



Community Church Eastbourne

Safeguarding Children Policy

Updated: November 2024

by: Ian Bamforth

signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Bamforth", written over a horizontal line.

Next Review date: November 2025

Community Church Eastbourne has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children they come into contact with. The need for guidelines and procedures is important to ensure that this is done with understanding and clarity.

The person(s) with lead responsibility for safeguarding within the organisation is (are):

Ian Bamforth

Safeguarding Lead

Tel: 07842 367077

Adrian Hewitt

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Jo Oakley

Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Children)

All staff and volunteers are made aware of this policy and the process for reporting concerns by issuing the policy at induction.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1. Introduction

Community Church Eastbourne are committed to keeping the welfare of any child or young person who is involved at any point of our services paramount, ensuring that they are valued, listened to and respected.

All children or young people, whatever their gender, disability, racial or ethnic background, religious beliefs or sexual orientation have a right to a safe and caring environment when participating in any activities run by Community Church and to equal protection from any form of exploitation or abuse.

1.1 Aims and Principles of Safeguarding Children

Everyone working or volunteering with us, including trustees, employees, agency staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring all children are safe.

We consider anyone aged under 18 to be a child for the purposes of this child protection policy. This includes the children of adult members, or service users of Community Church Eastbourne.

We will promote the welfare of all children participating in our services by:

- Implementing a robust recruitment and selection process with new staff or volunteers.
- Identifying a designated lead person for each project for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and clear referral process.
- Providing training for all who work with us so that they are clear about their responsibilities especially regarding safeguarding best practice.
- Ensuring that any concerns of possible abuse are referred appropriately and co-operating with the work of statutory agencies as necessary.
- Structuring our services to help children to protect themselves and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Identifying and implementing good practice in relation to the care, protection and welfare of children.
- Encouraging parents and carers to be involved with the programmes and develop a relationship with Community Church Eastbourne which promotes their child's welfare.
- Providing a whistleblowing policy that allows for an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour.
- Developing a listening culture where children feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.

- Volunteers receive induction training regarding policies and specific group practices before they start on rota.
- All volunteers complete Level 1 Safeguarding training as soon as possible and ongoing training is monitored. This may be training received from other organisations, from the Safeguarding Coordinator or update training sessions from Children/Youth Leader. Training should be recorded for each volunteer.
- Records of DBS dates, and training received by volunteers, are up to date.
- Adults are not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- Parents/carers are clear when responsibility for their child's care transfers from them to the children's worker and is returned to them at the end of the session.
- Parents of all children attending our groups can complete a Registration and Consent Form giving contact details, outlining medical needs, any food allergies and giving consent, or denying permission for photographs to be taken.
- Parents can nominate other adults to collect their child if they are unable to collect them.
- Children with special needs are fully integrated and protected within the church community.
- Children's Workers/Youth Leaders attend further training regarding child protection.

2.3 Volunteer workers will always:

- Abide by the policies outlined in this handbook, and by the specific guidelines of their groups individual working practices. The day-to-day practicalities will vary within different groups, but will never conflict with the core values and guidelines contained in this handbook.
- Attend regular safeguarding training. If you have attended safeguarding training in other organisations then please inform your safeguarding lead(s). This will assist us in tailoring training for you accordingly.
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watching their language, tone of voice, body language and non-verbal signals.
- Control and discipline children and young people without using physical punishment or derogatory names. The behaviour policy or code of conduct will be adhered to and promoted with the children/youth.
- Report any concerns to a leader on team or to the leadership if necessary.

Neglect

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); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

This is not an exhaustive list and it must be recognised that it is not the role of staff or volunteers to make an assessment of whether children or young people have suffered harm. Staff, volunteers and designated safeguarding leads do have a duty to report any concerns about harm in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Guidelines and Procedures.

4. Other forms of abuse to consider:

There is a brief overview at the end of this policy of other forms of abuse that can affect the children that come under our care and use our services. Having an awareness of these other types of abuse is useful, they are areas of abuse that are growing in significance as more cases come to light.

See Appendix 2: *Other forms of abuse for more information, along with contact numbers to get specific help and support.*

5. Recognition of harm:

Recognising physical abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury;
- Several different explanations provided for an injury;
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment;
- The parents / carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury;
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment;
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a 'cry for help' and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury);
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments;
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

All bruising in non-mobile children should be considered to be non-accidental and should be referred for an assessment.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexual conduct;
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age;
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation;
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts;
- Indiscriminate choice of sexual partners;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for - e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties);
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education;
- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area;
- Blood on underclothes;
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed;
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted infections, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing.

A child under 13 years is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child aged under 13 years is very serious and should be taken to indicate that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm. Cases involving children under 13 years old will always be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, penetrative sex with a child under 13 years old is classed as rape. Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm. There should be a presumption that the case will be reported to Children's Services/MASH.

Sexual activity with a child aged **under 16 years** is also an offence. Where it is consensual it may be less serious than if the child were aged under 13 years but may, nevertheless, have serious consequences for the welfare of the young person. Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13-15 as to whether there should be a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to Children's Services/MASH.

Sexual activity involving a **16 or 17 year old**, even if it does not involve an offence,

6. Acting on concerns – recording what you see, or are told by a child

If a member of staff or a volunteer has minor concerns about a child's welfare, they should record this following our **Care Diary procedures (or similar process the church might use)**.

6.1 Use of care diary

There will be children who are not suffering from significant risk of harm or abuse, perhaps you notice small one-off concerns, but over time it might be that a pattern of small concerns become a worry. Those children who are in need of extra support and care can be helped through support offered to parents who may be struggling with a wide range of issues. Poor parenting can come from many pressures on families, and with the help of universal services in the area, go on to improve and provide a good home for their family. Tracking concerns through a Care Diary system will help to monitor this. However, if there is no improvement due to the parent not engaging, and a child continues to struggle and not thrive then this will need to be recorded more formally and referred to Children's Services.

See Appendix 3: Register, Care Diary and Body Map (Optional)

No professional, staff or volunteer should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe.

6.2 Managing a disclosure

If a child tells you they are suffering from abuse, then you will need to manage that disclosure sensitively and record what you were told ready to refer it to the police or children's services as needed. Remember to record what the child told you in their own words, stay as close to what you were told without adding your opinions.

- Listen to what the child has to say with an open mind.
- Do not ask probing or leading questions designed to get the child to reveal more.
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, as well as what was said.
- Do not ask children to write a statement.
- Never promise the child that what they have told you can be kept secret. Explain that you have responsibility to report what the child has said to someone else.
- The designated lead for child protection in your church or project must be informed immediately, and/or a member of the leadership team.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

information to the local children's services whose duty it is to make enquiries in accordance with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

If there are situations where the nominated people are not available to take the concern to the relevant agencies, then every member of the public has a duty to report a concern, so please feel free to contact Children's Services or the Police directly.

7.2 Seeking Medical Attention

If a child has a physical injury and there are concerns about abuse:

If medical attention is required then this should be sought immediately by phoning for an ambulance, attending the Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit depending on the severity of the injury. You should then follow the procedures for referring a child protection concern to Children's Services as before. Any safeguarding concerns should be shared with the Ambulance staff/ Medical and Nursing staff in order that they can appropriately assess and treat the child and share relevant information.

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 Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will contact Children's Services as before but will not tell the parents or carers unless Children's Services have advised the church to do so.

Allegations of sexual abuse

If there are concerns regarding sexual abuse or a disclosure from a child regarding sexual abuse, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will immediately contact the police or children's services. This must not be shared with the parent/carer and the professional agencies will take over this process.

If there is concern about an adult also suffering from abuse in the situation you are dealing with for the child, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy must be informed and if necessary, will contact Adult Safeguarding Services in line with the Safeguarding Adults Policy.

The procedures remain the same for recording and reporting: a record must be made of the concerns seen, or of the disclosure of abuse recorded. A call must be made to the Adult Safeguarding Team, or the emergency services if they need medical attention or a crime has been committed.

Please refer to our Safeguarding Adults Policy for further information under the Care Act 2014. This also includes the many different forms of abuse adults face such as domestic violence, financial abuse, hate crime and institutional abuse, and others.

having an escort, restrictions on movement around the building along with further assessments made for other events such a Church BBQ's or home groups.

11. Allegations against staff members / volunteers

If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the group or organisation including:

- Behaving in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children the nature of the allegation or concern should be reported to the Designated Officer for dealing with allegations within the organisation immediately.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The member of staff who has a concern about a team member, or to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for Community Church Eastbourne will report the matter to the Designated Officer within Children's Services at the Local Authority. This position was formally known as Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the term is still often in use.

Community Church Eastbourne will always report any member of staff or volunteer they have concerns about to the appropriate authorities depending on the seriousness of the situation. We will take all advice offered to us and co-operate fully.

12. Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, i.e.: Safeguarding Lead, Children's Services and the police. It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as a breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, their family and any protection investigations that may follow.

Informing the parent or carers of the child you may have concerns about, needs to be dealt with in a sensitive way and should be done in consultation with Children's Services.

Any individual under supervision has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done in joint consultation with Children's Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation.

Recorded information should be stored in a secure place with limited access in line with data protection laws (e.g. the information stored is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Appendix 1: Seven Golden rules of information sharing

In July 2018, the government published revised practice guidance *"Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers"*. Below are the 7 golden rules of information sharing that this guidance recommends in line with the new data protection laws.

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.

2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.

4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.

5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).

7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion; want to get out of an arranged marriage; want to get out of a forced marriage; wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based abuse however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

- domestic abuse
- threats of violence
- sexual or psychological abuse
- forced marriage
- being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go
- assault

(Safe.Met.Police.UK)

Honour based abuse will commonly start when children try to live and fit in a more westernised culture, starting relationships which causes shame and distress to the family. Take any concerns a person may have about their safety seriously and seek professional help immediately. Do not try to resolve this in anyway yourself.

Female Genital Mutilation

Between April and June 2015, there were 1,026 newly recorded cases of FGM in England, (Health & Social Care Information Centre). City University London figures suggest that nearly 10,000 girls under 14 years of age have undergone FGM in the UK. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to: practice FGM in the UK; take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM, whether or not it is lawful in the country of destination; aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.

If you are concerned a child may be taken abroad for FGM, or that it may have already occurred please contact support helplines in Appendix 5.

Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention/affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

These all refer to going out of town to deliver drugs or money. Once a child is part of a county lines gang their loyalty and commitment will be tested. The gang will begin to trap the child by making them feel powerless to leave. This might include threats of violence if they leave, making the child feel like they are betraying their new 'family', or telling the child they will get in trouble if they seek help because they have committed a criminal offence (Children's Society, 2019).

For more information on these and other related abuses go to the NSPCC website link below

[Protecting children from county lines | NSPCC Learning](#)

Trafficking

Human trafficking is essentially the recruitment, movement or receipt of a person by deception or coercion into a situation of exploitation, this may include:

- prostitution (or other forms of sexual exploitation)
- forced labour
- slavery
- servitude, or
- the removal of organs¹.

Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence involves the exploitation of susceptible people who are drawn into violent extremism by radicalisers. Violent extremists often use a persuasive rationale and charismatic individuals to attract people to their cause. The aim is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. The Prevent Strategy, launched in 2007, seeks to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is the preventative strand of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

- Please issue a token to the parent/carer that corresponds to their number in the column on the register.
- Do not allow a child to be taken out without the appropriate carer/token/named person to collect.
- Use the tick column for parent/carer to initial and return the token.

If you have any queries about a child being collected, perhaps lost tokens or a new person coming to collect for the first time a child that isn't their own please feel empowered to double check things. Another team member can be sent to find the children's worker or someone else that can manage and support the decision. A genuine parent/person will more probably be grateful that you are double checking. Remember that some children attending are/might be fostered and under strict rules of contact with adults in their life.

Please ensure this and the Evaluation Sheet are completed and locked away after the session for data protection.

Evaluation of session: To be completed after the session

How the session went – what worked well - what didn't go so well or what you would change in the future, Spiritual objectives met, activities that engaged the children.

Resources running low or needed -check supplies cupboard first for tissues, wipes, cups, creche snacks

Cleaning or health and safety issues

Any other information you would like to pass on to Children's Lead or the rest of the team.

Gender: Male/Female	Age:	Date of birth:
Parent's/ Carer's names(s):		
Home Address:		
Contact numbers:		
Your Details:		
Your name:	Your Position	Date and time of incident:
Report:		
Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Responding to my own concerns <input type="checkbox"/> Responding to concerns raised by someone else		If responding to concerns raised by someone else, give their name and position within church/group:
Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, dates or other relevant information (describe and injuries) and whether fact, opinion or hearsay:		
The child's account of what has happened and how:		
Please provide details of the person alleged to have caused the incident/injury including where possible any details:		

Appendix 4: Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Have you spoken to the parents? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please provide details of what was said:	
Have you spoken to the child? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please provide details of what was said:	
Have you spoken to the person against whom the allegations are being made? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes, please provide details of what was said:	
Further action taken to date:		
What other agencies are you aware of that are involved with the family, and have you contacted any of them? E.g. school, GP, Health visitor, preschool etc.		
Have you informed the statutory authorities? Children's Social Care: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please provide name and number of person contacted: <input type="checkbox"/> No Police: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please provide name and number of person contacted: <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Data protection As the person completing this form, you must notify each person whose information you include about what will happen to their information and how it may be disclosed except to the extent that doing so would prejudice either the prevention or detection of a crime or the apprehension or prosecution of an offender		
Signature		
Your signature	Date	Time

Report or challenge the following:

- **Abusive activities such as ridiculing or bullying.** Educate where you can, report where you need to.
- **Suggestive, aggressive or derogatory remarks** or gestures. Model best practice of respect, choice and empowerment of individuals.
- **A colleague's behaviour or boundaries** that may have become a concern.
- **Report all concerns, allegations or suspicions of abuse.** They must be recorded and passed on.

Remember you have a position of power and trust serving as a member of a church or Christian project and must remain above reproach. Safeguarding does not stop appropriate care and support for the people you serve. It ensures they receive the best care and activities we can provide and protects your reputation and the projects you volunteer or work in.

	Human Trafficking			agencies that can be used to support those affected by Human Trafficking
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