sitting on laps must be avoided unless age-appropriate (6 years and under); 'side-hugs'/an arm around the shoulder can be appropriate, but you must assess the risks and possible perceptions before doing so.

3. Physical contact should be avoided in 1:1 settings, except where a child of the volunteer or staff member's own gender is extremely distressed and requesting touch. Even under these circumstances you should assess the risks and possible perceptions before responding.



4. Physical contact in public space and appropriate for the context is fine, e.g. when meeting someone by shaking their hand or giving them a high five.

5. If a game requires physical contact, the nature and extent of this must be agreed with the group before starting.

6. You will be held accountable for any physical contact with children and must be prepared to explain any contact made.

Some children have no concept of appropriate physical boundaries with [adults](#). If they request something which you feel is inappropriate, gently refuse – and then explain why. This will help them to keep themselves safe around other adults.

3.6 Discipline

The best discipline is preventative. Work with children at the start of a relationship or session to establish mutually agreed boundaries. [Activity leaders](#) will inform the team at the start of sessions when and how discipline will be enforced so that the team can present a united front. Sometimes children become angry, upset and disruptive. Occasionally their behaviour may endanger themselves or others.

If a child is being disruptive, here are some things that may be of help:

Speaking eye-to-eye (crouch down if necessary), calmly but firmly ask them to stop.

Speak to them to establish the cause(s) of upset.

Distract/re-occupy them if possible, away from the cause of upset if necessary.

If a second warning is required, inform them that they will be asked to leave the session if the behaviour continues.

Warn them that if they continue to be disruptive, this might result in longer term exclusion from the group.

Individual Risk Assessments may need to be used, please discuss with the Safeguarding Lead.



If a child is harming themselves, another person or property:

Escort other children away from the area.

With a second staff member/volunteer present, ask them to STOP. If they ignore you, warn them that you will consider calling for help (e.g. the police) if they do not stop.

In exceptional circumstances and with assistance, you might need to restrain them to prevent them harming themselves, others or property whilst you wait for the police. This must only be done as a last resort.

After an incident, you must always record what happened as soon as possible after the incident and give a copy to the activity leader and Safeguarding Lead for the session. Your record must include:

- What activity was taking place.
- What might have caused the disruptive behaviour.
- The child's behaviour.
- What you said and how you and others responded.
- A list of others present who witnessed the incident.
- Date, time and location of the incident.

Please write as clearly and objectively as possible.

3.7 Controlled substances

All activities where OCC is acting in *loco parentis* (in place of the parents) must be drug, alcohol (except for Communion directed by the local leaders), tobacco, vape and offensive weapon free. (any necessary medication must be listed on children's [consent forms](#)). If an under-18 is found to have drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vape and/or offensive weapons with them at such an activity, the activity leader must confiscate it and record details in the incident sheet. If an over-18 (and in equivalent of year 13) has alcohol, the activity leader must remove it and return it to them when they leave; drugs and offensive weapons must be confiscated. If immediate support is required, call the police.

Anyone whose behaviour is disruptive due to alcohol or drugs must be challenged; if their behaviour is posing a risk to themselves or others, they must be asked to leave the session. You must consider how they got to the session and parents or guardians may need to be contacted.



3.8 Electronic communications

Electronic communication is an easy way to communicate with children. However, you must be aware of the dangers which can be associated with it.

Electronic communication is often extremely informal, which can create the potential for communication to be misunderstood. Because of its informal style, it's easy to accidentally or purposefully cross appropriate boundaries.

Electronic means of communication must only be used when these three conditions are met:

- With children of [secondary school age](#), in line with the age restrictions of the relevant platform.
- With children whose parents/guardians have consented to this on their consent form.
- Operated by volunteers or staff member.

With the world of electronic communication changing so rapidly, it is not possible to issue guidance that covers all eventualities. However, there are some general principles that can help; please consult your Local Safeguarding Lead or Regional Safeguarding Lead as required.

DO

Use clear, unambiguous language (rather than abbreviations and 'text language').

Use electronic communication (including texts) for information-giving purposes only. If a child in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with you:

- Save the conversations
- Keep a log of who communicated, when and who was involved
- Contact the Safeguarding Lead.

Use the blind copy (bcc) function, in line with GDPR Policy, when sending e-mails to multiple recipients, unless you have permission from the whole group to share e-mail addresses.

DON'T

Use one-to-one electronic communication with [primary-age children](#), e.g. text message, social media. Group video chat may be used but only with parental consent and sign off from Regional Safeguarding Lead.

Share any private information with children, or any information secretly.



Request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of your role.

Use electronic communication with children between the hours of 21:30 and 08:00 unless in an emergency.

Participate in online gaming with children.

Make a one-to-one video call to a child.

Conduct any text-based conversation (a series of text messages being sent using digital means) with children using any means, such as WhatsApp, texting, Messenger etc.

Put any pressure on children to reveal their personal email addresses or mobile phone numbers.

Use language which could be deemed as flirtatious, sexual or showing favouritism. Do not scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, even in jest.

3.9 Cameras and videos

Staff members and volunteers can use their own phone with permission of the activity leader to take photos with documented parental consent. Photos must be used for the intended purpose only and then immediately deleted from the phone or device and where possible cloud storage.

The activity leader must ask visitors not to take any pictures or videos.

3.10 Social media

The Local Safeguarding Lead in the church must 'sign off' all social media being used for their church's purposes to communicate with children and give a list of approved accounts to the region's Safeguarding Lead. The Regional Safeguarding Lead must have admin or sign in details for all church-related social media accounts that are used to connect with and contact children. In the event that the same person fulfils both the Local Safeguarding Lead and Regional Safeguarding Lead roles, administrative access to accounts must be provided to the Charity Safeguarding Lead or to the Charity Safeguarding Lead's delegate.



DO

Only use the church's social media accounts when communicating with children, apart from WhatsApp. For other approved social media, a church specific account can be created.

Adhere to age limits of social networking sites, i.e. do not connect with children who are underage for a site yet have an account. Permission must be obtained to communicate with the child by a staff member or volunteer from the parent/guardian of the child.

Talk with a child if you're concerned about the content of their profile (e.g. unsuitable photos). Un-friend them if they continue to post inappropriate content.

Ensure official church pages and profiles have a message stating who to contact (church details, charity details) if there's any concern about online conduct.

Ensure a parent/guardian has given consent on a child's consent form before uploading images/videos of them.

Ensure that all 'groups', pages and other profiles/accounts have privacy settings such that they are closed and prevent non-members from accessing content. If there is a reason why a social media platform cannot carry this function then permission must be obtained from the Charity Safeguarding Lead to use that social media platform.

If using WhatsApp (this is the only social media in which you may use your own profile) or Facebook Messenger, this must only be used in a group context. Such platforms must not be used for one-to-one chats.

WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger groups (for text only, no video) must include more than 1 adult, who must be relevant volunteers/staff members for the group or activity.

Any new and existing social media platform that the church wishes to use must be approved by the Regional Safeguarding Lead.

DON'T

Manage any digital communication with, or communication attempts from, children using your personal profile. Instead, where applicable, create a "church account" e.g. joyouthworkerfacebook. Then give the relevant Safeguarding Lead access to this account.

Delete messages within a church social media account



Give details that could compromise a child's safety, such as schools, locations, home addresses on a public website.

Use video or audio chat to talk one-to-one children on social networks.

Send video or audio recordings to individual children on social networks.

In the context of a group video chat, the only platform OCC approves is Zoom.us. Zoom is the only platform permitted because at present, it is the only one with a room that you can close and doesn't leave people being able to connect over the platform. You must follow the guidance below:

Responsibility of participants

Participants must dress appropriately for a public meeting.

Participants must be encouraged to consider their setting and what is on view to others.

Think carefully about which meetings with children you will share the link to join publicly on social media platforms or any other public forum.

Parents and young people must be aware that the normal OCC Safeguarding Policy still applies during these online sessions. This means that the session will be run by volunteers and staff members and that Safeguarding concerns may be reported to the Local Safeguarding Lead.

Parents must be present within the property when primary-aged children are online.

Interactions must take place in a family room not a child's bedroom.

Participants must not share the link to join a Zoom call on any public website; links can be shared in closed groups.

Responsibility of meeting hosts

When you set up a new scheduled meeting, under 'Meeting ID' choose 'generate automatically'. This avoids you using your Personal Meeting ID.

Hosts must disable private messaging on Zoom.

Hosts must set the screen sharing to 'host only' as this reduces the risk of 'Zoombombing' (where unwanted content is shared in a meeting).



Hosts must disable 'file transfer' to prevent any malware being shared.

Group Zoom calls must not be recorded.

Hosts must use a password when setting up meetings.

Do not share the link for children to join a Zoom call on open websites; closed groups are fine.

Two volunteers/staff members must be present for the whole meeting. Hosts must use a 'waiting room' to ensure that a minimum of two leaders are present on the call before young people are live on the call.

Hosts must disable private messaging on Zoom. An exception is made if private messaging is necessary for an activity e.g. Mafia, in which case it is only permitted between individuals and the game-master, and the chat is saved.

Chat is automatically saved for sessions.

Consent for children to be on calls must be obtained.

Registers must be kept of volunteers, staff members and children.

The host must end the call for all users at the end of the agreed activity session.

The meeting host can mute a child or remove a child from the call if needed; if they remove the child, they must follow up afterwards with the child and parent, this may be done by a phone call if appropriate or face to face.

Given the relational culture in OCC churches, outside of formal church activities there will inevitably be friendships between families, including between children and adults, and including on social media. While these are beyond the purview of OCC to regulate, we do encourage adults to gain the consent of parents before befriending their under-18s on social media, and to consider which of the social media guidelines here are helpful for them, for example not engaging in 1-to-1 online conversations with children from other families.

For the avoidance of doubt, adults who are staff member or volunteers who are involved in children or youth work, should not be social media friends, even if they are also family friends. For other positions please refer to the regional safeguarding lead.



3.11 Ratios

The minimum staffing levels for children's activities are given in the table below and must be adhered to. More adult help may be required if children are being taken out of the normal setting, undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

Table of ratios

0-2 years: 1 adult to 3 children

2-3 years: 1 adult to 4 children

4-7 years: 1 adult to 6 children

8-11 years: 1 adult to 8 children

11-18 years: 1 adult to 10 children

Footnote: Adult in the above table means staff or volunteer.

- Activities must not run if the appropriate ratios cannot be met.
- Each group must have at least 2 volunteers or staff members.
- The best practice would be at least one male and one female adult for mixed gender activities with secondary ages. Where this is not possible an appropriate Risk Assessment must be created and approved by Regional and Local Safeguarding Leads.
- If small groups are in the same room or in an adjoining space with open access between them, then it is possible to have only one adult per group, depending on ratios and the nature of the activity.
- For an 18-year-old to be counted in the ratios as a volunteer or staff member, they must have left college or equivalent training and be a volunteer or staff member. If the 18-year-old is serving in the youth group they were part of, a separate Risk Assessment must be written to assess their suitability.
- No person under 18 years of age must be left in charge of any children of any age. Nor must children attending a group be left alone at any time.
- Children 16 and over who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping must always be overseen by an appointed staff member or volunteer who will be responsible for ensuring that the good practice and Safeguarding procedures outlined in this Policy are followed and the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding. They must also be trained and subject to a [DBS](#) check, as per normal procedures.



3.12 Transport

For some activities, you may need to transport children individually, in small or large groups. Sometimes it may make sense to use your personal car to do so. In all forms of transport, there are risks of accidents, allegations or abuse, so you must abide by the following (Items 2-13 do not apply to parental transport):

1. If parents transport children, e.g. to and from activities, ensure that everyone knows such arrangements are the responsibility of the parents involved and not of OCC.

2. You must be suitably trained/qualified to drive the vehicle and the correct insurance must be in place. The Local Safeguarding Lead will need to see your driving licence and insurance (proving you have business use), as well as proof that the vehicle you are using has valid Tax and MOT. The above documents are to be seen yearly, the expiry date is recorded in the driving details form and Local Safeguarding Leads will check this on a regular basis. See Appendix 2 – [Proforma for Driving details record](#) for an example of how to record this if you are unsure. If a volunteer needs business use, then the local church should pay for this.

3. Parents/guardians must have agreed to transport on the child's consent form.

4. Children and the driver always need to wear a seat belt and abide by the road laws.

5. When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle, it is advised to keep children in the same groups on the outgoing and return journeys. This will avoid confusion over whether a child has been transported home.

6. Do not leave a child on their own at collection or dropping off points. Make sure that they are collected by an appropriate adult, or they have safely entered the property.

7. Do not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to you about an in-depth or sensitive matter and has waited until other children have been dropped off, you must explain it isn't appropriate to talk in that context and arrange to meet them in a public setting.

8. The presence of two staff members or volunteers in a car increases the sense of accountability but does not in itself guarantee protection for a child.

9. Be aware of instances where it may be unwise for you to transport a particular child, e.g. where there has been a disagreement or where they have a 'crush' on you.



10. Long journeys can lead to boredom and bad behaviour. Plan time for breaks and avoid travelling during rush hour where possible.

11. There may be times when you are alone in a vehicle with one or more children: For short periods, e.g. dropping off the last child from a group. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. transporting to or from an appointment or event.

Here are some things to think about when driving alone with a child:

- If there is only one child in the car, the adult needs to be the same sex as the child. If, in exceptional circumstances, a volunteer or staff member is transporting one or more children of the opposite sex home, they must get permission from a parent or guardian and inform the Local Safeguarding Lead.
- Would it be better for the child to travel in the back of the car?
- If there is a group of children in the car, then it's fine for a child to sit in the front.

12. Children must normally use a car seat until they're 12 years old or 135 cm tall (whichever comes first). The car seat must have a label showing a capital 'E' in a circle, which shows they're EU approved. Children can travel without car seats in the following circumstances:

- In minibuses, but they must not sit in the front seats.
- In the case of a journey which is unexpected, necessary AND over a short distance.
- If there is no room for a 3rd car seat in the rear of the car.

13. Journeys with children should be reduced or avoided if possible, especially if it is not practical/helpful for the child to sit in the back of the car (because they are an older teenager, or because it would bring unhelpful awkwardness to a mentoring relationship).

In such instances, carry out a Risk Assessment which must be signed off by your church's Safeguarding Lead before the event. In the event of an emergency or other unforeseen circumstances which require a change to the agreed Policy, the volunteer/staff member must contact the Local or Regional Safeguarding Lead and obtain permission with a report written afterwards. The Risk Assessment must take into consideration points above as well as the following variables:

- The age and maturity of the child.
- The amount of time that will be spent in the vehicle together.
- The nature and length of your relationship with them.
- Journeys must be planned as much as possible in advance and a Risk Assessment carried out, where this is not possible an agreement must be obtained from the parent/guardian and Local or Regional Safeguarding Lead.



3.13 Toileting

Where possible, please encourage parents to take their children to the toilet before they come to the group. Only staff members and volunteers can take children to the toilet. In every Risk Assessment, toileting must feature, taking into consideration location, risk and children's needs.

3.13.1 Toileting for those not yet at primary school

For those not yet at primary school, there should be ideally two staff members or volunteers to take children to the toilet; however, one staff member or volunteer may be appropriate in line with your Risk Assessment. Written consent must be given by parents for any nappies to be changed (this may be stored on ChurchSuite). Toilets must be checked and free from other adults whilst the children are in the facilities as part of the group.

3.13.2 Toileting for primary school aged children

Primary-aged children must be taken to the toilet by a staff member or volunteer. One staff member or volunteer can take the children to the toilet. The staff member or volunteer must check the toilets are free from other adults and then wait outside. Another volunteer within the group must be informed you are taking children to the toilet. With younger children, you may sometimes need to enter the toilet to give some help. If you think this is going to happen, then you must take another staff member or volunteer with you where possible.

3.13.3 Toileting for children aged 11-18

Children of this age should be able to go to the toilet on their own. Depending on the situation of other people in the building, you may want a volunteer/staff member to go and check there are no other adults in the toilet at that time.

3.13.4 Designated children's toilets

If the building you are using allows for you to have designated children's toilets for your groups, then this would be the best practice. There must be suitable hygienic washing facilities and toilets must be clean for use.



3.13.5 Toilets for volunteers and staff

Volunteer/staff member must not use the same toilets as the children, instead using another available toilet, including the disabled toilet if necessary (if, in individual circumstances, this is not possible, then the volunteer/staff member must inform another volunteer/staff member they are using the toilet).

3.14 Additional guidelines for activity leaders

In addition to the above, the activity leader must:

Ensure any health & safety requirements are adhered to as outlined in the Risk Assessment for the activity.

Undertake Risk Assessments with appropriate action taken and records kept.

Keep attendance register of participants, staff members, volunteers and any authorised guests and consent forms up to date.

Have an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present.

Create space for children to talk – either formally or informally.

Liaise with the Local Safeguarding Lead over Good Practice for Safeguarding.

Always inform the Local Safeguarding Lead of any specific Safeguarding concerns that arise.

Any new activity must comply with the [Activity Practices](#) in Appendix 3. All existing activities must be checked for compliance with Appendix 3 and checked every 12 months by the Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader. Copies must be sent to church leadership teams.

3.15 Safer recruitment – a brief summary

Safer recruitment applies to all roles, paid or voluntary. It applies to all parts of Oxfordshire Community Churches where there is work for or with children or vulnerable adults. Refer to [section 8](#) on safer recruitment.

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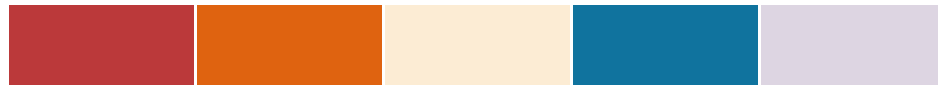
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4

6

4

6



4. Recognising child abuse




In this section

4.1 Recognising child abuse

4.2 Types of abuse

4.3 Volunteer advice for responding to child protection concerns

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

4.1 Recognising child abuse

Child abuse has many forms. There are four identified categories of abuse as described in the government guidance '[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)':

Physical
Emotional
Sexual
Neglect

Guidelines on responding to abuse are contained in [section 4.3](#) below. It is important not to investigate yourself but to seek advice.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. The categories listed here are those recognised in statutory guidance as domestic violence/abuse. Staff members and volunteers must also be aware that other forms of abuse can occur, for example:

stranger abuse





internet-related abuse, sometimes called 'e-abuse'
bullying (abuse by other children)
fabricated or induced illness
abuse of disabled children (who are far more frequently abused than non-disabled children)
deliberate self-harm (overdoses, cutting)
domestic violence/abuse – see section 4.2.5 below
allegations of possession by evil spirits
child trafficking
sexual exploitation
forced marriage
peer abuse – can be confused with bullying

The government issues guidance documents or advice for several of these specialist topics.

4.2 Types of abuse

4.2.1 Physical abuse

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.

4.2.2 Emotional abuse

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 cyberbullying), 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.

4.2.3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Such 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 the outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or 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.

4.2.4 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 caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

4.2.5 Domestic violence or abuse

The terms 'violence' and 'abuse' are used interchangeably throughout this document. The Home Office defines domestic violence as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality'¹. Although both men and women can be victimised

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-government-domestic-violence-and-abuse-definition/circular-0032013-new-government-domestic-violence-and-abuse-definition>



in this way, a greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic abuse and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover. For this reason, the statements and guidance below are predominantly made with reference to women.

Domestic violence affects both adults and children within the family. Domestic violence has an impact on children in a number of ways:

- Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene.
- Children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent.
- Exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress which may express itself in anti-social or criminal behaviour.
- Children in violent households are significantly more likely to be exposed to other forms of child abuse.

Although separating from a violent partner should result in women and children being safe from harm, the danger does not automatically end. It should be recognised that the point of leaving an abusive relationship is the time of highest risk for a victim.

Domestic abuse also affects children because it impacts on parenting capacity.

- A parent (in most families, the mother) may have difficulty in looking after the children when domestic violence results in injuries. In extreme cases, domestic violence can lead to the parent's death.
- Exposure to psychological and emotional abuse has profound negative effects on women's mental health resulting in a loss of confidence, depression, feelings of degradation, problems with sleep, isolation, and increased use of medication and alcohol. These are all factors that can restrict the mother's capacity to meet the developmental needs of her child.
- Belittling and insulting a mother in front of her children undermines not only her respect for herself, but also the authority she needs to parent confidently.
- A mother's relationship with her children may also be affected because, in attempts to avoid further outbursts of violence, she prioritises her partner's needs over those of her children.

The impact of domestic violence on children increases when directly abused, when witnessing the abuse of a parent, or colluding (willingly or otherwise) in the concealment of assaults. This constitutes abuse of children and must be reported to the authorities.



Domestic violence can impact any and every age group. An alternative, safe and supportive residence is key to the safety of women and children subjected to violence and the threat of violence.

4.2.6 Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern both within and outside of faith communities, including the church. Aspects of spiritual abuse can be recognised under the four categories of abuse such as emotional abuse or physical abuse (e.g. forced healing rituals).

Within faith communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive or forced healing and deliverance ministries or rituals. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful, it must be referred for investigation in cooperation with appropriate statutory agencies.

Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those staff members or volunteer's working with children with the pastoral care of children should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of harm include the denial of the right of faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

4.3 Volunteer advice for responding to child protection concerns

Do not try to deal with any child protection concern on your own. Always tell your activity leader and/or Safeguarding Lead. Agree between you who will take what action and when.

If you are not sure if child abuse is involved, or if you have concerns about a child and you need someone to talk things over with, then you must contact your activity leader or Safeguarding Lead. The Local Authority Children's Services Duty Officer can also be a source of advice. Please see the [contacts page](#) and [flow chart](#) at the start of the document.

Always make notes about a possible child protection incident or disclosure as accurately as possible and as soon as possible. These must cover what has happened, in what context, and anything that seemed particularly significant. Quote the child's words exactly where possible. If possible, try to note from the register the child's full name, age/date of birth, address, telephone number and GP. Remember to add your name, role, date of incident and date of the recording.

Ensure all notes are kept in a safe place.



If a child asks to talk in confidence, do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child who is at risk to the statutory agencies. Always explain that you may have to get other people to help.

Stay calm
Listen to the child attentively
Maintain eye contact
Allow the child to talk but do not press for information or ask leading questions
Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened
Reassure the child that they were right to tell
Let the child know that other people will have to be told and why
Try to explain what will happen next in a way the child can understand
Reassure the child that they will continue to receive support during the difficult time to come

4.3.1 Imminent risk

If you encounter a child in a situation where the child is in imminent danger, you must act immediately to secure the safety of the child. Seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to Local Authority Children’s Services.

If a child needs emergency medical attention, this must be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents, if available, must be kept fully informed.

What to do if you suspect a child is at risk or has been abused:

- Agree with your activity leader or Safeguarding Lead who will make the referral to the Regional Safeguarding Lead. See the [flow chart](#) and list of [contacts](#) at the beginning for how to contact them.
- If the Regional Safeguarding Lead is not available, agree who will make the referral to the Local Authorities M.A.S.H team (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)
- Make an immediate telephone referral to the Local Authority Children’s Services. Make it clear from the first point of contact that you are making a child protection referral. Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child and family, e.g. the child’s name, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP (if known).
- Follow up your telephone call with a completed referral form (sometimes available on the Local Authority web site) or letter. If there is no acknowledgement within 48 hours, chase it.

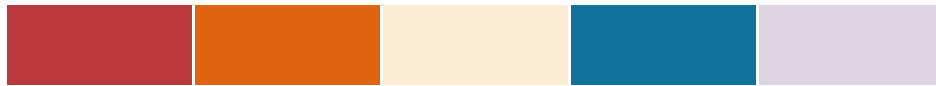


Remember that the child & family should, wherever possible, be informed about and consent to the referral unless this would put the welfare of the child or another person at further risk. If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent must not prevent a referral. The Duty Social Worker will give you advice over this if necessary.

Be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team. Tell them if you do not want your details disclosed to the family.

If your activity leader is not with you, call the [numbers](#) at the beginning of this document and follow the [flow chart](#). In urgent cases, call the police.

NEXT SECTION	5	5	6	5	6
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5. Good Practice guidelines

In this section

5.1 Special needs




5.2 Consent

5.3 Safe environment

5.4 First Aid

5.5 Residential

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS
-  LEADERS OF OVER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

5.1 Special needs

Welcome children with special needs to the group. Try to make the premises, toilets and access suitable for people with disabilities. Ask the parent or guardian about how best to meet the child's special needs, and do not see this as the responsibility of the child's parent only.

Disability legislation requires organisations to take reasonable steps to meet the needs of disabled people; this includes children.

5.2 Consent

Consent must be obtained for children to participate in all regular and one-off activities. This needs to be from a parent or person with parental responsibility. You must record who has given consent for activities. A consent form must be completed for every child who attends groups or activities, including for visiting children. The form must be updated annually and include the following:

- Name and address
- Date of birth
- Emergency contact details
- Medical information
- Any special needs, including activities which the child is unable to take part in



- Consent for emergency medical treatment
- Consent for photographs/videos if relevant
- Consent for social media (as per Policy)
- Consent for communication (as per Policy)

Separate consent must be obtained for one-off events and activities, e.g. swimming, outings, weekends away, etc. All personal details and consent forms must be stored securely in line with GDPR Policy. An example [consent form](#) is contained in the Appendices.

Paper copies must be shredded once information is transferred to ChurchSuite or appropriate system. Records must be kept for 5 years.

5.3 Safe environment and venue

For each activity, follow the guidelines below. A separate Risk Assessment must be completed for any unusual activity or when away from the usual location.

Insurance, the First Aid Kit and fire precautions must be checked, and a Health and Safety Check must be completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards. Things to check in a health and safety check are:

- Meeting places must be warm, well-lit, and well ventilated. They must be kept clean and free of clutter.
- Toilets and hand basins must be easily available with hygienic drying facilities, unless the activity is outside and no toilets or hygienic facilities are available; in this case, this must be added to the Risk Assessment and approved by the Local Safeguarding Lead.
- Appropriate space and equipment must be available for any intended activity.
- If food is regularly prepared by OCC volunteers/staff members for children on the premises, the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate acquired. Please see government guidelines; Local Safeguarding Leads will sign off on what is needed.
- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Volunteers/staff members must be aware of the fire procedures for the setting in use.
- Unaccompanied children must be encouraged not to walk to or from your premises along dark or badly lit paths.



5.4 First Aid

A First Aid Kit and accident book must be available for all organised activities. The contents of the First Aid Kit must be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group must designate one staff member or volunteer to check the contents at prescribed intervals which will be added to the Risk Assessment. The below is a useful link for more info:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/what-employers-need-to-do.htm>

All staff members and volunteers must be encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge and the church may provide access to First Aid training. A list of first aiders must be compiled and kept available.

All accidents (accident is something requiring treatment of any form) must be recorded in line with the OCC Health and Safety Policy.

5.5 Residential

Residential must adhere to the following guidelines:

Give careful consideration to the gender mix of the group you will be taking; mixed gender groups should be accompanied by both male and female leaders. Single sex groups must be accompanied by a leader of the same sex.

Research the destination(s) carefully and pre-visit the site if possible.

Rules that apply for normal activities may need to be revised and communicated again to the young people and team before embarking on the trip. Any revisions need to be signed off by the Local Safeguarding Lead.

Risk Assessments must be created and follow the guidance in the [Risk Assessment section](#). Consent forms must be obtained for every child.

If the trip involves an overnight stay then additional factors will need to be considered. If it is a purpose-built centre, then detailed liaison must take place with the management of the venue. If it is a camping trip, this will present other challenges including equipment preparation, hygiene etc. that need to be worked through by the leaders.



Sleeping Arrangements:

- Adults need to sleep in separate sleeping quarters, preferably adjacent to the young people for supervision.
- There must be adequate provision for each gender, e.g. separate male and female sleeping quarters.
- Safe access to toilet facilities during the night must be available.

NEXT SECTION

6

10

6

7

6



6. Code of Conduct for those working with vulnerable adults

In this section

6.1 Vulnerability

6.2 Definitions

6.3 Capacity

6.4 Good Practice

6.5 Forms and signs of harm in vulnerable adults

6.6 Promoting Good Practice


6.7 Responding to abuse

6.8 Guidance in pastoral care

Who this section is for

 STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS

 VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH ADULTS

 LEADERS OF OVER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

6.1 Vulnerability

Vulnerability is part of being human and no one is invulnerable. However, in the context of this Policy, vulnerability has a particular meaning.

All people may be vulnerable at some time or times of their lives. Vulnerability can be permanent or temporary and can be of a greater or lesser degree. It can be increased by various factors including any of the following:

- sensory or physical disability
- impairment
- learning disability
- physical illness
- mental illness



- dementia
- substance and alcohol misuse
- impact of an event in life such as bereavement, the actions of others or a change in living situation.

Vulnerability may bring with it some difficulties in making decisions or communicating those decisions. This may range from simple decisions, such as what to choose to eat, to more complicated decisions, such as whether to participate in certain activities or where to live. The capacity to make decisions should always be presumed to exist and care should be taken to understand what choices are being made, even where this is expressed non-verbally or in a different language.

Where the vulnerability prevents the ability to make certain choices, it should be assumed that other choices are not similarly limited unless it is clear that this is so.

6.2 Definitions

The term 'vulnerable adult' has a number of different definitions. In order to bring into focus those adults for whom the church must have a particular care, this is the definition which will be used in this Policy:

Any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of herself or himself, or to protect herself or himself from significant harm or exploitation.

Further definition provided by the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Group Acts 2006](#) can be found in [Appendix 6](#).

The Local Safeguarding Lead and [church leader](#) will be responsible for identifying who is classed as a vulnerable adult in their setting. This impacts on the decision whether a person needs to be DBS checked or not in accordance with the guidelines from the DBS. A conversation must be had with the Safeguarding Lead to determine whether a DBS check should be in place prior to employment, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

The important thing to remember is that the church needs to safeguard vulnerable adults from abuse, harm and neglect. In terms of government guidance, '[Safeguarding Adults](#)' stated that the emphasis should be on enabling adults to "retain independence, well-being and choice and to access their human right to live a life that is free from abuse and neglect". Staff members and volunteers who consider an adult to be vulnerable must deal with that adult on that basis.



6.3 Capacity

The issue of capacity is important. Capacity is not a universal concept. It must be applied in a specific context: is this person able to make this specific decision at this particular time? Adults are presumed to have capacity to make all decisions about themselves. Those who work with them must use every endeavour to obtain the decision from the adult. If this fails, then the person who is working with the adult may make day-to-day decisions, e.g. what will they have for lunch. More major decisions, such as with whom they will have contact, need to be made in a more structured way. This will generally involve Local Authority Adult Services. Advice can be obtained from Adult Services if there is uncertainty about an important decision or a situation where harm may occur. If urgent, an immediate referral must be made.

6.4 Good Practice

The following guidelines are adapted from the Home Office Safe from Harm Guidelines and must be followed where possible:

1. Adopt a Policy on Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children. Ensure a Policy statement is displayed or available on the premises. All activities must have a full copy of the Policy available (this may be a written copy, but also could be available digitally, such as on a website).
2. Plan the church's work to minimise situations where the abuse of vulnerable adults may occur or where situations can be misinterpreted (e.g. ensure the presence of more than one adult where possible; ensure visits are recorded; make arrangements for safe transport).
3. Apply appropriate procedures to all staff members and volunteers.
4. Ensure clear role descriptions, review and training plans are in place in writing for all staff members.
5. Ensure safer recruitment practices; ensure that checks and references are always undertaken and institute a probationary period for each new staff member or volunteer.
6. Train all staff members and volunteers in safe practice and Safeguarding including updating training.



6.5 Forms and signs of harm in vulnerable adults

Whilst there is a strong overlap in forms of abuse between children and young adults, it is worth considering the two areas separately.

Harm is that which results from abuse, neglect, bullying and harassment. It may take the following forms. It should be noted that the various forms of abuse and harm can overlap.

6.5.1 Physical abuse

Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. It may include the inappropriate use of medication and the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in, health. Abuse can obviously be suspected if the person is seen to have injuries, particularly if these recur or are in the same place on more than one occasion or are without explanation. It may be that the person indicates that they do not want to be with a certain person.

6.5.2 Emotional or psychological abuse

Includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. This may occur directly or indirectly by telephone or internet. This may be seen in a person becoming quiet or withdrawn, or conversely, becoming aggressive or angry for no apparent reason. They may show a change in characteristics such as becoming helpless or tearful. It should be noted that such signs may also be seen in those who are physically abused or sexually abused. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.

6.5.3 Sexual abuse

Includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting.

6.5.4 Financial or material abuse

Includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. There are also material signs to watch out for, such as a sudden change in a person's finances, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings or getting into debt. Watch out for any official or



financial documents that seem unusual, and for documents relating to their finances that suddenly go missing.

6.5.5 Neglect and acts of omission

Includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, withholding the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. This may be evidenced in a person looking unkempt or dirty and their personal hygiene being compromised. Their weight may alter.

6.5.6 Discriminatory abuse

Includes racist and sexist abuse, abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment. This may be observed in conversations or in reports by the person of how they perceive themselves. An example of this is where a person rubs their skin to try to remove the colour or who puts themselves down in terms of their gender or sexuality.

6.5.7 Spiritual and ritual abuse

In the church context, there has been developing realisation that spiritual abuse is another form of harm. [The Church of England Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy](#) cautions those who minister to beware of abusing their position.

Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, attempt to 'force' religious values or ideas onto people, particularly those who may be vulnerable to such practices. Within faith communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice: this can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in vulnerable people experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. Other forms of spiritual abuse include the denial to vulnerable people of the right to faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

If such inappropriate behaviour occurs, it must be referred for investigation in the usual way. Careful supervision and mentoring of those staff members or volunteers working with vulnerable adults with the pastoral care of adults should help to prevent harm occurring in this way.



6.5.8 Domestic abuse

The terms violence/abuse are used interchangeably throughout this Policy. The Home Office describes domestic violence as follows: “Domestic violence is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody, regardless of their gender or sexuality.”

The violence can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional. It can include honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, and forced marriage. Whatever form it takes, domestic violence is rarely a one-off incident. Usually it is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which an abuser seeks power over their family member or partner.

Domestic violence occurs across all of society, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth or geography. Women are more likely than men to be victims of domestic violence, and children are also affected – they can be traumatised by what they’ve seen, and there is a strong connection between domestic violence and child abuse.

Domestic violence can impact any and every age group. An alternative, safe and supportive residence is key to the safety of women and children subjected to violence and the threat of violence.

6.5.9 Forced Marriage

Guidelines on forced marriage are set out in [Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Handling Cases of Forced Marriage](#) from which the following extracts have been taken:

- *Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.*
- *Forced marriage is a form of child/domestic violence against women and men; it should form part of existing child and adult protection structures, policies and procedures.*
- *In line with other publications on domestic abuse, these guidelines focus mainly on women’s needs and not men’s. This is because 85% of cases referred to the Forced Marriage Unit involve women and the consequences for women are different than those for men.*
- *Although these guidelines focus on women, much of the guidance applies to men facing forced marriage – and men must be given the same assistance and respect when they seek help.*

6.5.10 Institutional abuse

This type of abuse is seen where an institution is inherently discriminatory towards a particular group. It may occur in a care home where the residents are routinely referred to in a derisory fashion or where their



privacy and dignity is routinely compromised. An institution may then be unable to safeguard residents from emotional or even physical harm and neglect. The Church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.

6.6 Promoting Good Practice

6.6.1 Underpinning safe and inclusive practice

These principles, adapted from [The Ten Essential Shared Capabilities](#) for those working in the mental health services, provide a reference point for those working with individuals, carers, families, colleagues and the wider community to address safe and inclusive practice.

Working in partnership.

Developing and maintaining constructive working relationships with individuals, carers, families, colleagues and wider community networks. Working positively with any tensions created by conflicts of interest or aspiration that may arise between the partners.

Respecting diversity.

Working with individuals, carers and families in ways that respect and value diversity, including age, ethnicity, race, culture, disability, gender, spirituality and sexuality.

Practising ethically.

Recognising the rights and aspirations of individuals and their families, acknowledging power differentials and minimising them whenever possible. Allowing individuals to make their own choices.



Challenging inequality.

Addressing the causes and consequences of stigma, discrimination, social inequality and exclusion on individuals, carers and families. Creating, developing or maintaining valued social roles for people in the communities they come from. This includes ensuring that buildings and practices allow inclusion. Buildings should be assessed to check that they are as accessible as possible and that aids and adaptations have been used. This may include the use of ramps, loop systems, etc. Worship and other activities within the church should also be as accessible as possible and the 'messages' given by these should be checked. For example, does moving forward and kneeling to receive Communion exclude those whose mobility is compromised? Does certain language cause pain to some people? Does the environment created within the church include everyone? Inclusion may mean that the church needs to consider making services available to particular groups, such as worship specifically for those who are frail, or have dementia or have learning difficulties. Inclusion also means enabling people to fulfil their discipleship and calling.

Promoting recovery.

Working in partnership to provide help that enables individuals, families and carers to tackle problems with hope and optimism and to work towards a valued lifestyle within and beyond the limits of any problem.

Identifying people's needs and strengths.

Working in partnership in the context of the preferred lifestyle and aspirations of individuals, their families, carers and friends. Materials provided for activities should be available as widely as possible. Within worship, printed material should be provided in large print (at least 18pt font) and material provided by PowerPoint should be supplemented if necessary.

Promoting safety and positive risk taking.

Empowering the individual to decide the level of risk they are prepared to take with their lives. This includes working with the tension between promoting safety and positive risk taking, including assessing and dealing with possible risks for individuals, carers, family members and the wider public.

Personal development and learning.

Take advantage of training opportunities which are provided by the charity.

6.6.2 Safer recruitment – a brief summary

Safer recruitment applies to all roles, paid or voluntary. It applies to all parts of Oxfordshire Community Churches where there is work for or with children or vulnerable adults. Refer to [section 8](#) on safer recruitment.



6.6.3 Training

Training will be given to staff members and volunteers working with vulnerable adults. This will be relevant for specific organised ministries, such as CAP, Besom or homeless ministries. It will also be relevant where specific one-to-one pastoral care or small group leadership of a vulnerable adult has been delegated to an individual by the church leadership.

The training will include the following:

- Training specific to the role undertaken.
- Generic training in relation to the activity and the building.
- Training in relation to vulnerable adults. This will include dealing with the specific issues relating to vulnerable adults. Adults may have a range of vulnerabilities which could be addressed by the appropriate use of aids and adaptations or particular skills. Specialist training may be needed with these.
- Adults may express their vulnerability by a range of behaviour. Training may be needed in how to deal with such behaviour, as well as in how staff members and volunteers are supported to avoid inappropriate behaviour and to recognise this type of behaviour, including bullying, in themselves and others.
- Training will also be needed in relation to the issues of decision making with adults whose capacities are impaired.

6.6.4 Advocacy

Staff members and volunteers are often placed in the role of advocate. Advocacy for adults who are vulnerable is especially important. Advocacy is about speaking up for, or acting on behalf of, yourself or another person. Advocacy can help individuals to:

- make clear their own views and wishes
- express and present their views effectively and faithfully
- obtain independent advice and accurate information
- negotiate and resolve conflict.

Some people aren't clear about their rights or have difficulty in fully understanding these rights. Others may find it hard to speak up for themselves. Advocacy can enable people to take more responsibility and control for the decisions which affect their lives.



Advocacy principles

What the person communicates and wants is the most important thing. Advocacy enables individuals to do more for themselves and lessens their dependency on other people.

Advocacy should help people to make informed choices. An advocate must ensure the individual is making real choices based on good quality information.

Advocates should not have a conflict of interest. They should be independent.

6.6.5 Cultural diversity

Jesus came to save people from every tribe and nation, and the Christian faith has long been the most ethnically and culturally diverse movement in human history. We recognise that no one social group knows how best to care for all children and vulnerable adults, and we recognise the importance of learning from the experiences of others, especially from people with a different cultural or ethnic heritage. Therefore, if and when people from diverse backgrounds raise concerns about our Safeguarding practice or suggest possible improvements to it, we will never simply discount their views, but will rather listen carefully to ensure that those experiences and perspectives are truly heard and understood, and we will consider making any amendments that would improve our Safeguarding Policy and practice.

6.7 Responding to abuse

Disclosures may not always be made verbally or in writing to the staff member or volunteer. Sometimes, a staff member or volunteer will observe a situation which seems to be abusive or neglectful. Sometimes the adult has no means to communicate verbally but communicates distress by some other means, such as tears. Careful 'listening' is important and an adult may need support to tell their story. It is important that the story is received and taken seriously. It is not the staff member or volunteer's job, nor that of the church, to conduct an investigation. That is the task of the Local Authority's Adult Services and the police. Immediate safety must be ensured if necessary.

It is often not easy to recognise abuse or harm. Therefore, it is important to act if you suspect abuse – don't wait until you are absolutely sure. This doesn't mean that you are jumping to conclusions or making judgements about the situation, it simply means that there is a Safeguarding concern. You may suspect abuse because:

- You have a general concern about someone's well-being.
- You see or hear something which could be abusive.



- Someone tells you that something has happened or is happening to them, or to an adult at risk, which could be abusive.

In these circumstances, do not delay. Pass on your concerns to your Local Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours.

If someone discloses abuse directly to you, please refer to the [flow chart](#) entitled 'What to do if you have Safeguarding concerns' on page 3 of this document.

6.7.1 Reporting concerns

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) is a group of statutory, private, voluntary, and independent organisations across Oxfordshire who work together to empower and protect some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Their website www.osab.co.uk/public/reporting-concerns contains details of how to follow up concerns with the relevant authorities.

6.8 Guidance in pastoral care

Not all adults who receive pastoral care are vulnerable within the definition of [section 6.2](#). However, all staff members and volunteers involved in pastoral care with vulnerable adults should be working within the following guidelines. (These guidelines maybe helpful in other pastoral situations.)

Following such guidelines will not only protect vulnerable people but also help to ensure that staff members and volunteers are not wrongly accused of abuse or misconduct.

6.8.1 Pastoral relationships for vulnerable adults

Exercising any kind of ministry with vulnerable adults involves staff members and volunteers developing an understanding of themselves and how they relate to others, how they increase the well-being of others and how they ensure the well-being and safety of themselves and others. People in positions such as staff members or volunteers who are working with vulnerable adults necessarily have power, although this may not be apparent to them; consequently, respecting boundaries is particularly important.



Many pastoral relationships can become intertwined with friendships and social contacts, making the following guidance even more necessary.

Staff members and volunteers must exercise particular care when ministering to persons with whom they have a close personal friendship or family relationship.

Staff members and volunteers must be aware of the dangers of dependency in pastoral and professional relationships and seek advice or supervision when these concerns arise.

Staff members and volunteers who exercise a 'healing ministry' should be trained in the theology and non-intrusive practice of that work.

Staff members and volunteers must recognise their limits and not undertake any ministry that is beyond their competence or role (e.g. therapeutic counselling, deliverance ministry, counselling victims of abuse and domestic violence, or their perpetrators, or giving legal advice). In such instances the person should be referred to another person or agency with appropriate expertise.

Staff members and volunteers should consider issues of ethnicity and gender in their ministry.

Staff members and volunteers must avoid behaviour that could give the impression of inappropriate favouritism or the encouragement of inappropriate special relationships.

Staff members and volunteers must treat those with whom they work or visit with respect, encouraging self-determination, independence and choice.

Pastoral relationships may develop into romantic attachments and such situations must be handled sensitively. Staff members and volunteers need to recognise such a development and make it clear to both the person concerned and a supervisor or colleague. Alternative arrangements must be made for the ongoing pastoral care of the person concerned.

Staff members and volunteers should not undertake any pastoral ministry while they are under the influence of drink or drugs.

6.8.2 Conversations and interviews in a ministry context

Formal interviews and informal conversations in a ministry context are considered pastoral encounters. Staff members and volunteers must be aware of their language and behaviour. For example, innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, the staff member or volunteer must be discerning about the



motives and needs of the person and question their own ability to assist.

The staff member or volunteer must consider in advance

The place of the meeting, arrangement of the furniture and lighting, the worker's dress.

The balance of privacy for conversation with the opportunity for supervision (open doors or windows in doors, another person nearby).

The physical distance between people determined by hospitality and respect, being aware that someone may have suffered abuse or harassment in the past.

Whether the circumstances suggest a professional or social interaction.

The propriety or danger of visiting or being visited alone and personal safety in visits, especially in the evening.

The personal safety and comfort of all participants.

Establishing at the outset the nature of the interview in respect to subject matter, confidentiality and duration, and the appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, for example, gestures of comfort, which may be unwanted or misinterpreted.

The specific pastoral needs of individuals and whether the worker has the skill to meet these without additional support. Certain people will need skilled and professional support to which pastoral work will be supplementary. It may be that the initial pastoral task in such a situation is to work with the individual in supporting them to access professional help.

6.8.3 Sexual conduct

The sexual conduct of staff members and volunteers may have an impact on their ministry within the church. It is never appropriate for workers to take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with anyone with whom they have a pastoral relationship. Staff members & volunteers must be aware of the power imbalance inherent in pastoral relationships.

- Staff members and volunteers must never sexually abuse or harass an adult. Staff members and volunteers must take responsibility for their words and actions if wishing to make physical contact with another adult (e.g. a hug may be misunderstood) or talk to them about sexual matters. This will include seeking permission, respecting the person's wishes, noticing and responding to non-verbal communication, and refraining from such conduct if in doubt about the person's wishes.



- Staff members and volunteers must not view, possess or distribute sexual images of children and must refrain from viewing, possessing or distributing sexually exploitative images of adults.
- Staff members and volunteers must avoid situations where they feel vulnerable to temptation or where their conduct may be misinterpreted.

6.8.4 Financial integrity in working with vulnerable adults

Financial dealings can have an impact on the church and the community and must always be handled with integrity. Those with authority for such matters must maintain proper systems and not delegate that responsibility to anyone else.

Staff members and volunteers must not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond their salary or recognised allowances.

Staff members and volunteers must not be influenced by offers of money.

Staff members and volunteers must ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart and should avoid any conflict of interest.

Money received by the church must be handled by two unrelated people.

Any known gifts received must be disclosed to a supervisor or Safeguarding Lead, who must decide whether the gift can be accepted.

Care must be taken not to canvass for church donations from those who may be vulnerable, e.g. the recently bereaved.

There are particular issues in relation to Lasting Powers of Attorney and wills. A Lasting Power of Attorney can be made by an adult with capacity and can deal with issues of finance and/or welfare. When the person making the Lasting Power of Attorney loses their capacity (ability to make decisions), the person named as Attorney can continue to make decisions on their behalf. The safeguards in this instrument require it to be registered with the Court of Protection. It would be appropriate for an individual who so wishes to name a staff member or volunteer as Attorney provided the individual has received independent legal advice on the subject before entering into this. This safeguards the staff member or volunteer from possible issues of undue influence. However, the staff member or volunteer should consider this carefully and may wish to seek their own advice. This is not a task to be taken lightly.

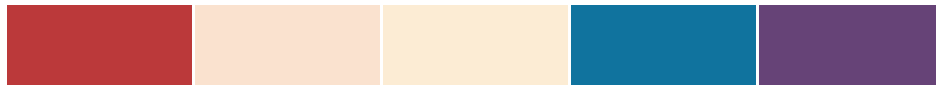
In relation to wills, the [guidance relating to Lasting Powers of Attorney](#) must be followed where appointment as an Executor is being considered or where the individual is considering a bequest to a staff member, volunteer or church.



6.8.5 Behaviour outside work and Christian ministry

In church ministry, behaviour outside work can often impinge on that ministry. Staff members and volunteers are expected to uphold Christian values throughout their lives.

NEXT SECTION	7	10	10	7	7
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7. Risk Assessment

***A Risk Assessment must be carried out for all activities.
Every Risk Assessment must be signed off by the Local Safeguarding Lead and Regional Safeguarding Lead or Charity Safeguarding Lead's delegate where they are the same person. Any change to a Risk Assessment needs reapproval, before implementation, as outlined above.***

In this section
Risk Assessment template

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS
-  LEADERS OF OVER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

See the Risk Assessment template on the following page.





Risk Assessment

Church:

Ministry/Activity:

Venue:

ACTIVITY	PERSON AT RISK	SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS	RISK			RISK CONTROL MEASURES	RESIDUAL RISK*			ACTION / DUE BY
			L	S	DR		L	S	DR	

Signed Originator		Position	
Date Completed		Date For Revision	

- LIKELIHOOD** (L) = Frequent (5) Probable (4) Occasional (3) Improbable (2) Remote (1)
SEVERITY (S) = Catastrophic (5) Major (4) Reportable (3) Serious (2) Minor (1)
DEGREE OF RISK (DR) = LIKELIHOOD x SEVERITY

* Residual risk is the level of risk that remains after suitable and sufficient control measures are introduced



Risk Assessment notes

HOW TO COMPLETE A RISK ASSESSMENT

Five steps of Risk Assessment:

1. Identify hazards (anything that may cause harm)

2. Decide who might be harmed and how

3. Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures

4. Record your findings and implement them

5. Review your assessment and update if necessary

This Risk Assessment must be reviewed annually or as necessary depending on the activity of the session. A new Risk Assessment must be completed for any activity not within the normal range of activities or of

Activities to be included in the Risk Assessment are:

- Pictures and videos
- Communication
- Toileting
- Equipment
- Challenging behaviour
- Transportation
- Trips, slips and falls
- Medical emergency (First Aid)
- Venue
- Fire safety

There may be other activities that are not listed above that should be added. Activity leaders and Local and Regional Safeguarding Leads must determine anything else that should be added. Regional Safeguarding Leads have example Risk Assessments and can provide advice on how to create Risk Assessments.

NEXT SECTION

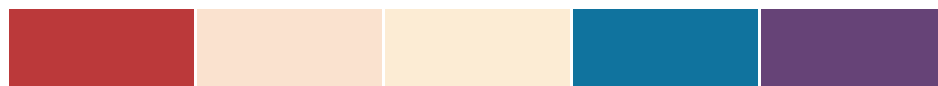
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8. Safer recruitment of staff members and volunteers

In this section

- 8.1** Safer recruitment
- 8.2** Safeguarding appointments
- 8.3** Implementation in local churches
- 8.4** Implementation in the regions

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS
-  LEADERS OF OVER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

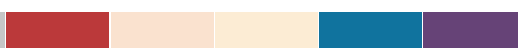
8.1 Safer recruitment

A list of who takes responsibility at each level of church life is provided at the beginning of this document in the [list of Contacts](#). There are many responsibilities and commitments outlined in this Policy that indicate clearly that all staff members and volunteers, at all levels of church life, play a significant role in implementing Safeguarding procedures.

The Charity Commission and OCC insurance both require a Safeguarding Policy to be in place. Each region and local church will produce Risk Assessments relating to any work with children and vulnerable adults.

It is important to recognise that it is people, and not only procedures, who protect. The aim is to create a culture of informed vigilance at all levels in OCC by:

- raising awareness of the issues involved in protecting children and vulnerable adults in OCC, addressing their needs in all their cultural, spiritual, intellectual, racial and physical diversity
- responding to the needs of children and adults who have been abused, supporting and training those who work with children, encouraging them to work together to follow good practice
- caring appropriately for those in OCC who have abused children or vulnerable adults.





All those working with children in a paid or unpaid capacity will be carefully recruited and checked for registration with the DBS at the appropriate level through a criminal records check. They must also complete OCC Safeguarding training.

These checks will also be carried out on those supervising people working with children and on those whose representational ministry, office or status gives them the opportunity or the expectation for regular or unsupervised contact with children. This might include for example the church leader, the children's worker, employed youth worker etc.

8.2 Safeguarding appointments

Every church member has a responsibility to create a safe environment for everyone who attends any church activity. However, named individuals with specific responsibilities are required. The following appointments within Oxfordshire Community Churches aim to ensure that good Safeguarding practice is embedded throughout the charity:

8.2.1 Appointment of Local Safeguarding Lead and responsibility

Every local leadership team is responsible before the Lord for the well-being of those they serve. To ensure that there is compliance with this Safeguarding Policy, each church must appoint a Local Safeguarding Lead. This person will be nominated by the elders or local leadership team and approved by the Regional Safeguarding Lead and is responsible for the implementation of Safeguarding Policy and procedure, as outlined in this document, in the local congregation.

Recruiting all volunteers/staff members

When recruiting a new volunteer or staff member, the steps below must be completed before the volunteer or staff member begins working with children or vulnerable adults.



Action	Responsibility
<p>If at any point a conviction, charge or caution is discovered or disclosed the guidance outlined in section 9 must be followed.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>1. Applicant must be interviewed by the activity leader for that particular activity with another church leader, whether formally or informally, so that they can ascertain if the applicant is suitable for the role.</p>	<p>Activity leader and church leader</p>
<p>2. Prospective volunteer or staff member fills in an application form (unless filled in previously) for working with children and or vulnerable adults (see form in section 11). This will be stored on ChurchSuite in line with OCC's GDPR Policy.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead Volunteer/staff member</p>
<p>3. Church leadership and Local Safeguarding Lead review applicant's suitability for activity using application. Church leadership approves/rejects applicant.</p>	<p>Church leadership and Local Safeguarding Lead</p>
<p>4. Successful applicant fills in DBS application form and provides ID as advised by Local Safeguarding Lead. Fills in associated forms as per guidance from Local Safeguarding Lead.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead</p>
<p>5. Fill in a DBS Data Protection form - This form will be given to you by The Local Safeguarding Lead and must be filled out before the DBS is sent off. This needs to be stored for minimum of 3months by the Local Safeguarding Lead.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead</p>
<p>6. Undertake OCC Safeguarding training session. (Refresher training must be completed every 2 years.)</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader</p>
<p>7. Submit a signed declaration that volunteer or staff member has read the Policy.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader</p>



<p>8. DBS certificate received by applicant and shown to Local Safeguarding Lead.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead</p>
<p>9. If certificate has convictions or there are other disclosures or concerns you are aware of then the guidelines in section 9 must be followed..</p>	<p>Regional Safeguarding Lead</p>
<p>10. If certificate is clear of convictions, applicant can start working in role applied for</p>	
<p>11. Volunteer appointed to activity once:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application has been submitted • Applicant has been approved by church leadership • Training has been completed • DBS & DBS Data protection form complete, returned and reviewed • Declaration form signed 	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader</p>
<p>Ongoing Training & DBS</p>	
<p>12. Three months before the applicant’s training and DBS expire, the Local Safeguarding Lead will start to process the volunteer/staff member’s DBS check and the applicant must obtain OCC Safeguarding refresher training.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead</p>
<p>13. If the volunteer/staff member has not completed their 2 -year refresher training or obtained a new DBS check before the existing 2 years finish, they will not be able to work with children or vulnerable adults until Safeguarding training and DBS check are complete</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader</p>

A prospective staff member or volunteer can visit the activity for up to 2 sessions to observe but must not be counted within the ratios or be left alone. Their presence is for visiting purposes only.

Activity leaders and volunteers must be agreed by the local church leadership team.



Note: Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children or adults at risk to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children or adults at risk. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly offer work with children or adults at risk to an individual who is so disqualified or to knowingly allow such an individual to continue to work with children or adults at risk.

Additional checks for staff members

In addition to the above checks which must be completed for both staff members and volunteers, an applicant's UK residency status and/ or right to work in the UK will be checked when recruiting for a paid role.

Appointment and supervision

The church's Safeguarding Policy and procedures will be discussed with the applicant and they will be required to [sign an agreement](#) (a signed copy of which will be kept on record) to adhere to them. All staff members and volunteers will have a role description and clear lines of accountability to an activity leader and the leadership team. Staff members will also have an assigned line manager whom they will meet with regularly to discuss work and address any issues or areas of concern. There may be a probationary period, as outlined in the employment contract, before any paid appointment is confirmed.

There will also be regular team meetings to review practice, share concerns and identify other matters that may need clarification and guidance.

Training

It is important that all staff members and volunteers understand OCC's agreed Safeguarding procedures. All volunteers must attend Safeguarding training; this training will expire after two years. When this time has elapsed, they must attend another Safeguarding training session; if they do not they will no longer be able to work in OCC activities. Volunteers or staff members whose training has expired must not work on an activity. Additional specialist training will also be arranged where needed, for example, in First Aid.

Young leaders under 18 years of age

In law, young leaders under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that they are helped to develop their skills, attitudes and



experience. Young leaders must always be closely supervised by an adult leader and never given sole responsibility for a group of children. When considering ratios of adults to children, young leaders will be counted as children, not as adults. Safeguarding procedures apply to a young leader just as they do to any other person. Parent/guardian permission needs to be sought for young leaders to participate in and lead activities just as for any person under 18 years of age.

8.2.2 Regional Safeguarding Lead

Each Regional Safeguarding Lead will be nominated by the Regional Leader and approved by the Charity Trustees. Their role is the oversight of Safeguarding and to be an advisor to the local leaders within the region. They will act as counter-signatories for DBS checks. They will also collate a central record of all local and regional Risk Assessments for each activity.

An equivalent role will be instituted in The King's School.

8.2.3 Charity Safeguarding Lead

It is the responsibility of the Charity Safeguarding Lead to ensure compliance with the whole Safeguarding Policy across the charity, and to act as the lead signatory for DBS checks on behalf of the Trustees.

8.3 Implementation in local churches

Churches may work together in regions to implement the Policy and procedures, but it is important to remember that accountability will continue to rest with the individual churches. All activities must be overseen by a designated local church and their Local Safeguarding Lead – for instance, the West Regional celebrations might be designated to Witney Community Church as the responsible church which meets at New Yatt Road.

The local church leader is responsible for ensuring that:

A Local Safeguarding Lead is appointed.

Allegations concerning staff members and volunteers are responded to immediately and according to Good Practice procedures (as outlined in this Policy) including referral to the statutory authorities.

Reports of abuse (including allegations) are referred to the statutory authorities according to Good Practice procedures (as outlined in this Policy).



Ensuring that the Local Safeguarding Lead is informed about all current and new activities which fall within this Policy.

Proper procedures are implemented in relation to sex offenders in the church (see [section 9.3](#)).

Safeguarding Good Practice is followed and complementary pastoral care provided in all instances of child or adult abuse and trauma, including pastoral provision for the needs of survivors of abuse and careful ministry to those who pose a risk to children.

The Local Safeguarding Lead will carry delegated responsibility for:

The creation, implementation and approval of all Risk Assessments relating to local church activities

The training and induction of all staff members and volunteers who work with children

Ensuring all staff members and volunteers who work with children are subject to necessary Disclosure & Barring Service checks and keeping such checks up to date.

8.4 Implementation in the regions

Regional Trustee groups must provide support and oversight for leaders and staff members and volunteers who work with children in implementing Safeguarding in local churches.

In particular, each region must:

Provide a structure to manage Safeguarding issues and practice in the region and nominate a Regional Safeguarding Lead to take a lead role in this area.

Provide access to training and support on Safeguarding matters to churches.

Provide support and oversight for local church leaders and Local Safeguarding Leads in implementing Safeguarding as stated above, and ensure that activities with children, both within the region and in local churches, are provided according to good practice and Safeguarding procedures.

It is the responsibility of the regional Trustee body/regional leadership team, working with the local church leadership and with support and guidance from the Charity Safeguarding Lead, to refer cases



where allegations lead to disciplinary action, or someone resigns pending this, to the Disclosure & Barring Service.

The application form for working with children can be found in [section 11.1](#).

NEXT SECTION	9	10	10	9	9
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9. Dealing with those who may pose a risk

In this section

- 9.1 Dealing with those who may pose a risk
- 9.2 Good Practice – a Contract of Agreement
- 9.3 Dealing with Declarations
- 9.4 Offender Contract of Agreement

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS
-  LEADERS OF OVER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

9.1 Dealing with those who may pose a risk

The purpose of providing Good Practice for ministering to, and providing pastoral care for, those who pose a risk is to enable them to worship and be part of a church community more safely.

For those with a criminal conviction or caution for a sexual offence against a child and or vulnerable adult, this entails specific prohibitions from offices, roles or responsibilities within the established church and can be treated in the same way within OCC.

The process set out below was created to support sex offenders but can be used to manage all those who present a risk to children.

9.2 Good Practice – a Contract of Agreement

Where ex-offenders are part of a local church setting, it is vital to have agreed procedures to ensure safety. These arrangements are known as a 'Contract of Agreement' and must be established in outline as part of each church's Safeguarding arrangements.

This agreement will cover a broad range of issues from committing to ongoing pastoral care to restricting access to certain activities or parts of a building hosting certain church activities.



9.3 Dealing with Declarations

9.3.1 Dealing with ex-offenders (sexual convictions)

If through any means, a person is found to have been convicted, charged or cautioned in relation to a criminal offence relating to abuse of children or adults, the local church leader, Local Safeguarding Lead, Regional Safeguarding Lead and Charity Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately and the following action must be taken:

Presence in church settings:

- Any pending applications to work with children or vulnerable adults must be suspended. If the person is currently a volunteer or staff member then they must be suspended from that role with immediate effect.
- The Regional Safeguarding Lead, Local Safeguarding Lead and church leader will meet to discuss the situation and agree on boundaries to be set whilst the ex-offender is in the church setting.
- The individual must be informed (face to face) by the church leader of their decision and the further procedures being followed, as required. The church leader must also agree boundaries with the offender whilst in the church setting and ensure an agreement is signed. (These boundaries must be discussed with the Probation Service working with the ex-offender.)
- The church leader will discuss and establish pastoral care with the ex-offender.

Offenders working with children or vulnerable adults:

- Any pending applications to work with children or vulnerable adults must be suspended. If the person is currently a volunteer or staff member then they must be suspended from that role with immediate effect.
- In the event that the church leader, Local Safeguarding Lead and Regional Safeguarding Lead agree that a person convicted, charged or cautioned for a relevant offence may be appropriate to work on a particular activity, then the application process in [section 8](#) must be followed, if not already completed. On receipt of the DBS disclosure, the Regional Safeguarding Lead will contact the church leader and Local Safeguarding Lead to inform them of the exact details of conviction & when it occurred
- The applicant will not work with any children or vulnerable adults until a decision has been received from the Charity Safeguarding Lead.
- The Regional Safeguarding Lead will submit all details to the Charity Safeguarding Lead in order for a formal decision as to the capacities in which the person can/cannot work with children.
- If the Charity Safeguarding Lead decides that it is appropriate for the applicant to volunteer, the Regional Safeguarding Lead and Local Safeguarding Lead will meet with the church leader to review



the boundaries already set with the ex-offender in light of the decision. The Contract of Agreement must be discussed and signed. These boundaries must be reviewed regularly but must remain in place for the whole time the ex-offender is in the church.

- Church leaders, personal pastors, key workers (those working with the ex-offender) and the ex-offender must be informed of the decision taken.

9.3.2 Dealing with ex-offenders (non-sexual convictions)

If disclosures of non-sexual convictions arise, it may be appropriate to follow the same process as outlined above. However, in many cases, disclosures relate to minor offences in the distant past, or offences which do not suggest a risk to children or vulnerable adults.

In these cases, an interview with the person must be arranged to discuss the offence and decisions as to appropriate action and/or restrictions must be agreed between the Regional Safeguarding Lead, Local Safeguarding Lead and local church leader. If necessary, advice may be taken from the Charity Safeguarding Lead.

9.4 Offender Contract of Agreement

I agree to abide by all the boundaries set out by this agreement, which will enable me to enjoy and experience the life of the church to the full, protecting me and the other members of this church from my weaknesses, and allowing me to grow into wholeness in Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-3).

See the Contract of Agreement on the following page.





I agree to come under the authority of the leaders of this church and will be obedient to them in all things.

I may have to be directed in church in various circumstances for my own well-being as well as that of others.

I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children.

I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, nor any area where children's activities are in progress. This may mean exclusion from the building on certain days at certain times.

I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.

I will not attend community groups where there are children, unless agreed by the leadership.

I accept that there will be certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children for whom they care.

I accept that I will only be allowed to use the disabled toilet facilities and will not enter any of the other facilities.

I accept that I will only be allowed to sit in the section of the church as designated by the leaders.

I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, social services, and police (where necessary) who will meet with church leaders as and when necessary.

I accept that will provide me with pastoral care.

I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. probation and social services) and any other relevant organisation.

I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported.






I understand that this agreement will be reviewed every months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signed church attendee		Print name	
Signed church leader		Print name	
Date Completed			



10. Lone Working Policy for those working and volunteering with children and vulnerable adults

Who this section is for

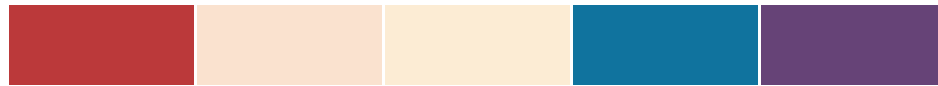
-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN
-  VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH ADULTS
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS
-  LEADERS OF OVER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

Lone working is an everyday and essential practice for those working for the church including staff members and volunteers.

OCC is committed to the safe well-being of all volunteers and staff members. If you are already or planning on lone working with children or vulnerable adults, the Local Safeguarding Lead must be informed so they can approve and risk assess the activity. Further information is available in the OCC Lone Working Policy.

All lone working must have a Risk Assessment and the activity must be approved by Regional Safeguarding Lead.








11. Application form for working with children

In this section

11.1 Application form

Who this section is for

-  STAFF MEMBERS, TRUSTEES, SAFEGUARDING LEADS, ELDERS, LEADERS
-  VOLUNTEERS & STAFF MEMBERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN
-  LEADERS OF UNDER-18-FOCUSSED TEAMS OR EVENTS

11.1 Application form

We ask all prospective staff members and volunteers who might work with children to complete the form on the following pages. If there is insufficient room to fully answer any particular question, please continue on a separate sheet. The information will be kept confidential by OCC.



Application form

SECTION 1

Full name

Date of birth

Daytime telephone

Email address

SECTION 2

Address

Postcode

Which church do you attend?

What is your relationship to Oxfordshire Community Churches?

Please tell us about your faith experience (i.e. would you call yourself a Christian, have you attended church in the past, name of minister/leader, any activities undertaken).

Please give details of previous experience of looking after or working with children.

CONTINUED >>

Please include details of any relevant qualifications or appropriate training, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Do you suffer, or have you suffered, from any illness which may directly affect your work with children?

If yes, please give details

Please give the names, addresses and telephone numbers and role or relationship of two people who know you well and who would be able to give a personal reference. They must not be members of your family.

FIRST REFERENCE - PROFESSIONAL

SECOND REFERENCE - PERSONAL

Full name

Full name

Address

Address

Telephone

Telephone

How long have you known them?

How long have you known them?

SECTION 3

If you already have a DBS certificate and have signed up with the update service, please fill in your certificate number

Current DBS certificate Number:

Surname with which you applied:

If you haven't got a current DBS certificate, please fill in a DBS application form and sign up for the Update Service. See additional 'Update Service Info Sheet' for more details.

DBS application form number: F

SECTION 4

(please tick)

Have you ever been cautioned or convicted for an offence?

NO

YES (please tick and give details here)

Please note that a conviction or caution will not necessarily bar you from working with children or vulnerable adults.

I confirm that the above information is correct and complete and that I have read the Oxfordshire Community Churches Child Protection Policy on protecting children.

I understand that it is my duty to protect children with whom I come in contact. I know what action to take if abuse is alleged or suspected. I will endeavour to carry out the Policy and if there are things I do not understand or if I have reason to be concerned about a child, I will check with the appropriate leaders.

I give permission to Oxfordshire Community Churches to check my DBS certificate online.

I have read the Standard/Enhanced Check Privacy Policy for applicants (www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-privacy-policies) and I understand how DBS will process my personal data and the options available to me for submitting an application.

Signed applicant		Print name	
Signed church pastor		Print name	
Date Completed			



Appendices

In this section

Appendix 1 Proforma Consent Form for children

Appendix 2 Proforma for Driving details record for Safeguarding Leads

Appendix 3 Proforma Activity Practices (starting and managing existing activities)

Appendix 4 Proforma Declaration of Agreement to Policy

Appendix 5 Appointment of volunteers and staff members checklist

Appendix 6 Vulnerable Adults

Appendix 1 Proforma Consent Form for children



Activity

Child's Name

Date of birth

MALE

FEMALE

Address

Home Telephone

Emergency Contact Number

Email Address (Parent/Guardian)

Email Address (Youth only)

Doctor's Name and Address

Surgery Telephone Number

Details of any relevant medical condition from which the child suffers (e.g. asthma, epilepsy)

Condition:

Any known allergies:

Emergency Contact (should parent/guardian not be available)

Name

Telephone Number

I give authorisation for my child to receive emergency medical treatment if it is considered by the doctor to be necessary (please tick)

I am willing for my child to be photographed for display or publicity/media purposes (please tick)

I am willing for my child to be transported to and from activities by a volunteer or staff member where required (please tick)

I am willing for my child to access social media for communication purposes. (please tick)

Any other useful information:

I consent to storing this information electronically for the purpose of

emergency contact and communication of activities only. (please tick)

(This information will not be passed on to any third party).

Signed Parent/Guardian:

Print Name Parent/Guardian:

Date:

Please inform us immediately of any changes to your personal contact information

Your data will be stored in line with OCC's GDPR Policy which can be found on occ.org.uk Oxfordshire Community Churches.

Registered Charity 1056921. A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, number 3223210.

Registered Office: The King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Appendix 2 Proforma for Driving details record for Safeguarding Leads



Name	Driving Licence	Insurance Certificate	Valid Tax Details	Date of last MOT	Date of your inspection														

Appendix 3 Activity Practices (starting and managing existing activities)



This appendix provides a check list of tasks that need to be completed when starting a new activity and also checked annually for existing activities to ensure that everything is in place. These must be completed before an activity starts.

Name of Activity:

Task
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify activity leader
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify list of volunteers and ensure ratios are met
<input type="checkbox"/> Check all volunteers are safeguard trained and DBS-checked
<input type="checkbox"/> Check activity covered by insurance
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that Risk Assessment is written / updated
<input type="checkbox"/> Approval of Risk Assessment (Local and Regional Safeguarding Leads)
Create pack for activity leaders containing:
<input type="checkbox"/> Accident form
<input type="checkbox"/> OCC application form
<input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding Policy
Create pack for volunteers containing:
<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Accident form
<input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling guidelines
<input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> What to do if you have concerns flow chart
Conversation with activity leaders
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm Risk Assessment reflects reality of activity
<input type="checkbox"/> Remind leaders that accidents must be reported via accident form
<input type="checkbox"/> Remind that prospective volunteers need to go through appointment process before being available to work
<input type="checkbox"/> Circulate pack for activity leaders
<input type="checkbox"/> Circulate pack for volunteers

Appendix 4 Proforma Declaration of Agreement to Policy



I, *(insert name)*, confirm that I have read and understood the OCC Safeguarding Policy and hereby agree and commit to following this Policy insofar as it applies to the work I do as a volunteer or staff member when working with children or vulnerable adults for OCC.

Signed

Full name

Date

Appendix 5 Appointment of volunteers/staff members



This checklist must be followed when recruiting any volunteers or staff members. For further details, please refer to the [table on recruiting staff members](#) and volunteers in section 8.2. If at any point a conviction, charge or caution is discovered or disclosed the guidance outlined in [section 9](#) must be followed.

Task	Responsibility
Appointment process	
Activity leader and another church leader interview applicant to ascertain suitability	Activity leader and church leader
Applicant fills in application form for working with children and or vulnerable adults	Local Safeguarding Lead and applicant
Church leadership and Local Safeguarding Lead review applicant's suitability and approve or reject application	Church leadership and Local Safeguarding Lead
Successful applicant fills in DBS application form and associated forms, and provides ID	Local Safeguarding Lead
Successful applicant fills in DBS Data Protection form (to be stored for 3 months)	Local Safeguarding Lead
Successful applicant completes OCC Safeguarding training session	Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader
Successful applicant submits signed declaration confirming they have read the Safeguarding Policy	Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader
Applicant receives DBS certificate and shows it to Local Safeguarding Lead	Local Safeguarding Lead and Regional Safeguarding Lead
Guidelines in Safeguarding Policy section 9 followed in the event of convictions or other disclosures or concerns revealed by DBS certificate	Local Safeguarding Lead and Regional Safeguarding Lead
Applicant appointed if clear DBS or Safeguarding Policy section 9 guidelines allow the appointment	Local Safeguarding Lead and activity leader
Ongoing Training & DBS	
Process volunteer/staff member's DBS check three months before expiry	Local Safeguarding Lead
Volunteer/staff member obtains refresher Safeguarding training every two years	Local Safeguarding Lead

If the volunteer/staff member has not completed their 2-year refresher training or obtained a new DBS check before the existing 2 years finish, they will not be able to work with children or vulnerable adults until Safeguarding training and DBS check are complete

Appendix 6 Vulnerable Adults



The [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#) defines a vulnerable adult as a person who has attained the age of 18 years and meets one or more of the following criteria:

is in residential accommodation

is in sheltered housing

receives domiciliary care

receives a specific form of health care as defined by the Act (this does not include one-off doctor's appointments etc.)

is detained in lawful custody

is in contact with probation services (i.e. receiving help or supervision)

receives a welfare service of a prescribed description

receives any service or participates in any activity provided specifically for persons who have particular needs due to age, any form of disability or a physical or mental problem as prescribed by the Act (two further prescribed conditions are not relevant for our context)

receives direct payments e.g. Disability living allowance, PIP etc

requires assistance in the conduct of their own affairs.