



**Safeguarding Policy for
Children, Young People and
Vulnerable Adults**
(Reviewed April 2026)

This safeguarding policy and the procedures contained within it have been divided into five sections covering all 10 of the recommended safeguarding standards produced by Thirtyone eight (previously known as CCPAS).

Section 1 Place of worship / organisation details

Safe and Secure – Standard 1

Section 2 Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Safe and Secure – Standards 2 and 7

Section 3 Prevention

Safe and Secure – Standards 3 and 4

Section 4 Pastoral care

Safe and Secure – Standards 8 and 9

Section 5 Practice guidelines

Safe and Secure – Standards 5, 6 and 10

Appendix 1 Leadership safeguarding statement

Appendix 2 WhatsApp Policy



Section 1 – Church Details/Place of Worship

1.2 Contact and Key Information

Church Leadership (known as Elders): Tim Gannon and James Davies.

Place of Worship: Chrysalis Theatre, Japonica Ln, Willen Park South, Milton Keynes MK15 9JY

Email address: office@gracechurchmiltonkeynes.org.

Organisation: Catalyst

Charity Number: 1156871

Insurance Company: Ansvar. Public Liability Insurance

The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children / vulnerable adults:

- **Grace Church Milton Keynes** (hereafter, ‘the Church’) meets at 10:30 am on Sunday mornings for public Christian worship and Bible teaching at **The Chrysalis Theatre**, Japonica Lane, Willen Park South, Milton Keynes MK15 9JY.
- The church is part of **Catalyst churches** part of **Newfrontiers**, a world-wide family of Churches.
- The Bible tells us in Mark 10:13-16 that ‘People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.’ (NIV)
- **Grace Church Milton Keynes** therefore holds children’s work in high regard; children are recognised as a valuable part of the church today and not just as the church of tomorrow.
- **The Church aims** to provide children with an environment of fun and friendship where they are encouraged to personally know and follow Jesus.
- **We take seriously** our responsibility as leaders and members of the church to support parents in their God-given task of ‘training a child in the way he should go’ (Proverbs 22:6), but recognise that it is primarily the parents’ responsibility to teach and model Christian values at home as well as in church.
- **We also** are committed to safeguarding any adults and the principles of this policy can be adopted if any concerns are raised.

- **For the purposes** of this policy, the term ‘child’, ‘children’ or ‘young person’ include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years of age. For vulnerable adults (Adults at risk) there is no single definition of an adult at risk, so for our policy we are using the following simple definition taken from Thirtyone eight:

‘Any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function age, illness or traumatic circumstance may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment, or exploitation’.

- **This policy has been adopted** to help us to do this effectively.

We currently run the following groups which require workers to be appropriately checked under the safer recruitment process:

Sunday Mornings:

- Children’s Group Explorers (children aged up to 1-3 inclusive)
- Children’s Group Adventure Kids (children aged 4 – 7 inclusive)
- Children’s Group Trailblazers (children 8-11 inclusive)
- Youth Group – (children aged 11 – 18 inclusive) Friday Evenings and Sundays

1.2 Our Commitment

We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

As a leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.

- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- file a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with Thirtyone eight and the local authority, Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board (MKSCB) and any amendments subsequently published. The leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Section 2 - Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

2.1 Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

2.2 Definitions of abuse

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)'.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. 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 for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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.

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 cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once

a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);

- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

2.3 Signs of Possible Abuse (children & young people)

The following signs **could** be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context with any other indicators, any disclosure and the child's whole life.

Physical

Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.

Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.

Injuries that have not received medical attention.

Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.

Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.

Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.

Cuts/scratches/substance abuse.

Sexual

Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse.

Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing.

Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.

Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.

Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.

Also, but not exclusively, eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia can be a sign but will need to be considered alongside other indicators *

Emotional

Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.

Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.

Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.

Obsessions or phobias.

Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.

Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.

Attention-seeking behaviour.

Persistent tiredness.

Running away/stealing/lying.

Neglect

Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food,

untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.

**Research indicates a significant link between eating disorders and sexual abuse in the UK, with roughly 30% of patients having experienced sexual abuse. Such trauma is considered a key risk factor, as individuals may use disordered eating behaviours like restriction or purging, as a coping mechanism to manage trauma symptoms, manage shame, or gain control (National Institute of Health)*

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. This isn't just physical violence – domestic abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse.

Abusive behaviour can occur in any relationship. It can continue even after the relationship has ended. Both men and women can be abused or abusers.

Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people. Witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse, and teenagers can also suffer domestic abuse in their relationships.

Domestic abuse can include:

- sexual abuse and rape (including within a relationship)
- punching, kicking, cutting, hitting with an object
- withholding money or preventing someone from earning money
- taking control over aspects of someone's everyday life, which can include where they go and what they wear
- not letting someone leave the house
- reading emails, text messages or letters
- threatening to kill or harm them, a partner, another family member or pet.

Children and young people witnessing domestic abuse

Witnessing domestic abuse is distressing and scary for a child, and causes serious harm. Children living in a home where domestic abuse is happening are at risk of other types of abuse too. Children can experience domestic abuse or violence in lots of different ways. They might:

- see the abuse
- hear the abuse from another room
- see a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
- be hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse

Teenagers experiencing domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can happen in any relationship, and it affects young people too.

They may not realise that what's happening is abuse. Even if they do, they might not tell anyone about it because they're scared of what will happen, or ashamed about what people will think.

2.4 Spiritual Abuse

Grace Church Milton Keynes is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for all. We believe that spiritual authority should be used to protect and empower, not to harm, control, or exploit.

In writing this statement we have considered the report by Thirtyone eight into spiritual abuse:

“We would argue that the focus should not be on stopping an exploration of spiritual abuse because of a possible threat to leadership, but rather, that there should be a focus on how to support and nurture leaders to lead in an authentic and healthy way. Which allows the use of authority and the development of those they are leading.

The ability of leaders to be able to self-reflect and self-regulate is a key requirement in understanding how power and authority are used in the day-to-day interactions with those around them, such that they do not cause harm. Evidence shows that a significant amount of spiritually abusive behaviour is not intentional, but comes as a result of a failure to self-manage emotions, attitudes and beliefs and their impact upon others in day-to-day interactions and relationships. That is why much of our recent work has been on healthy leadership and healthy culture”. (J Humphries CEO & head of Safeguarding Thirtyone eight)

At Grace Church we define spiritual abuse as the violation of a person's trust, autonomy, or safety through the misuse of religious power, including, but not limited to:

- Manipulation or coercion using theological arguments or spiritual threats.
- Coercive control, isolation, or exploitation of vulnerability.
- Misuse of scripture, spiritual authority, or "revelation" to control personal decisions.
- Shaming, shunning, or using fear including supernatural punishment (e.g., witchcraft, possession)

Our Commitment to Safeguarding:

Zero Tolerance: We do not tolerate any form of abuse, regardless of the beliefs or justifications used, or level to which is experienced.

Recognition & Response: We will train our staff and volunteers to recognise signs of spiritual abuse and respond to disclosures with empathy, without judgment.

Mandatory Reporting: Any concern, allegation, or suspicion of spiritual abuse will be reported immediately to our designated Safeguarding Lead.

Action & Support: We will take swift action to protect anyone at risk and, where necessary, involve statutory authorities (Police or Social Services)

If you have concerns or have been affected, please contact Gladys Olujobi or Jonathan Kempster on 07809760426 /07305108418 in confidence

2.5 Safeguarding awareness

The leadership is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and developmental opportunities for all workers and volunteers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers and volunteers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis, provided by our in-house safeguarding co-ordinators. We will in addition to this enable workers and volunteers to attend external courses such as those provided by the Thirtyone eight when such courses relate to the work of a particular individual.

The leadership will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern and will have available a range of resources and access to help leaflets many of which have been produced by Thirtyone eight.

2.6 Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Under no circumstances should a church worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into any allegation or suspicion of abuse. The following procedure must be applied.

- The person in receipt of an allegation or suspicion of abuse should report their concerns as soon as possible to **Gladys Olujobi** (hereafter, the “Co-ordinator”) on **07809760426** who is nominated by the church leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Co-ordinator, or if suspicions in any way involve the Co-ordinator then the report should be made to **Jonathan Kempster** (hereafter the “Deputy Co-ordinator”) on **07305108418**. If the suspicions implicate both of the aforementioned people then the report should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone Eight PO Box 133 Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone **0303 003 1111**.

Alternatively contact the local Social Services or the police. The children’s social services numbers are **01908 253169** or **01908 253170** between 9.00am and 5.00pm is. The out of hours number is **01908 265545**. The police Child Protection telephone number is **01908 686000**.

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is **01908 252835**. The out of hours emergency number is **01908 725005**.

- Where required the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should then immediately inform the insurance company.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with church procedures and kept in a secure place at the church office.

- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Coordinator, in the absence of the Co-ordinator their deputy should not delay referral to the Social Services Department, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone Eight.
- The church leadership will support the Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone eight, although the church leadership hope that members of the church will feel able to use the procedure set out within this policy. If, however, the individual with concern feels that the Co-ordinator/Deputy Coordinator has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact any outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the church leadership demonstrate its commitment to the effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.
- The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

2.7 Allegations of Physical injury, Neglect or Emotional abuse

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator will:

- Contact social services (or thirtyone eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, where a child makes a direct disclosure, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Will not tell the parents or carer unless advised to do so having contacted Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting) encourage parent/carers to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of injury or abuse.
- Where the parent/carers is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Social Services.

2.8 Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy Co-ordinator will:

- Contact the Social Services Multiagency Safeguarding duty officer or Police Child Protection Team. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow advice from Thirtyone eight if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Social Services/Police. Thirtyone eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

2.9 Suspicions or allegations of physical or sexual abuse where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, thirtyone eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact Thirtyone eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including

action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

2.10 Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with the MKSCB procedures will need to liaise with the Children's Social Services department in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). In addition, it may be necessary to refer the individual to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Section 3 - Prevention

3.1 Safer Recruitment

The church leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the principles set out in government guidelines. This includes ensuring that the church adheres safe recruitment guidelines.

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- An Enhanced DBS has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- safeguarding training will be provided for the successful applicant. This will be updated yearly.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- We will consider to use young people as volunteers they will need to carry out safer recruitment checks but not a DBS. At no time will a young person be left alone with children and will always be supervised by someone who has a DBS check.

3.2 Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and vulnerable adults. The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to

engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Grace church has a separate policy for the management of allegations that can be found on the church website or by following this link.

<https://gracechurchmiltonkeynes.org/docs/Grace-Church-Managing-Safeguarding-Allegations-Against-Staff-and-Volunteers.pdf>

Section 4 – Pastoral Care

4.1 Supporting those affected by abuse

The church leadership is committed to offering pastoral care and support to all those who have been affected by any form of abuse, working with statutory agencies as appropriate. This is open to all who have contact with or are part of its organisation.

Support may be provided through pastoral care teams, through counselling agencies, through identified specific services or any other practical ways support can be provided.

4.2 Working with offenders

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the church leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. All details will only be shared on a need to know basis. The elders and any dedicated supervisor will be aware of boundaries set.

Section 5 – Practice Guidelines

5.1 Code of Conduct and Good Practice Guide

As a church and place of worship working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in however it must be appreciated that good practice evolves over time and therefore the attached guide for workers is subject to change and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

5.2 Adult to Child Ratio's

In order to supervise activities safely, it is necessary to have sufficient adult leaders and helpers. Guidance based on OFSTED regulations is as follows:

0-2 yrs	1 adult to 3 children
2-3yrs	1 adult to 4 children
3-8yrs	1 adult to 8 children

There are no legal requirements to have specific ratios for children over 8 years of age however, it is good practice to ensure that all groups are supervised appropriately and therefore we recommend that there is at least 1 adult to every 10 children and wherever possible that there are 2 workers one male and one female (particularly when working with older youth groups).

5.3 Registration and Consent Forms for groups and activities

All parents/guardians (including one-off visitors) must fill out a registration form for their child or young person before they will be allowed to attend one of the Sunday group meetings.

Group leaders are responsible for ensuring that all workers familiarise themselves with information written on the child/children's registration and consent forms (particularly for new children) before the session commences. It is important that workers clarify any issues with parents if they are unsure i.e. food allergies, special needs etc.

With the exception of those who attend the youth group, children must be dropped off and collected by a responsible adult. Workers should make themselves aware of any special arrangements particularly where children are not being dropped off or collected by their parents/guardians.

Workers in all groups must take a register at the beginning of each session, making a note of the date and which leaders/workers were present.

5.4 Taking children to the toilet

The level of personal care, e.g. toileting, must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst accepting that the child may have special needs, and therefore need more help.

If children are toilet training parents will be called to accompany their children to the toilet. For our children who are still wearing nappies, they can be changed by our staff as long as permission has been given by parent (see registration form)

5.5 Transporting Children and Young People

It is accepted that on occasion it will be necessary for some workers to transport children in their own vehicles. Workers must not do this however without the explicit permission from the child's parent or guardian. The following should also be applied:

- It is the drivers' responsibility to ensure that their car is road worthy and that appropriate insurance is in place.
- Wherever possible, ensure that you have another responsible adult travelling with you or at the very least ensure that another adult knows what are you doing and where you are going.

- Ensure that children sit in the back of the car and use appropriate child restraints and booster seats if necessary.
- Always consider your route i.e. if dropping off more than one child try and leave the shortest journey until the end. Best practice would not be alone in a car with members of the opposite sex but if unavoidable another adult should be made aware that this journey is taking place.

5.6 Camps and Overnight Stays

'Newday' is the national Newfrontiers event for young people aged 12 and over and our church is committed to sending young people known to the church to this event each year. A separate registration and consent form must be completed by parents/guardians for this event. Workers supporting this event must in addition to this policy follow procedures set within the Newday Child Protection Policy.

5.7 Communication

Different workers will have their own style of communication but it is important that workers are aware of their use of verbal and body language and the effect this may have on a child. Always be mindful of the following:

- Your tone of voice – Never shout at a child. If a child is being disruptive, remain firm in your request for them to stop and if the behaviour continues ask another worker to call the parent.
- Physical touch – Touch is an important part of human relationships and within your work, you may need to touch a child to stop them from hurting themselves or others. Touch is also a natural way of responding to someone in distress and if you are in a group situation, where other adults are present, it is perfectly okay to hug a child so long as the child has initiated this or you have asked the child first. Avoid whenever possible having physical contact with a child if you are alone with them.
- Favouritism – Never favour one child over another. All children deserve to be treated equally with dignity and respect.
- Inappropriate conversations with others – Your focus should always be on the children and therefore it is not appropriate to engage in conversation with other workers about issues not related to the session.

5.8 Managing Disruptive Behaviour and concerns about children who cause harm to others.

Sometimes children and young people become angry, upset and disruptive. Occasionally their behaviour may endanger themselves or others.

If a child/young person is being disruptive:

- Ask them to stop.
- Speak to the child to establish the cause(s) of upset.
- Inform the child that they will be asked to leave if the behaviour continues.
- Warn the child that if they continue to be disruptive, this might result in longer term exclusion from the group.

If a child/young person is harming him/herself, another person or property then other children/young people present should be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring.

We understand that we may have children with additional needs. As a church we will support those families and signpost them to local agencies who are able to assist as it may be that some of the disruptiveness might be attributed to their additional needs.

At the same time, and with a second worker present, request the child/young person to STOP. If your request is ignored, you might need to warn the individual that you will consider calling for additional help, e.g. leader/parent.

In exceptional circumstances and with assistance, you might need to restrain the child/young person to prevent them harming themselves, others or property whilst you wait for parents.

The workers involved should always record what happened as soon as possible after the incident. This should include the following:

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

This must be handed to Gladys Olujobi/Jon Kempster as soon as possible who will determine any action that may be required

5.9 Health and Safety Matters

The Elders of the church have developed and maintained positive relationships with the CEO and staff at The Chrysalis Theatre on Camp Hill (our current place of worship) who allow the use of several rooms in and around the building. Please be aware of the following:

- Smoking is prohibited in the building.
- Please ensure that any rooms used are left in the condition that they were found.
- A first aid kit is available please make leader aware if needed.
- Ensure that you know the location of the accident and incident forms and record any such incident immediately.

5.10 E-Technology and E-Safety

Guidelines for all church staff, volunteers and Youth Workers regarding young people and the use of Social Networking Sites

Introduction

The use of Social Networking sites such as snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and others can be very advantageous to church leaders, youth

workers both professionally and personally. In this day and age, the pace of internet and social media is constant – and instant! It can offer opportunities to communicate with/stay in touch with people near and far.

However, it can also be fraught with potential risks and difficulties. The following guidelines are designed for church staff and volunteers who are members of social networking sites to ensure they follow best practice.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Grace Church guidance on child protection and the protection of vulnerable adults.

Guidelines

- 5.10.1 Youth leaders and support workers should have a 'profile' separate from your personal private profile which can be a professional account. This will allow leaders and volunteers to keep their private and professional lives completely separate.
- 5.10.2 If you allow young people, or others to whom you represent to have access to a personal social networking account/ profile, then you must ensure that they do not have access to private information about you which may compromise either you and/or the organisation. This includes personal contact information and private arrangements between friends among other things.
- 5.10.3 Many sites offer a 'restricted profile' option which allows certain 'friends' to only see a limited amount of information. Where available, this should be used and should be checked thoroughly to ensure that you are aware of exactly which information can be viewed.
- 5.10.4 It is strongly recommended that you do not post any information about yourself on the internet which may be embarrassing, inappropriate, compromising or offensive, no matter who can view it. This includes your use of language, your posting of (or tagging of) photographs and your recounting of stories and experiences.
- 5.10.5 When young people contact you personally via Social networking sites or any other media, then it is strongly recommended that you keep a copy of correspondence sent and received.
- 5.10.6 When young people contact you personally via Social networking sites or any other media, then it is strongly recommended that you do take every reasonable step to ensure that the young person does not form an inappropriate attachment to you. Such an attachment may be misconstrued by third parties, and may give the young person false expectations and impressions. If you suspect that there is a danger of this, you are advised to limit the contact as much as possible, and to inform one of your designated co-ordinators immediately.
- 5.10.7 If you are using Facebook or any other site to advertise events or to make arrangements, then it is vital that you take reasonable steps to ensure that no information which may compromise the safety of young people is made

public. You should also remember that there is a **legal age limit of 13yrs old** for access to sites such as Facebook.

5.10.8 If, when viewing an internet site, you become aware of a situation in which a young person is potentially in danger, then it is vital that you report it straight away. Depending on the situation, you may report it to either, your safeguarding officer, the police, CEOP or another relevant authority.

5.10.9 Where you have any significant or regular contact with a young person via a social networking site, you should ensure, where appropriate and possible, that your church co-ordinator and the young person's parents are aware that the contact is taking place.

5.10.10 Grace church has a separate procedure for the use of WhatsApp. See Appendix 2.

Legal considerations

It is worth being aware of some of the laws that exist to offer protection:

The Human Rights Act 1998

This Act gives a 'right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence'. People should therefore have a reasonable expectation of privacy and all courts must now interpret existing legislation in relation to the Human Rights Act. No one should include any inappropriate personal information about another person through any social networking/media or Email and in addition this must not be divulged to any external third party.

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

This Act covers the extent to which organisations can monitor or record communications at the point at which they enter or are being sent within the employer's telecommunications system, and applies to public and private communication networks. It gives the sender or recipient of a communication the right of action for damages against the employer for the unlawful interception of communications. There are two areas where monitoring is not unlawful. These are: (i) where the employer reasonably believes that the sender and intended recipient have consented to the interception, and (ii) without consent, the employer may monitor in certain circumstances, for example, to prevent crime, protect their business or to comply with financial regulations.

Organisations can reserve the right to monitor all internal and external communications in appropriate ways that protect its reputation and integrity.

Legal Definition (Care Act 2014)

This is the primary legislation in England establishing a single, consistent legal framework for adult social care. It mandates that local authorities prioritize individual wellbeing, prevent care needs, and provide support for both adults and carers, centring on a statutory duty to promote wellbeing.

The Data Protection Act 1998

This is an Act that many are already very familiar with.

The government's Information Commissioner is responsible for enforcement of the Data Protection Act and has published a code of practice to help employers comply with the provisions of the Act. Organisations should be mindful of information which relates to them, their staff, and those for whom it holds information - in the processing of individual data (and the basis for monitoring and retention of email communications and other paperwork including personnel records)

Grace church is GDPR compliant and relevant policy is in place.

Mobile Phones and Email

The church recognises that workers may have a legitimate reason to contact a young person via mobile phone or Email. Workers must be aware that any inappropriate contact on their behalf could be a breach of position of trust and could have serious consequences should this occur. Therefore, it is important that youth workers/leaders observe the following 'good practice' principles:

- Keep phone calls or text messages simple and to the point.
- If leaders receive any malicious texts/emails these must be reported to **Gladys Olujobi/Jon Kempster**.
- Avoid communicating with a young person late in the night or other times which may be considered unreasonable.

We would encourage all leaders to respect the points below

- 1) Do not sign off texts or messages with a kiss (x)
- 2) Do not use abbreviations - always spell the word, this includes words such as UR or LOL
- 3) Only text during a reasonable hour of the day (9am-9pm). You may need to contact the young person outside these times but this should be only in an emergency or if you think the young person is likely to suffer significant harm.
- 4) Any texts that you feel could be misinterpreted, seek advice as soon as possible (whilst you still have the messages on your phone)

Responding to Reports of Abuse

6.1 What do I do if a child or vulnerable adult tells me that they are being abused?

- Listen to what the child/young, vulnerable adult is saying; allow them to express their feelings and views, without interruption, accepting what is said. Try not to appear shocked.
- Do not press for information or ask direct or leading questions.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Write down notes (including date & time), as soon as the conversation has finished so that you remember as much detail as possible. These should be

kept separate from the accident/incident book and in a secure place until they are needed as these may be used as evidence in any legal proceedings.

- As soon as possible notify the one of the safeguarding co-ordinators: **Gladys Olujobi or Jonathan Kempster**
- You must complete a **Safeguarding Concerns Form**. Write down as much detail as you can remember (using the notes you took at the time). Try and use the words that the child used, avoid writing down your own thoughts and feelings. Once the form is complete, return it to one of the safeguarding co-ordinators preferably the same person you notified in the first instance.
- At this stage do not discuss concerns with anyone other than those nominated above. The decision as to when, and who should inform the child's parents will be made in consultation with Milton Keynes Council Children's Services and the Thames Valley Police Family Protection Unit if necessary.

6.2 What do I do if I suspect or witness a child/adult being abused?

- As soon as possible notify the one of the safeguarding Co-ordinators: **Gladys Olujobi/Jonathan Kempster** expressing the concerns you have regarding the child or young person as soon as possible.
- Do not at any time talk to the child/young person directly.
- You must then complete a **Safeguarding Concerns Form**. Write down any concerns you have, using as much detail as possible and return it to one of the safeguarding co-ordinators preferably the same person you notified in the first instance.
- At this stage do not discuss concerns with anyone other than those nominated. The decision as to when, and who should inform the child's parents will be made in consultation with Milton Keynes Council Children's Services and the Thames Valley Police Family Protection Unit if necessary.

6.3 What do I do if I hear third party that a child/young person is being abused?

- The third party should be informed before they reveal any information that their name and what they say will be recorded and may be used in legal proceedings if they take place.
- Where allegations are made by a third party, the worker should try to obtain as much information as possible from the referrer.
- This should include the referrers details (name, address, tel. no.) and as much factual detail as possible about the child/young person and the family concerned (names of family members, addresses, name /date of birth of subject, ethnic origin etc.).
- Information as to the cause of concern or nature of the injuries/observations should also be included.
- As soon as possible notify the safeguarding coordinators: **Gladys Olujobi or Jonathan Kempster**
- You must then complete a **Concerns Form**. Write down as much detail as you can remember (using the notes you took at the time) and return it to one of the safeguarding co-ordinators preferably the same person you notified in the first instance.
- At this stage do not discuss concerns with anyone other than those nominated above. The decision as to when, and who should inform the child's parents will

be made in consultation with Milton Keynes Council Children's Services and the Thames Valley Police Family Protection Unit if necessary.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets thirtyone eight safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

APPENDIX 1 Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The church leadership otherwise known as the Elders of Grace Church Milton Keynes hereafter referred to as the leadership recognises the importance of its work with children, young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to its care.

The following statement was agreed by the leadership on: 09/09/14 and reviewed yearly. **Last review was April 2026**

This place of worship/organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of vulnerable adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our church unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by our church.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually. If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable adult, then speak to the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for Grace Church Milton Keynes

Gladys Olujobi – Child and Adult Safeguarding Coordinator
Jonathan Kempster- Deputy Child and Adult Safeguarding Coordinator

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available on the Church website

A copy of our safeguarding policy has been lodged with Thirtyone Eight.

Signed by: Safeguarding Coordinator:

G Olujobi

Date: 20/04/2026

Signed by Deputy Co-ordinator

J Kempster

Date: 20/04/2026

Signed by Lead Elder:

T Gannon

Date:20/04/2026

APPENDIX 2 WhatsApp Policy

It is important that communication between youth, parents/guardians and team members is conducted in a clearly defined way with safeguarding in mind. This is to protect young people and team members from risks associated with social media (see Youthscape's overview of risks below*). Whilst we recognise that these are unlikely scenarios we also recognise the importance of following safety guidelines for communication.

Grace Church Youth's Whatsapp usage policy:

- No under 13's are to be added to any Youth group communications on WhatsApp as it is directly against WhatsApp terms and conditions.
- Written consent from parents/guardians should be in place for 13-18 year olds.
- The community function should be used. This enables communication to take place without disclosure of telephone numbers.
- All communications with youth should have 2 members of the team who are not related to each other in the conversation or a team member and a parent/guardian.
- If a youth member contacts you directly you should explain the policy of having 2 team members in the conversation and add another team member.
- Any safeguarding concerns should go through the youth team leaders or, if concerning the leaders, to Grace Church's Safeguarding officer directly.

Other forms of communication.

- We will only use WhatsApp for communicating with youth.
- Under 13s will need to be updated by parents/guardians with all relevant communications.
- Exceptions to the above could be made only with full knowledge and agreement of the Youth Team Leaders, parent/guardian of the youth, and with the Church Safeguarding Officer's knowledge.

(A form for parents to sign is available.)

<https://faq.whatsapp.com/695318248185629>

You must be at least 13 years old to register for and use WhatsApp.

Please refer to our [Terms of Service](#) for more information.

Note:

- Creating an account with false information is a violation of our Terms.
- Registering an account on behalf of someone who does not meet minimum age requirements is also a violation of our Terms.

*Some risks that should be kept in mind include: • The opportunity for grooming/sexual exploitation • Sharing of personal contact details of young people and youth workers • Inappropriate conversations between young people and workers • Potential allegations against workers • Use of apps with minimum age restrictions • The facilitation of abusive or unkind behaviour (cyber-bullying) between young people • Particular risks associated with children in care or those known to children's services (p4)

