



# Moorlands Church

## **Safeguarding Policy**

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## 1. The Role of the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Team

### 1.1 Why have a Safeguarding Policy?

Moorlands Church takes its responsibilities for the care and protection of children very seriously and puts a high value on all its work with children and young people. We believe that we should provide our children with the highest standard of care and that the experience of growing up within the Church community should be enriching. To ensure that this work is carried out in a way which brings glory to God and is in accordance with the Children Act of 1989, these guidelines have been produced. They are for the protection of both children and those who work among them.

Each worker with children and young people must have read the Safeguarding Policy prior to undertaking duties with children and young people. They must undertake to apply its contents and personally review the policy every 12 months.

### 1.2 Safeguarding Policy Statement

Moorlands Church regards Safeguarding and good working practice as a priority. In the interests of the safety and well being of all children and young people, it has developed and operates a formal Safeguarding Policy.

We are committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all the children in our care. Many children are involved in the life of the Church, under the guidance of a dedicated group of leaders and helpers. These people give their time freely and generously so that our children can grow in their faith in Jesus Christ. Both children and adults need a safe and secure environment in which to work.

Moorlands is committed to ensuring that everyone working with children or young people:

- Has undergone a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at enhanced level.
- Is adequately trained and supervised.
- Understands and follow the Church's Safeguarding Policy.

Moorlands Church:

- Recognises that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Is committed to supporting parents and families.
- Recognises the unique and individual worth of each child.
- Is committed to nurturing, protecting and safeguarding children and young people.
- Exercises care in the appointment of all those working with children and young people in the Church.
- Is committed to following statutory and specialist guidelines in working with children and young people.
- Seeks to support all those affected by abuse.

- Is committed to supporting, training and resourcing those who work with children and young people and provide regular supervision.
- Is committed to the management and supervision of known offenders in the Church.
- Will review its Safeguarding Policy annually.

Should the Church have any Safeguarding concerns it will seek the advice of the Safeguarding Team and if appropriate contact the statutory authorities and/ or ThirtyOne:Eight (an independent Christian charity who provide safeguarding services to churches).

### 1.3 Where can I obtain a copy of the Safeguarding Policy?

The Safeguarding Policy may be viewed and/or a copy obtained from the Safeguarding Team. A copy will also be available on the Welcome desk and on the Church website (in the Families' section).

### 1.4 Safeguarding Team

The Church will appoint a Safeguarding Team. The responsibilities of this team is:

- To maintain review and maintain the Safeguarding Policy.
- To help coordinate the appointment of any persons working with children or vulnerable adults with respect to Safeguarding, including arranging DBS checks.
- To maintain a record of all Safeguarding issues according to guidelines.
- To be available if a disclosure occurs and follow the disclosure procedure, including informing the appropriate authorities.
- To keep the eldership of the Church abreast of new developments in Safeguarding.

The current Safeguarding Officer is:

Simon Tomlinson

who oversees our safeguarding activities, with the day-to-day operations being the responsibility of Becky Byrom and Erin Skillicorn. (Together the Safeguarding Team).

All the children and young people involved in activities within the Church should be familiar with who they are and how they can be contacted.

## 2. Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People

### 2.1 General Guidelines

All people should:

- Treat all children and young people with the respect and dignity befitting their age.
- Watch their own language, tone of voice and body language.
- Control and discipline children without physical punishment. This must never be used even if parents have given explicit permission.
- Ensure that another adult is informed if a worker needs to take a child to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children.
- If known in advance seek a parent's permission if a child or young person is to be seen on his or her own; another adult must be nearby and the child or young person must know this.

No one should:

- Invade a child's privacy whilst washing or toileting.
- Play rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Be sexually suggestive about or to a child or young person even in fun.
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child or young person.
- Show favouritism to any one child, young person or group.
- Allow a child or young person to involve the worker in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature
- Give lifts to children or young people on their own. If this is unavoidable, the worker should have parental permission and must ask the child or young person to sit in the back of the vehicle.
- Share sleeping accommodation with young people.
- Invite a young person to the worker's home alone.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying.
- Allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person.
- Put a child out of a meeting unattended. If they are being disruptive and have to be excluded, they should be escorted home by two leaders or their guardians phoned and asked to pick them up. (This should be a last resort and should be recorded in the logbook).

### 2.2 Physical Contact and Safeguarding

Child abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely that any type of physical contact in the course of children and youth work could be misconstrued as abuse. We aim to provide a warm, nurturing environment for children and young people whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour. All workers and volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult. If any activity requires physical contact make sure that the young person and their parents are aware of this and its nature.

- There must be no physical punishment of any kind nor should anyone sanction ridicule or humiliate a child.
- Avoid physically rough games.
- Avoid unnecessary informal touching.
- Avoid taking young children to the toilet, but when unavoidable make sure another adult is informed or organise a toilet break for the whole group. Only female workers should escort very young children to the toilet. Encourage children to be independent and do not allow the toilets to be used as a playground.
- Young children may sometimes need comforting: make sure they are responded to warmly but with other adults around.
- First aid should be administered with others around.
- Very occasionally it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming himself or others. Use the least possible force and inform the parents as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and the information given to one of the Safeguarding Team.
- All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child's needs not the needs of the adult. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.
- Set time limits for the beginning and ending of meetings and aim to keep to them.

## 2.3 Health and Safety Guidelines

### Adult / Child Ratios

The minimum required staffing levels for children's groups are given below. More help may be required if children are being taken out or undertaking physical activities.

0–2 years	1 person for every 3 children
2–3 years	1 person for every 4 children
3–8 years	1 person for every 8 children
Over 8 years	1 person for the first 8 children and then one extra person for every extra 12 children

Each group should have at least two adults and it is recommended that a gender balance is maintained.

At no point should any single leader be alone with a child of any age in a room. If groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with doors open one person per group is allowed. If there is a need to talk confidentially to a child, this should be done where possible within the sight of others. If a leader is in a situation where they are left alone with a child they should tell the person to whom they are responsible immediately afterwards.

Young people aged between 14 and 18 may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult helper who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and the Safeguarding procedures are followed. Adults asked to help on a very occasional basis may be seen as visitors but must be responsible to an appointed worker, and must be supervised at all times. If any adults or young people become part of a regular rota, they should

become part of the team, be properly appointed and must also undergo an enhanced DBS check.

## Premises

Meeting places should be warm, well lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter. Electric sockets should be covered for the preschool group. Toilets and hand basins should be easily available, with hygienic drying facilities provided. There should be enough space available for the intended activity.

Main entrances and exits need to be safe so that children cannot get out without the leaders knowing and strangers cannot get in. When the main door is open at the beginning and end of meetings, there should be a leader present. It should not be left open at other times. If children are being collected by parents, ensure they do not leave the building on their own. Two leaders should stay until all the children have been collected. If anyone other than the child's parent is collecting the child then the parents must have given permission for this prior to leaving the child. Any parents of visiting children must be asked to clearly identify themselves to the leaders before leaving the child.

If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises (cold snacks such as fruit or breadsticks are not included in this category), the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a "Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate" acquired. Drinks should always be available.

## Other Health and Safety Advice

- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of first aid and fire procedures. Fire extinguishers should be regularly checked and smoke detectors fitted throughout the premises.
- No smoking should be permitted in the areas where there are children. Alcohol and illegal drugs must not be used by those who have children and young people in their care, or at a time when their use could affect the care given to them.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should not walk to or from the premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A record of the names, addresses and emergency contact numbers of the children attending the meeting should be kept in the immediate vicinity of the premises where the meeting takes place.
- In the event of a toileting accident, two leaders should deal with the situation. If the child has to be changed, it should be recorded in the log book and the parents notified immediately when the child is picked up to be taken home.

## 2.4 First Aid and Health

A first aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. Workers should be encouraged to attend First Aid training. A list of first-aiders should be compiled and kept available. All accidents must be recorded in the accident book. Detailing the date and time

of when an incident occurred, the action taken, who took it and how long it took to do. At least two leaders should deal with any problem.

All premises used by children should have a first aid kit, the contents of which should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents regularly. All workers should be encouraged to have some first aid knowledge.

Confidentiality regarding a child's HIV status should always be maintained.

Good hygiene should always be practiced with all children and young people.

Disposable gloves and aprons should be available for use when dealing with broken skin, body fluids and faeces.

## 2.5 Guidelines for corresponding with children and young people

### Corresponding with children

Leaders will only contact children (here defined as 0-11 year olds) directly by post (e.g. a Christmas card, get well card etc). Any other form of initiated communication (email, phone, text) must always go through a parent or guardian. If a child emails a leader, any response from the leader should ideally be copied to the parent. If this is not appropriate another leader should be copied in.

### Corresponding with young people (age 11-18)

In addition to contacting young people by post, leaders of the youth groups may on occasion contact the whole group at one time by email, text or other social media (together, Social Media). Leaders will not generally contact individual young people by Social Media but on occasion when a leader does contact a young person individually (for instance replying to a young person's question) the leader will always copy in another leader visibly (i.e. not blind copied).

Leaders will not generally contact young people by Social Media. The exception is contacting young people to confirm practical arrangements (e.g. ringing a young person to find out where they are, if they have not arrived etc).

Leaders will not delete any electronic contact with young people.

Any Social Media communication that raises concerns received from a young person or sent to a young person should be written down and passed to the Safeguarding Team who will record it in the incident book.

Leaders will be advised to allow one trusted adult (not the leaders spouse) to access their phone to provide accountability for their use of Social Media.

## 2.6 Guidelines for Transporting Children

### By Car

Children and young people should not be taken in a vehicle, without the prior consent of the parents. All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured. Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their license should inform one of the Safeguarding Team. Any driver who has an “unspent” conviction for a drink driving offence or for Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport children. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts during Church activities. All cars that carry children should be in a roadworthy condition. All children must wear suitable seat belts. If there are no seat belts children should not be carried.

At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number. If a child is known to have a disability or special need, consideration should be given whether to have a non-driving adult in the car. This adult should sit in the back, behind the driver, with the child in the seat beside him or her. If a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car. This should only happen for short distances or in case of emergency.

### By Minibus

- A mini-bus with seat belts must be used.
- All children must have a proper seat.
- An escort must always be taken.

## 2.7 Guidelines for “Off-Site” Activities

- All activities must be covered by insurance. Potentially hazardous activities must be assessed for risk before being agreed by the elders.
- The leader should take the consent forms with them on the outing.
- A First Aid kit should be carried.
- When there is an outing a named person must be responsible, back in the home area, in the event of an unforeseen delay or emergency. This person’s name and contact details should be given to the child’s parents and they should be available during the time that the group is away. This person should have the itinerary and be aware of the plans - estimated time of arrival at the destination, estimated time of return etc. The named person should have the names and addresses of everyone both adults and children, who are on the trip. In the event of an incident or accident the named person will be responsible for speedily contacting the parents.

## 2.8 Guidelines for Taking Young People Away

- No child under the age of 8 can be taken away on residential activities without being accompanied by their parent or guardian.
- Information for parents

- It is important that parents should have full information before giving consent. This should include:
  - Aims and objectives of the event or activity.
  - Date of the event and its duration.
  - Details of venue including arrangements for accommodation and supervision.
  - Travel arrangements.
  - Name of group leader and contact numbers.
  - Information about financial, medical and insurance arrangements.

## Parental Consent

Each child or young person under the age of 18 (unless they are over 16 and living away from home or married) must have the written consent of his or her parent or guardian; this gives authority to the person named as responsible for the activity to take the young person away and to act “as a careful parent would”. It does not transfer “parental responsibility”.

## Premises

Insurance, First Aid kit and fire precautions should be checked.

## Insurance

Insurance must be adequate for the activities planned, especially any hazardous activities.

## Accommodation

Boys and girls must have separate sleeping and washing facilities which are private to them. Mixed groups must have adults of both sexes involved. Adults should have separate accommodation but in close proximity to the young people. Any other arrangements e.g. “sleep-overs”, “lock-ins”, “all-night” events should be carefully explained to parents beforehand and their consent sought for the arrangements.

## Supervision

- Ratios of helpers to young people should be strictly followed.
- Adults should avoid being alone with children or young people.
- Parents should be informed beforehand if it is intended to allow groups of young people to go off unsupervised e.g. for shopping.
- All volunteer helpers should be clear about their responsibilities and who to ask for advice about concerns

## 2.9 Guidelines for Holiday Clubs and Missions

- These are situations when there are likely to be extra helpers for part or all of the activity.

- The activity should be planned carefully. If in the course of one year several events for under 8 year olds extend over more than 6 days there is a requirement for the activity to be registered with the local Social Services Department.
- You should ensure that all the usual health and safety recommendations are in place. Make sure there are enough helpers for all the activities.
- If there are many new or one-off helpers divide them into teams ensuring that there is a known, properly appointed leader responsible for each team.
- Ask the children's parents to fill in a consent form to cover all the activities.
- There will be occasions, such as the Church Weekend, where recommended and trusted helpers are from other churches (Church by the Bay, Parr Street etc).
- In these circumstances, it will be acceptable for DBS checks from their church to be seen by the Safeguarding Team.

### 3. Appointment, Support, Supervision and Training of Leaders and Workers

#### 3.1 Procedure For Appointment

The following procedure is required for new workers with children and young people:

- Be considered by appropriate people to have the behaviours, character and ability required of a worker with children and young people.
- Undergo a partnership interview with a church elder or pastor and be accepted by the church family as a partner.
- The volunteer should complete the declaration form (see Appendix 7) and be asked to voluntarily disclose any previous Safeguarding convictions.
- The volunteer should be given a copy of the Church's Safeguarding Policy which they should read and agree to work within the guidelines.
- A DBS (enhanced level) check should be completed if the volunteer does not have a certificate which has been issued in the previous 12 months by Moorlands.
- Each volunteer should be given guidelines on dealing with the disclosure of abuse and should receive ongoing training on Safeguarding and related issues as appropriate.

In the case of new workers helping on an ad hoc basis with creches:

- Be considered by appropriate people to have the behaviours, character and ability required of a worker with children and young people.
- The volunteer should be given a copy of the Church's Safeguarding Policy which they should read and agree to work within the guidelines.
- A DBS (enhanced level) check should be completed if the volunteer does not have a certificate which has been issued in the previous 12 months by Moorlands.
- Each volunteer should be given guidelines on dealing with the disclosure of abuse and should receive ongoing training on Safeguarding and related issues as appropriate.
- The volunteer should not be left alone with or in charge of the group.

In the case of a worker who is going to be working for the Church in a formal capacity (eg: Ministry trainee) the following additional actions may be required:

- The volunteer should complete an application form.
- The volunteer should complete the declaration form (see Appendix 7) and be asked to voluntarily disclose any previous Safeguarding convictions.
- References should be collected from people who have knowledge of the volunteer's previous work with children or young people.

#### 3.2 Support and Training

All workers should familiarize themselves with the Safeguarding Team and feel free to approach them, or alternatively a Church elder, about any issue relating to Safeguarding.

The Church has a responsibility to:

- Support all who work with children and young people by providing a safe and structured environment in which Safeguarding is seen as a priority.

- Provide pastoral support to all these workers and allow them to speak confidentially to appropriate persons if concerns are raised.
- Provide suitable training within the Church and if necessary encourage attendance at external training courses such as those provided by ThirtyOne:Eight. Financial support is available for this purpose, subject to the approval of the elders.
- The whole Church has a responsibility to report any concerns about any workers within the Church to the Safeguarding Team or the Church Elders.

### 3.3 Working With Offenders

#### Ex-sexual Offenders Within the Congregation

The Church is a place for all who fall short and sin, for the vulnerable and for those in need. Abusers are people in desperate need of help. Whenever help and support is offered to an ex-offender the protection of the children in the Church must come first. Remember that abusers of children are usually people who get on well with children and whom children like. Present research suggests that sexual offending can be a kind of addiction that is very hard to control and can only be managed. This must be born in mind when welcoming an ex-offender into the community.

Many ex-offenders will seek God's forgiveness for their crimes. Genuine repentance implies that the person concerned will accept that further help is required to prevent a re-occurrence of the offence and to deal with the human and social effects of the sin. As well as professional therapy, this may require continuing supervision and discipline within the Church as part of the ministry to the offender. An ex-offender will need to accept that no further contact or work with children or young people can be permitted, and that a continuing pastoral role may be impossible. Sensitive care of the offender is needed in these circumstances.

Anyone who discovers that a person has been convicted of sexual abuse against a child must inform one of the Safeguarding Team so appropriate steps may be taken.

It is our policy that no-one who has been convicted or who has accepted a caution for a sexual offence against a child will be permitted to work, in a paid or unpaid position with children. A person who has been convicted or who has accepted a caution for a sexual offence against a child may be restricted from certain church activities.

A person convicted or who has accepted a caution for any other offence against a child or for whom there are unresolved serious allegations outstanding will only be allowed to work with children or be part of mixed-age activities following consultation and individual agreement. This agreement may contain restrictions from certain activities, specified levels of supervision or other instructions deemed necessary at the discretion of the Safeguarding Team and Church leadership.

## How to plan the integration of known sexual offenders

Where a known offender joins the Church it will be important to extend love and friendship to the individual, but at the same time the elders will need to ensure that a frank discussion takes place with the person concerned and that efforts are made to sustain open communications. It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries for both the protection of the young people and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly accused of abuse or being tempted to abuse.

The following procedures should be followed:

- Maintain close links with any probation officer.
- Be open with the offender.
- Prepare an agreement which may include:
  - Attending only designated services and meetings.
  - Sitting apart from children.
  - Staying away from areas of the building where children meet.
  - Attending a house group where there are no children.
  - Declining hospitality where there are children.
  - Never being alone with children.
  - Never working with children.
  - Not being part of an activity that includes children.
  - Attending only agreed social events.
  - Restriction from certain roles of perceived leadership and trust.
- Ask the offender to sign the agreement.
- Enforce the agreement - do not allow manipulation.
- Consider with the offender whether to tell the Church.
- Ensure that appropriate members of the eldership and Safeguarding team are aware of the situation (if you don't tell the whole Church)
- Provide close support and pastoral care.
- If the agreement is broken be prepared to ban the offender from the Church and inform the probation officer.

## 4. What to do if a Child Makes a Disclosure or Child Abuse is Suspected

### 4.1 Talking to young people or child on their own.

If a child or young person asks to speak to you alone it is important to listen because any delay may prevent that person from disclosing a serious problem. (You should hold a current DBS check if you agree to speak to the person). The following guidelines should be followed if possible:

- Be open and available.
- Be relaxed.
- Listen before you speak.
- Never promise not to tell anyone.
- Avoid putting any pressure on the person.
- Remember none of us have all the answers.
- Help the person decide what they want to do.
- Remember you are not on your own.
- Always meet in an open area where others are around but not too close.
- In exceptional circumstances, if a person is distressed and more privacy is needed, use a separate room after telling another adult about the arrangements and make sure that the young person knows where the nearest adult is.
- Preferably women should advise females, and men advise males.
- Keep a record of who is spoken to in case follow up is needed. Sign, date and time the notes (see section 4.2, Confidentiality, below).
- If a young person is distressed they should be entrusted to another adult at the end of the session.
- If a situation is encountered where the listener feels uncomfortable they should speak to the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

### 4.2 Confidentiality

At the first meeting, explain that you may need to tell certain, appropriate others (e.g. Safeguarding Team) the content of the conversation. If the person is being harmed themselves, if they are harming others or if they know that a child or young person is being harmed, the information will have to be passed on. The person will be told what will be done and how they will be supported if they need to talk to someone else. In these circumstances always make a written record, sign date and time, and follow the Safeguarding procedures.

### 4.3 Hearing a child abuse disclosure from the Child

Church workers may get to know the children and young people in their groups very well. A child or young person may feel enough trust to be able to talk about unhappy things that are happening - at home, at school or at Church. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. Remember that the child may want the abuse to stop but still love the abuser. The child may think that it is possible to stop the abuse without anything else happening.

If a child asks to talk in confidence always tell them that it will depend on the circumstances. Your responsibility is for the child's safety and wellbeing. It will be necessary to get other people to help if they are being harmed. You should inform the child of any steps you will take in advance of taking them. If it is possible, try to have another adult present whilst the child speaks, but do not prevent the child from speaking if this is not a possibility. If the child will not speak with another adult present, the conversation should take place in a public room with other people in the vicinity.

#### General points:

- Listen to the child attentively.
- Show acceptance of what the young person says (however unlikely it seems).
- Maintain eye contact.
- Be honest.
- Be aware that they may have been threatened.
- Allow the child to talk, but don't press for information.

#### Helpful Things to Say

- 'I believe you.' (or show acceptance of what they've said)
- 'I'm glad you've told me.'
- 'I will help you.'

#### Avoid Saying

- 'Why didn't you tell me before.'
- 'I can't believe it.'
- 'Are you sure this is true?'
- 'Why? Where? When? Who?'
- Any false promises.
- 'I'm shocked.'
- 'Don't tell anyone else.'

#### Having listened to them

- Tell the child that they are not to blame for anything that has happened.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you
- Let the child know that other people will have to be told so that the abuse can stop.
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way that the child can understand.
- Reassure the child that he or she will continue to be supported during the difficult time to come.
- Seek advice from the Safeguarding Team; if no-one is immediately available contact your local Social Services Department directly.
- As soon as practicable (preferably within an hour of the conversation) write down as carefully as possible everything that was said, what the child has said, how they said it and how they appeared emotionally. Record dates, times and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes. Sign, date and time the notes. Make sure a copy is given to one of the Safeguarding Team.
- Do not talk to the alleged abuser.
- The Safeguarding Team or appropriate leader should inform social services immediately and take advice prior to informing the parents or carers of the situation.

#### 4.4 Reports from Parents or Others

Parents, other adults or a teenager may report abuse but be reluctant to inform the relevant authorities in such circumstances. They should be encouraged to discuss the matter with Social Services or with another trusted professional with Safeguarding training. In any case it is the responsibility of the Church to inform the Social Services Department of the allegation so that the child or young person and other children are protected.

#### 4.5 Disclosures from Abusers - Matters of Confidentiality

People who abuse children rarely admit to what they have done. It is however possible that admissions may be made. While there is a general presumption in favour of confidentiality of pastoral conversations of all kinds, this cannot apply in the case of disclosures concerning the abuse of children. Thus while a person's right to confidentiality is of great importance, it is not absolute. If a person hearing a disclosure considers that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm they must follow these procedures.

The Children Act 1989 states that if there is a conflict between the needs of a child and an adult "the welfare of the child is paramount".

Those who admit to offences against children should be assured that, within the constraints of the law and subject to the obligation to safeguard the welfare of children, they will continue to receive the pastoral care and support of the Church.

#### 4.6 Historical Allegations

It is quite common for adults who were abused as children to make allegations of the abuse some years after the event. This may be as a result of seeing the abuser approaching another child, or perhaps their own children have reached the age when they themselves were abused. The adult making the allegation may need advice about where to seek counselling and support.

The Safeguarding Team must be informed of all allegations involving a member of the Church. It will be the responsibility of the adult concerned to decide whether they wish to seek legal redress. The Church will then decide whether there might be children now at risk. If so, a referral will be made to the local Social Services Department.

#### 4.7 The Care of Survivors of Child Abuse

The Church will be involved with survivors of abuse in many ways:

- Abused children may come to the Church for help
- Adult abuse survivors may turn to the Church for help
- Some Church workers were sexually abused as children, and need the support of colleagues, congregations and superiors
- Children may be abused by Christian family members
- Children may be abused by Church workers

The Church should think about ways of responding in a sympathetic and practical way. This means creating a loving environment within which healing can happen and which may require providing access to factual information and sources of professional help.

#### 4.8 Procedures to be followed if there are Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm must be referred to the local Social Services Department.

There are several ways in which concerns about a child can become apparent:

- By an allegation made by the child directly.
- By reports or allegations made by a parent or another person.
- By observing signs and symptoms of abuse.
- By the admission from someone who says they are harming a child.

The Safeguarding Team should be informed if there are any concerns regarding children or young people and appropriate referrals will be made to the local Social Services Department

If any individual is unhappy about the Church's response, there is delay, or for some reason they do not wish to go through this procedure, the person has a personal responsibility to make the referral to the Social Services Department themselves.

In the case of serious allegations or if it is possible that a criminal offence has been committed; for example a physical or sexual assault, care should be taken not to inform the child's parents or the alleged offender so that any investigation is not compromised. An agreement should be made with the police and Social Services Department about who should be given information and when that information should be given. During Safeguarding investigations it is normal for the alleged offender to be withdrawn from any contact with children or young people. This is a neutral act and is done without prejudging the person concerned. All actions regarding a Safeguarding concern must be recorded, signed and dated.

The Social Services Department is the lead agency in matters of Safeguarding and coordinates any response. The police can be contacted in an emergency. When making the referral give the appropriate person as much detail as possible, describing the event or disclosure, as well as information about the child and family. Distinguish between fact and opinion, what is first hand knowledge and what has been heard from others. The referral should be followed up with a letter, a copy of which must be sent to the Safeguarding Team.

The person directly involved with a disclosure or observation should:

- Be prepared to have further discussions with Social Services and police.
- Be prepared to attend a Safeguarding Case Conference.
- Continue to support the child (but not to ask any questions about the disclosure as indicated above) and seek personal support for themselves.
- Give evidence in court if required to do so.

## 4.9 Record Keeping: the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998

It is important to keep accurate records of any Safeguarding concerns, disclosures or allegations. Facts observed or disclosed should be accurately recorded, signed and dated. Opinions should not be included. If any records are to be kept without the subject of the record's knowledge, it should be made clear why this is so, for instance if there appears to be a worrying pattern of behaviour which needs to be monitored. Try to be consistent about what is kept so that it can be justified if necessary. Actions taken and decisions made should all be noted. It should be recorded who knows about the information, for example, the subject of the record, the child's parents etc. Information should not be kept once a situation has been resolved.

## 4.10 Untrue Allegations

Occasionally an untrue allegation may be made. It is important not to make judgments and to allow any allegation to be carefully investigated to try to ascertain the truth. Untrue allegations can be the result of some other concern or unhappiness in a child's life. It is very important that people working with children do not put themselves in vulnerable situations.

## 4.11 Inappropriate Behaviour by Children Towards Adults

Children or young people can sometimes make suggestive approaches to an adult.

- They may have a crush or may act inappropriately following previous abusive experiences. The behaviour may be a "cry for help". If an adult feels uncomfortable about a child or young person's behaviour he or she must:
  - Tell the Safeguarding Team. Agree with the colleague what measures should be taken to prevent a re-occurrence.
  - Make it clear to the child or young person, with sensitivity, that their language or behaviour is inappropriate.
  - Record the incident in case accusations are made in the future. Sign and date the record and hand it to the Safeguarding Team.

## 4.12 Procedures to be Followed During the Investigation of an Allegation

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in conjunction with the statutory authorities. The highest degree of confidentiality must be maintained during an investigation. Support should be given to the various parties involved with an allegation. Those supporting the alleged offender and those supporting the alleged victim or victim's family should not discuss the situation with each other. This is to avoid any possible contamination of evidence.

Following the outcome of an investigation, appropriate disciplinary procedures will apply. The result of an investigation may be inconclusive, there may or may not be a prosecution, or it may be decided that a person's behaviour has been ill-advised and foolish rather than criminal. After taking advice, the Elders may need to put restrictions on a person's future employment or volunteering, or require them to undertake a risk assessment, counselling, training, supervision or spiritual direction.

Allegations may be shown to be unfounded or malicious. In these cases appropriate means will be taken to make clear that the person has been exonerated.

#### 4.13 Procedures to be Followed After Investigation of Serious Allegations or Conviction

People who have been convicted of or who have admitted a sexual offence against a child or who have unresolved serious allegations of sexual abuse will not be able to:

- Hold a post involving contact with children
  - Become a volunteer in any Church activity involving children or young people
- Other convictions or serious unresolved allegations against children will need to be carefully assessed by the elders as to whether a person may have contact with children. An agreement will be made with the person concerned

## Appendices

## 1. The Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998

The Data Protection principles enshrined in the Data Protection Act 2018 are included for information.

Personal data should be:

- Processed fairly and lawfully and only if certain conditions are met.
- Processed only for specified lawful purposes/in ways compatible with them.
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose.
- Accurate and up-to-date.
- Kept for no longer than necessary for the purpose.
- Processed in accordance with the strengthened subject access rights.
- Kept securely.
- Not transferred to any country without adequate data protection.

The Human Rights Act 1998 includes both the right to privacy in family life and also the right to life and the right not to be tortured. It is expected that the courts will uphold the need to pass on information for the purposes of protecting a child. The highest degree of confidentiality consistent with this should be maintained and only information necessary for the safeguarding of children passed on.

## 2. Responding to allegations or suspicions of child abuse: Duties of the Local Authority

The Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the Local Authority:

- To take reasonable steps to prevent children suffering ill treatment or neglect.
- To share information about any child within the area who is likely to suffer harm.
- To investigate where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need and their families by the provision of services.
- Recognition of suspected or actual child abuse is the responsibility not only of the statutory agencies (police, Social Services, health services, schools etc.) but also the community.

It is the duty of the Social Services Department under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to investigate “where there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm”. After a referral has been made, the Social Services Department will decide whether what they have heard appears to constitute child abuse, and/or whether they need to offer advice and support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 for a child in need. They may also decide not to do anything. If they decide to investigate, they will normally do this jointly with specially trained police officers.

- They will gather information from people who know the child: for example teachers and GP.
- They will interview the child’s parents.
- They will interview the child and perhaps other children in the family. This may be in the form of a video interview if it is considered that court proceedings might be a possible outcome. The child is always interviewed by specially trained staff.
- If the investigation concludes that the child or young person has suffered and/or is likely to continue to suffer significant harm a multi-agency Safeguarding Case

Conference will decide whether the child needs protection and how that can be achieved. The child's name may be placed on the Safeguarding Register.

- The police will decide, together with the Crown Prosecution Service, whether a criminal act has been committed and whether a person should be cautioned or charged with an offence and taken to court.
- If the case is taken to court the child will probably have to be a witness, unless the person pleads guilty; there are special provisions to help a child through this process.

## Significant harm

This concept was introduced by the Children Act 1989 as the threshold for intervention in family life for the protection of children. There is no absolute criteria on which to rely—consideration is given to the severity of ill-treatment; the degree and extent of physical harm; the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect; the extent of pre-meditation; the degree of threat and coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse. Significant harm can be caused by one traumatic event or a compilation of events that interrupt, change or damage the child's physical or psychological development. In each case it is necessary also to consider the family's strengths and supports.

## 3. Definitions of child abuse

From "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (1999)

Someone 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.

### 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

### 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## 4. Common Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

### Physical Abuse

The first evidence of abuse may not be an obvious severe injury.

- Bruises
  - In or around the mouth.
  - Fingertip bruising on arms, chest or face indicating tight gripping or shaking.
  - Bruises of different colours indicating injuries of different ages.
  - Two simultaneous black eyes without bruising to the forehead.
  - Bruising showing the marks of a belt or implement or a hand print.
  - Bruising or tears around the earlobes.
  - Bruising to the head or soft tissue areas of the body.
- Bites
  - Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped and can leave a clear impression of teeth.
- Burns and scalds
  - Burns with a clear outline are suspicious.
  - Circular burns from cigarettes.
  - Linear burns from hot metal rods or electric elements.
  - Burns of a uniform depth over a large area.
  - Friction burns from being pulled across a floor.
  - Scalds producing a water line from immersion or pouring of hot liquid.
  - Splash marks around the main burn area caused by hot liquid being thrown.
  - Old scars indicating previous burns.
- Fractures
  - Any fracture in a child under 1 year old is suspicious.
  - Any skull fracture in the first 3 years is suspicious.
- Female circumcision

- This is illegal except for health reasons.

## Neglect

Often difficult to identify, neglect leads to the physical and emotional harm of a child. The signs and symptoms include:

- Failure of a parent to provide adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, medical care or supervision.
- Failure of a child to grow within the normally expected pattern; they may show pallor, weight loss and signs of poor nutrition.
- Failure of a parent to provide adequate love and affection in a stimulating environment, a child may look listless, apathetic or unresponsive with no apparent medical cause.
- A child may be observed thriving when away from the home environment.

## Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can also be difficult to identify. It is the result of ill treatment in the form of coldness, hostility and rejection; constant denigration or seriously distorted emotional demands; extreme inconsistency of parenting. Some of the signs and symptoms are:

- Low self-esteem;
- Apathy;
- Being fearful and withdrawn or displaying “ frozen watchfulness”.
- Unduly aggressive behaviour.
- Excessive clinging or attention seeking behaviour.
- Constantly seeking to please.
- Over-readiness to relate to anyone, even strangers.

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse can be suspected based on physical signs, the child's behaviour or following a direct statement by the child. It is often investigated because of a combination of these signs.

- Physical signs (these will normally be identified by a medical practitioner. Others can be more generally observed):
  - Recurrent abdominal pain.
  - Unexplained pregnancy.
  - Difficulty walking and sitting.
  - Faecal soiling or retention.
  - Recurrent urinary tract infections.
- Behavioural signs:
  - Knowledge unusual for the age of the child.
  - Sexually provocative relationships with adults.
  - Sexualised play with other children.
  - Hints of sexual activity through play, drawing or conversation.
  - Requests for contraceptive advice.
  - Lack of trust or marked fear of familiar adults.

- Sudden onset of soiling or wetting.
- Severe sleep disturbance.
- Change of eating habits.
- Social isolation and withdrawal.
- Role reversal in the home e.g. a daughter taking over the mothering role.
- Inappropriate displays of physical contact between adult and child.
- Learning difficulties, poor concentration.
- Inability to make friends.
- Using school as a haven, arriving early and seeming reluctant to leave
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity.
- Truancy, running away from home.
- Self harm, mutilation or suicide attempts.
- Dependence on drugs or alcohol.
- Anti-social behaviour including promiscuity and prostitution.

## Organised abuse

Organised abuse refers to any abusive practice which is planned or exercised by two or more perpetrators, or where more than one child is abused by the same person. This type of abuse does occur and needs very careful investigation. Good communication between everyone involved is essential. This type of abuse can include the production and dissemination of child pornography by various methods including the internet.

## 5. Equal Opportunities Statement

1. Moorlands Church is a Christian organisation committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to treating people on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor. No person will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds.
2. In employment we actively seek to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.
3. As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, some posts can only be filled by Christians. These posts are kept under regular review. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented in accordance with Employment and Race Directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.
4. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Church undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

5. A Disclosure is only requested if relevant for the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.
6. Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent separately and in confidence to the Recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to, as part of the recruitment process.
7. Unless the nature of the position allows questioning about your entire criminal record, we only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
8. We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
9. At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
10. Every person undergoing a DBS check will be made aware of the DBS Code of Practice and a copy will be available on request.
11. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
12. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

## 6. Handling, Use, Secure Storage, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information

In consideration of our use of the Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure Service, to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, we agree to comply with the DBS Code of Practice, Data Protection Act and other legislation in regard to the correct handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information.

### Storage and access

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant’s personal file but stored separately and securely, in a lockable, non-portable storage container (e.g. filing cabinet), with access strictly limited to those who are entitled as part of their official duties.

### Handling

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information have been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

## Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

## Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, Disclosure information may be kept for up to six months for the resolution of disputes or complaints, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If this happens it will be done in consultation with the ThirtyOne:Eight Disclosure Unit who will seek advice from the DBS giving full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights legislation. The conditions regarding safe handling and storage will continue to apply.

## Disposal

Once the retention period has lapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately and appropriately destroyed (eg by shredding, pulping or burning). While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will continue to be kept securely. We will not keep any original documents or copies relating to the disclosure certificate. However, we may keep a record of it i.e. the name, date, and type of disclosure, the position for which it was requested, the unique reference number and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

## 7. Confidential Declaration Form

### Confidential Declaration Form

1a. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offence?<sup>1</sup> (If yes, please state the nature and date(s) of the offence(s), continuing on a separate sheet if necessary.)

1b. Have you ever been cautioned by the police or bound over to keep the peace?

1c. Have you ever been found by a Court exercising civil jurisdiction (including matrimonial or family jurisdiction) to have caused significant harm<sup>2</sup> to a child or young person under the age of 18 years, or has any such Court made any order against you on the basis of any finding or allegation that any child or young person was at risk of significant harm from you?

2a. Has your conduct ever caused or been likely to cause significant harm to a child or young person under 18, or put a child or young person at risk of significant harm?

2b. To your knowledge has it ever been alleged that your conduct has ever resulted in any of these things?

The following question relates to any conduct, whether in a paid capacity, as a voluntary worker or otherwise. If yes, please give full details, including the date(s) and nature of the conduct or alleged conduct, whether this was investigated and whether you were dismissed, disciplined, moved to other work or resigned from any paid or voluntary work as a result. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

3. Has a child in your care or for whom you have or had parental responsibility ever been removed from your care, been placed on a Safeguarding Register or been the subject of a care order, a supervision order, a child assessment order or an emergency protection order under the Children Act 1989, or a similar order under other legislation?

If yes, please give full details, continuing on a separate sheet if necessary

4. Do you have any health problems which might affect your work with children or young people under the age of 18? (If yes, please give full details, continuing on a separate sheet if necessary.)

5. Have you, since the age of 18, ever been known by any name other than the one given below? (If yes, please give full details.)

6. Have you, during the past 5 years had any home address other than the one given below? (If yes, please give full details, continuing on a separate sheet if necessary)

**Notes**

1 This question covers all convictions which are not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. It also covers "spent" convictions if they fall within:

Schedule 1 to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933; or

The Schedule to the Disqualification for Caring for Children Regulation 1991; or

The other offences listed in Annex 1E to the House of Bishops' Policy Document on Safeguarding, which also contains details of the offences within the first two items of this list.

2 "Significant harm" means ill treatment (which is serious and noteworthy) of any kind (including sexual abuse) or impairment of physical or mental health or development

**Declaration**

I declare that the above information (and that on the attached sheets) is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Signed

Date

Full name

Address

Date of birth

Please return the completed form to Moorlands Church.