



Safeguarding Policy

Version 1 – February 2026

Note: Supersedes Child Protection Policy (July 2018)

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Section 1: Details of the organisation

Name of Organisation: Bangor Vineyard (the “church”)

Senior Pastors: Ben and Rebecca Cupples

Senior Pastors Email Addresses:

- ben@bangorvineyard.co.uk
- rebecca@bangorvineyard.co.uk

Safeguarding Lead Name: Rebecca Cupples

Safeguarding Lead Phone Number: 07738082201

Charity Number: 108541

Company Number: NI652470

Regulators: The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and Companies House

Bangor Vineyard is a vibrant Christian community based in Bangor, Northern Ireland. Our desire is to see the Kingdom of God transform lives, renew culture and impact the city of Bangor and beyond. Our activities are designed for people of all ages and abilities to encounter God's love, build meaningful relationships, and grow in their faith journey. We believe that encountering God's love must happen in a context of safety, dignity, and care for all.

As a church, we believe safeguarding is an expression of God's heart for justice, protection, and dignity. We are called to care for the vulnerable, uphold the value of every person, and create environments where people can grow in faith free from harm or fear. This policy reflects our commitment to embody those values in practice.

Section 2: Building a safe church culture

Our commitment

The Board of Trustees of Bangor Vineyard recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

We affirm the core principles of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Human Rights, particularly those that uphold the dignity, equality, and protection of all people—regardless of race, sex, language, religion, or social status.

We also affirm the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which recognises every child's right to develop their full potential, free from neglect, exploitation, and abuse.

As a church 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.

Our safeguarding statement can be found in Appendix 1 - Statement on safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight ([Our Ten standards | Thirtyone:eight](#)).

Governance

Bangor Vineyard's Board of Trustees is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility. This includes having a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the standards and behaviours of the Church.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the Church or "the way we do things around here". Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

"The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object" (IICSA The Governance Institute, 2017).

The Board of Trustees will have overarching responsibility for safeguarding within the Church, including referring to the relevant charity regulator, the Northern Ireland Charity Commission.

This Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims not only to meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our Church but to also build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- there are accountability structures
- with codes of conduct
- the values of the Church are embedded in its day-to-day actions and behaviours of its people
- and there is open communication

The Board of Trustees will review safeguarding annually, ensure appropriate reporting structures are in place, and designate a trustee with specific safeguarding oversight responsibilities.

Section 3: Building safe practice

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue (definitions in Appendix 2 - Categories of abuse). A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults with care and support needs may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

For the purposes of this policy, a 'child' will be referred to as someone under 18 years old.

In this policy, we use the term vulnerable adult to refer to any person aged 18 or over who may be at increased risk of harm due to personal characteristics and/or life circumstances.

We recognise two key categories:

1. Adult at Risk of Harm

An adult whose vulnerability may be increased by:

- Personal characteristics such as age, disability, illness, or cognitive impairment
- Life circumstances such as isolation, poverty, or unsafe living conditions

This category includes adults who may be more exposed to harm but are still able to protect themselves.

2. Adult in Need of Protection

An adult who:

- Has increased vulnerability (as above)
- Is unable to protect their own well-being, rights, or property
- Is being harmed, or is at risk of harm, due to someone else's actions or neglect

To meet the definition of an adult in need of protection, either personal characteristics or life circumstances must be present, alongside both:

- An inability to protect their own well-being, rights, or property
- Actual or likely harm caused by another person's actions or neglect

In line with Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we affirm that every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This includes ensuring robust procedures for prevention, reporting, and response.

In safeguarding adults, we affirm the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 5, which states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

This policy is in line with the following legislation:

- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
- Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011
- Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership key documents 2015

How to respond to a disclosure of abuse is included in this safeguarding policy.

Positions of trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022, it is illegal in Northern Ireland for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17-year-old under their care or supervision.

Safer recruitment

The church is committed to safe and proportionate recruitment practices that reflect both government guidance and the relational nature of our church community. All staff and volunteers working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults will be appointed, trained, and supported in ways that prioritise safeguarding and pastoral integrity.

For new roles we will ensure the following steps are taken

Before appointment:

- Expectations will be clearly communicated
- A conversation (formal or informal) will take place that includes safeguarding awareness and expectations
- References will be sought where appropriate
- An AccessNI check will be completed if the role is new and involves regulated activity
- Any relevant qualifications will be noted or verified

During induction:

- Induction and safeguarding training will be provided, tailored to the role
- The individual will be given a copy of the Church's safeguarding policy and shown how to report concerns

Please see Appendix 8 - Recruitment and vetting flow chart

Safeguarding training

The church is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development for all workers. We aim to build a culture of awareness that helps protect everyone in our community.

All relevant workers will receive induction training and undertake appropriate safeguarding training at regular intervals - ideally every three years.

We recognise the importance of equipping the Safeguarding Lead with appropriate training for their role. This includes access to advanced safeguarding training, refreshed periodically to reflect current guidance and the practical needs of our church context.

Practice guidelines

As a church working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs 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 potential harm or abuse and false or unfounded accusations.

We have good practice guidelines for specific activity we are involved in, and these are attached in Appendix 3 - Practical supervision guidelines and Appendix 4 - Supervision guidelines.

For some activities you will need specific forms, e.g. consent forms etc.

Management of workers – codes of conduct

As a church we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct for supporting children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their role and outside of their role. They will also receive further training as necessary.

The relevant codes of conduct can be found in Appendix 6 - Code of conduct for adults serving in children and youth ministry

Accident & Incident Reporting

We have an accident report form (see Appendix 5 - Accident and Incident Form to record details of accidents and incidents. This form should be used for the recording of accidents, incidents, injuries and any action taken, no matter how minor. Each entry should be signed by the leader in charge. Parents/guardians should be informed of the accident/incident in person or by phone as soon as possible.

Section 4: Partnership working

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

We therefore have clear guidelines with 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. Any organisation using our premises—whether through formal letting agreements or informal arrangements—is expected to have its own safeguarding policy that aligns with our standards. We will discuss these expectations as part of any agreement, ensuring shared understanding and commitment to creating a safe environment for all who use the space.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults with care and support needs and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Section 5: Responding to allegations of abuse

Reporting and referral procedures for safeguarding concerns

Under no circumstances should a worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The person in receipt of disclosures, allegation or concern of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Name: Rebecca Cupples (hereafter the "Safeguarding Lead")

Tel: 07738082201

Email: rebecca@bangorvineyard.co.uk

The above is nominated by the Board of Trustees to act on their behalf in dealing with the disclosure, allegation or concern, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or, if the concerns in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead, then the report should be made to:

Name: Louise Skelton (hereafter the "Safeguarding Trustee")

Tel: 07587233606

Email: safeguardingtrustee@bangorvineyard.co.uk

The worker or volunteer can also contact Thirtyone:eight to get further advice if required: Tel: 0303 003 1111. Option 2

The worker or volunteer should record the disclosure, allegation or concern onto the cause for concern form (see Appendix 9 - Cause for concern form) and share this with the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Trustee as soon as possible.

The Safeguarding Lead may first ring the Thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. Based on the concern, they may then contact the relevant statutory services.

The Safeguarding Lead may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, such as:

- Chair of Trustees and/or Safeguarding Trustee who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to report a serious incident.
- Local Authority Designated Officer at the Gateway Team if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- The Senior Pastors, where appropriate, to ensure pastoral oversight and organisational accountability—unless the concern involves them directly or disclosure would compromise the integrity of the safeguarding response

Concerns 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.

Whilst disclosures, allegations or concerns of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Safeguarding Lead should not delay referral to the statutory services, the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

The Senior Pastor(s) will support the Safeguarding Lead 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.

The role of the safeguarding Lead is to collate and clarify the details of any allegation or concern, and to pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Right to refer and escalate safeguarding concerns

While we encourage concerns to be reported through the church's safeguarding procedures, we recognise that any individual has the right to contact safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight directly. If someone feels their concern has not been responded to appropriately, or disagrees with a decision, they are free to make a direct referral to statutory services.

We hope that by making this statement, we demonstrate our commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

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 Lead will:

- If the child requires immediate medical attention, contact the relevant medical services, informing the Doctor of any concerns.
- Contact Gateway Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- If the disclosure, allegation or concern is directly about the parents, then do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Gateway Services.
- For lower-level concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Care Gateway Services direct for advice.

- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether to refer a case to Gateway Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse:

In the event of allegations or concerns of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Contact the Children's Social Care Gateway Services for children and families and Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) on 101.
- Depending on the circumstances, they will need to consider whether it is appropriate to speak to the parents of the child. If they are not sure about this, then they will contact Thirtyone:eight for advice.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether to contact Gateway Services/Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI). Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a vulnerable adult:

Concerns 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 Lead will:

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services on 999, informing them of any suspicions.
- Contact Adult Social Work Services who will be able to advise whether this reaches the safeguarding threshold and actions required. Alternatively, Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Lead will:

- Identify support services for the Survivor 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.

Detailed procedures where there is an allegation made against an adult who works with Children/Young People and Vulnerable Adults:

Allegations of Abuse Against a Person Who Works with Children/Young People

If an allegation is made against a worker (volunteer or paid), the Safeguarding Lead will:

Stage 1 – Advisory and Internal Response

- Seek immediate advice from Thirtyone:eight to assess the nature and severity of the concern.
- Advise the trustee with designated responsibility for safeguarding, ensuring appropriate oversight and support.
- Record the concern and any advice received, ensuring clarity, accuracy, and confidentiality.
- Conduct an internal investigation (with oversight and involvement from the safeguarding trustee).
- Determine—based on advice and findings—whether the concern meets the threshold for statutory referral or can be addressed internally through pastoral or disciplinary processes.

Stage 2 – Statutory Referral (if advised by Thirtyone:eight)

If Thirtyone:eight advise that the concern meets the threshold for statutory involvement, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Make a referral to the Gateway Team, who handle all allegations against adults working with children and young people.
- Refer to AccessNI for consideration of barring, guided by statutory advice and the outcome of any investigation.

Stage 3 – Follow-Up and Organisational Support

- Offer pastoral support to all parties involved, including the person raising the concern, the accused (if appropriate), and the wider team.
- Update safeguarding records and policy if needed.

Allegations of Abuse Against a Person Who Works with Vulnerable Adults

If an allegation is made against a worker (volunteer or paid), the Safeguarding Lead will:

Stage 1 – Advisory and Internal Response

- Seek advice from Thirtyone:eight to assess the concern and determine appropriate next steps.
- Advise the trustee with designated responsibility for safeguarding, ensuring appropriate oversight and support.
- Record the concern and any advice received, ensuring clarity, accuracy, and confidentiality.
- Conduct an internal investigation (with oversight and involvement from the safeguarding trustee).
- Determine—based on advice and findings—whether the concern meets the threshold for statutory referral or can be addressed internally.

Stage 2 – Statutory Referral (if advised by Adult Social Work Services or Thirtyone:eight)

- If statutory involvement is recommended, the Safeguarding Lead will:
- Liaise with Adult Social Work Services¹ to establish whether the concern can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- Refer to AccessNI for consideration of barring, following statutory advice.

Stage 3 – Follow-Up and Organisational Support

- Offer pastoral support to all parties involved.
- Update safeguarding records and policy as needed.

Allegations of Non-Recent Sexual Abuse from an Adult

If an adult discloses non-recent sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead will:

Stage 1 – Advisory and Internal Response

- Offer the adult the option to report the matter to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
- Advise the trustee with designated responsibility for safeguarding, ensuring appropriate oversight and support.
- Seek guidance from Thirtyone:eight to assess the nature and scale of the concern.

¹ Legislation across the UK places the duty to investigate harm to adults with care and support needs on Adult Social Work Services. Outcomes may include action against the person or organisation causing harm, increased support for carers, or no further action if the adult has capacity and chooses not to proceed. This decision rests with Adult Social Work Services, not the organisation.

- Record the concern and any advice received, ensuring clarity, accuracy, and confidentiality.
- If advised by Thirtyone:eight, conduct an internal investigation (with oversight and involvement from the safeguarding trustee).
- Determine—based on advice and findings—whether the concern meets the threshold for statutory referral or can be addressed internally.

Stage 2 – Statutory Referral (if advised by Thirtyone:eight)

If Thirtyone:eight advise that statutory referral is required, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- If the alleged perpetrator is currently in a role working or volunteering with children or young people:
 - Refer to the Gateway Team, who handle all allegations against adults working with children and young people.
- If the alleged perpetrator is currently in a role working with vulnerable adults:
 - Liaise with Adult Social Work Services to establish whether the concern can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.

Stage 3 – Follow-Up and Organisational Support

- If the alleged perpetrator is in a role within the church, consult with Thirtyone:eight to determine appropriate action in line with the scale of concern.
- Offer pastoral support to the adult disclosing the abuse, respecting their autonomy and confidentiality.
- Update safeguarding records and policy as needed.

Where the subject of an allegation continues to attend the Church, follow the risk-management process in Section 6: Wellbeing support and pastoral care and Appendix 7 - Working with those who may pose a risk.

Relevant Contact Details:

Please note the following contact details, correct as of June 2025:

- Gateway Services:
 - During office hours (9.00am – 5:00pm) – you should contact Gateway Services on 028 9050 7000
 - At all other times (all through the night, at weekends and over Bank Holidays) – you should contact the out-of-hours Emergency Service: 028 9504 9999
- Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) 101 or 999 if person at is at risk of harm
- The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland: 028 3832 0220

Section 6: Wellbeing support and pastoral care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The church is committed to offering wellbeing support and pastoral care to anyone affected by abuse who engages with or is part of our church community.

Where appropriate, we will work in partnership with statutory agencies to ensure coordinated and proportionate support. The Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the Senior Pastors to agree on suitable pastoral responses and wellbeing support.

Working with those who may pose a risk

The church is committed to creating a safe environment for children, young people, and adults with care and support needs. Where someone attending the church is known to pose a potential risk, the Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Trustee, and Senior Pastors will assess whether it is safe or appropriate for them to remain part of the church community.

If continued attendance is considered viable, appropriate boundaries and supervision will be put in place. These will be based on a formal risk assessment and developed in consultation with external safeguarding professionals, such as Thirtyone:eight or statutory agencies. The individual will be expected to comply fully with these boundaries.

In some cases, the risk may be too great, or the individual may be unwilling to comply. In such circumstances, the church reserves the right to withdraw access to its activities or premises in order to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of others.

All decisions will be managed confidentially by those with designated safeguarding responsibility and shared only on a strict need-to-know basis.

For further details see Appendix 7 - Working with those who may pose a risk.

Section 7: Adoption and review of the policy

This Safeguarding Policy was formally adopted by the Board of Trustees in September 2025. It supersedes the previous **Child Protection Policy (April 2018)** and reflects current statutory guidance and recognised safeguarding standards.

As a growing church, we are committed to implementing safeguarding practices that are legally robust, pastorally sensitive, and proportionate to our evolving context. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with best practice, legal requirements, and any changes in safeguarding guidance.

Type of Review	Date Approved by Board	Next Review Due
New policy	December 2025	December 2026

Appendix 1 - Statement on safeguarding

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT

The following statement was agreed by the Board of Trustees on _____

Bangor Vineyard is committed to safeguarding children, young people, and adults with care and support needs. We believe safeguarding is an expression of God's heart for justice, protection, and dignity. As a church, we are called to care for the vulnerable, uphold the value of every person, and create environments where people can grow in faith free from harm or fear.

We recognise that:

- The personal dignity and rights of all individuals must be upheld
- All people should have access to every aspect of church life in safety
- Those affected by abuse must be supported with compassion, discretion, and care

We commit to:

- Following statutory, denominational, and specialist safeguarding guidance
- Implementing relevant legislation, including:
 - *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)*
 - *Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*
 - *Children's Services Co-operation Act (NI) 2015*
 - *Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011*
 - *Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (2015)*
- Supporting, resourcing, and training those who work with children and adults
- Providing appropriate training and guidance to help staff and volunteers fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities
- Keeping up to date with national and local safeguarding developments
- Ensuring that all workers and volunteers agree to abide by this policy and its procedures

We acknowledge that:

- Gateway Services lead investigations into concerns about children where there are indicators or disclosures of abuse, or where a child may be at risk of significant harm.
- Adult Social Work Services lead investigations into concerns involving abuse or risk of harm to vulnerable adults.
- The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) must be contacted urgently if a criminal offence is suspected

This statement and the full safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with best practice, legal requirements, and the evolving context of Bangor Vineyard as a growing church.

If you have any concerns about a child or adult, please speak to the Safeguarding Lead approved by the Board of Trustees to act on our behalf:

Name: _____

Contact: _____

A full copy of this Church's Safeguarding Policy is available at www.bangorvineyard.co.uk

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 - Categories of abuse

Children

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

Vulnerable adults

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Financial
- Institutional
- Neglect
- Exploitation (includes domestic abuse, trafficking and modern slavery).

Appendix 3 - Practical supervision guidelines

Adult-Child Ratios

The following ratios should always be maintained for each age group:

- 0-1 year olds: 1 adult to 3 children
- 2-3 year olds: 1 adult to 4 children
- Nursery – P2s and P3-P7s: 1 adult to 8 children
- Youth: 2 adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 young people, with one additional adult for every extra 10 young people

There should always be no less than two adult leaders, whether the group activity is outdoors or indoors. Always begin with two leaders, even for an individual child.

The ratio of adults to children with special needs will be dependent on the needs of the child and will be decided on an individual basis.

Leaders may be 16 years or over, however, there must always be a leader present who is over 18.

Appendix 4 - Supervision guidelines

Sign-in / sign-out & registration guidelines

On arrival, parents, guardians, or accompanying adults will be directed to register children and young people. Those wishing to add a child to the register will be asked to complete a parental consent form.

Young people attending youth groups may use a self-sign-in system upon arrival.

Once a child or young person has been signed into their designated group or room, they become the responsibility of the children's ministry team. Upon sign-out, responsibility returns to the parent or guardian.

We ask parents and carers to ensure they know where their children are at all times and to keep them with them in shared spaces such as the coffee and reception areas

Personal care protocols

Our children's team members do not change nappies at any time. If a child needs a nappy change, a team member will contact their parent or guardian so they can attend to them.

Children who are being potty trained and require assistance with toileting may be supervised and supported by a leader, provided written permission has been obtained from their parent or guardian. Older children and young people with additional needs may also be assisted, following appropriate guidance and written consent.

Leaders must never be alone with a child when providing personal care. They must also do their utmost to protect the child's dignity. If a child is able to use the toilet independently, they should be encouraged to do so. If a younger child requires assistance, the leader should either:

- Ask the parent or guardian to assist, or
- Accompany the child to the bathroom with a second approved adult leader present.

All personal care interactions must be age-appropriate, respectful, and in line with safeguarding procedures.

Appendix 5 - Accident and Incident Form

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident. The worker should discuss with the appropriate leader for the group/activity what follow up action is necessary.

Day, date and time of the incident

Names, addresses and ages of those involved in the incident

Where did this incident take place?

Name of place of Church:

Name of the group:

Who is normally responsible for group? (Name, address and telephone number)

Who was responsible for the group at the time of the incident, if different from the above? (Name, address and telephone number)

Which other workers were supervising the group at the time of the incident? (names, addresses and telephone numbers)

Who witnessed the incident? (Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and ages if under 16) Normally only two witnesses would be needed.

Describe the accident/incident (include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given)

Have you retained any defective equipment?

YES NO NONE INVOLVED (Please tick)

If yes, where is it being kept and by whom?

What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident?

Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use YES NO (Please tick)

Is the equipment still safe for your group to use? YES NO (Please tick)

Who else do you need to inform?

Have they been informed? YES NO (Please tick)

If so, when and by whom?

Signature of person in charge of group at time of accident/incident

Signed: _____ **Print Name:**

Date: ____/____/____

Form seen by: _____
(state role eg. Senior Pastor)

Signed: _____ **Print Name:** _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix 6 - Code of conduct for adults serving in children and youth ministry

In planning our code of conduct towards children in Bangor Vineyard, we take our example from Jesus' teaching and ministry to children. We read in the Bible that:

- He welcomed them and told us to do likewise.
- He rebuked anyone that might cause them to sin.
- He instructed us not to look down on them.
- He laid hands on them and prayed for them, with parents and other witnesses present.
- He told us not to hinder them or stand in their way.

Based on these principles we expect anyone involved in children's and youth ministry to fully adhere to the following guidelines for good practice:

- We will do our utmost to be positive role models for the children in our care, our commitment to reading the Bible, our worship and in how we serve them and other people.
- We will always praise good behaviour.
- Children will be encouraged, but not forced to participate fully in activities.
- We will value children by providing a high quality of teaching, worship and resources.
- We will always respect a child by listening to them when they come to us. We will not ask a child to wait until later if they wish to tell us something. They may not remember later and it may be very important.
- We will treat all children fairly, equally and consistently.
- Physical punishment is strictly forbidden. All discipline will be based on love and will involve the children's parents / guardians.
- Verbal abuse in the form of shouting at a child is strictly forbidden. We appreciate that a leader may on specific occasions need to shout, for example, to warn a child of danger, but shouting should never be used as a tool for managing challenging behaviour, as it can foster fear and anxiety rather than acceptance, security and value.
- An appropriate ratio of adults: children will be maintained at all times (see supervision in appendices for recommended figures). **It is never appropriate for a child to be alone with an adult.**

- Any personal information regarding children will be kept confidential, in line with data protection laws.
- Appropriate physical contact is always in direct response to a child's need. It will always be ability and age appropriate.

Code of conduct for children and young people

- Positive behaviour will be encouraged, recognised and rewarded at all times.
- Children will be encouraged to respect other people at all times. This means behaving well towards friends and leaders, listening well to others and speaking words that build up rather than tear down.
- In light of this ethos, physical fighting is never acceptable. Children who harm another child physically with intention (e.g. punching, kicking) will be taken back to their parents/guardians for the remainder of the service. Time will be set aside after the service for the children's/youth leader to talk through what has happened with the child and their parents. The safety of children attending vineyard kids and youth ministry is paramount, and if the child repeats the offence, they will face a ban from attending kids'/youth ministry. This will be for a length of time agreed with the parents/guardians of the child and the Children's/Youth leader.
- We understand that when a toddler hits or bites, etc, this is a very different thing. In this scenario we will aim to deal with an issue in the moment while it is fresh in the child's mind. Toddlers are constantly testing cause and effect. They don't have the skills to get what they want in a reasonable way, so they may act pushy or overly defiant, using the only tools they have. Should a toddler's behaviour show an ongoing pattern that causes their leader concern, we will discuss a plan to move forwards with the child's parents.
- Bullying is never acceptable. Physical and verbal bullying will not be tolerated and if persistent may also result in a ban. Again this will be based on discussion with the Children's/Youth leader, the child and their parents/guardian.

Mobile phone & social media code

Use of Mobile Phones

Those leading in our children's and youth rooms may from time to time need to contact young people.

When texting remember "Communication NOT Conversation"

1. Texts should be used to communicate information about events and programmes.
For example: Dates, times, location.

2. Texts can be used by means of encouragement to young people. For example: "Hope exam goes well" or "well done for leading worship today". When texting messages like these, it is important to include another leader or the parent in this message so that the message is not misinterpreted. Where possible if a female leader is messaging a male young person, a male leader should be included in the message and vice-versa.
3. Leaders working with young people should only have a young person's number if the nature of their involvement requires it (for example: a young person is serving within one of our children's rooms.)
4. Parental permission should be sought if the leader in this role will be contacting a young person via mobile phone.
5. If a leader has a young person's phone number it should only be used for the purposes given. (The leader should not share the number.)

Communicating via Social Media

Social Media is a useful means of communicating information to our young people and parents if used safely and correctly. Workers will communicate information via this method if it is appropriate and effective to the event/programme being communicated.

Workers will not be 'friends/followers' with anyone under the age of 18 who attends our church. It is also our policy that our kid's and youth leaders will not be friends/followers on social networking sites with any of the young people in the group that they lead.

If young people want to engage with ministries via social media they will be encouraged to follow our church profiles to stay up to date with information about individual ministries.

When using social media, we have adopted the following policy in order to protect workers and young people engaging with this method of communication:

1. The page/profile must be password protected and the password will be held by the nominated officers as well as the leader in charge of that particular ministry.
2. The nominated officers will act as supervisors for social media sites and will monitor its content on a regular basis.
3. Any inappropriate posts by children/young people/leaders should be removed by the designated supervisor. Reasons for its removal should then be explained to the person who posted the content. Where possible the settings on the profiles should be set so that posts can be reviewed before being made public.
4. The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers should be avoided at all times.
5. The identity of the young people should not be disclosed (ie- no tagging photos, no use of handles/profile names to be used in social media posts.)

6. Content of all postings should be consistent with the aims of the Church. In cases of doubt, leaders should seek advice from the nominated officers.
7. Leaders should only communicate to young people in public/open forums (for example group messages, conversation threads on public profiles.) In the event of sending an email, another leader should be cc'd into the conversation (can be bcc'd if necessary.)
8. Leaders should avoid communicating with young people late at night/early in the morning.
9. In signing off posts/emails leaders should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient e.g.: "xoxo". Simply sign your name.
10. Parental permission is required before pictures or videos of children or young people are posted online. Before posting on social media the photo should be shown to the young people to gain their permission for their photo to be on the site.
11. Photos should not disclose personal information about the child/young people (ie- school uniforms, address/location or names etc.)

Appendix 7 - Working with those who may pose a risk

Managing offenders

The Church believes that within the context of grace and forgiveness, attendance at worship services is open to everyone. At the same time, a person who has cautions or convictions on their record may still be involved in the life of the Church. However, if a person has convictions of abuse against children or vulnerable adults then they should never be in a position of leadership with children or vulnerable adults.

If it becomes known that a person who has been convicted of offences against children or vulnerable adults is attending church, the church leaders should be notified. This is not to say they cannot attend but so that advice can be taken to ensure that attendance becomes safe for the protection of the children or vulnerable adults and others attending church and for the offender themselves.

Risk assessment and boundary setting

When someone with a known history of offenses against children or vulnerable adults wishes to attend church activities, the following steps must be taken:

1. The Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Trustee must be informed immediately
2. A risk assessment must be conducted in consultation with statutory agencies (PSNI, Probation Services)
3. A written agreement must be created that establishes clear boundaries, which may include:
 - Restricted attendance at certain services
 - No unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults
 - No participation in children's or youth activities
 - Designated seating areas away from children
 - Accompaniment by an approved adult at all times while on church premises
 - Regular meetings with pastoral support person
4. The agreement must be signed by the individual, the Safeguarding Lead, and the Senior Pastor
5. A small group of leaders may be informed on a need-to-know basis to help monitor compliance

6. The agreement must be reviewed regularly (at least every six months)

If an offender has restrictions placed upon them from PSNI or Probation Services, the church must work in partnership with these agencies and ensure any church agreement aligns with official requirements.

Appendix 8 - Recruitment and vetting flow chart

Recruitment process

1. Applicant completes Children's/Youth ministry application form
2. Applicant submits to AccessNI enhanced check with barred list check
3. Two references are gathered and stored confidentially
4. Informal meeting with Children's pastor or Leader in charge of chosen ministry area
5. Attendance at seasonal children's or youth leadership team meetings required

Vetting requirements

- All those who serve in Children and Youth ministry must adhere to the safeguarding policy
- New leaders must complete the application process before beginning service
- Leaders returning after 6+ months absence must go through the vetting process again
- The Board of Directors requires that if a leader takes time out of the ministry for a minimum of 6 months and is set to return, they must go through the vetting process afresh

Appendix 9 - Cause for concern form

Part 1: Record of concern about a child/adult's safety and welfare

(for use by any staff/volunteers– This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible)^{1, 2, 3}

Child/Adult's name (subject of concern):	Date of birth/age: Child/Adult:	Address:
Date & time of incident:	Date & time (of writing):	
Your Name (print): Role/Job title: Signature:		
Other members of the household ⁴ :		
Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. <i>(please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)</i>		
How did the concern come to light?		
What is the child/adult saying about what has happened ⁴ ?		
Any other relevant information. Previous concerns etc.		
Date and time of discussion with Safeguarding Lead ⁵ : _____		

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.

Please pass this form to your Safeguarding Lead without delay

Guidance notes for Form 1 (volunteers/staff only):

Following are some helpful pointers in completing the above form:

1. As a registered body the church/charitable organisation is required to ensure that its duty of care towards its beneficiaries is carried out in line with the principles enshrined within the Working together to safeguard children and young people, 2018 and the Care Act, 2014.
2. Essential principles of recording the information received/disclosed/observed:
 - a. Remember: do not investigate or ask any leading questions
 - b. make notes within the first one hour of receiving the disclosure or observing the incident
 - c. be clear and factual in your recording of the incident or disclosure
 - d. avoid giving your opinion or feelings on the matter
 - e. aim to record using the 4 W's and 1 H: When, where, what, why and how
 - f. do not share this information with anyone else except your safeguarding co-ordinator in the first instance and they will advise on who else will need to be informed, how and when.
 - g. make use of the additional information section to add any other relevant information regarding the child/adult/ family that you may be aware of. This can include any historic concerns or observations.
3. **What constitutes a safeguarding concern?** – any incident that has caused or likely to cause significant harm to a child can be classed as a safeguarding concern. Abuse is classified under four different categories (with regards to children) as already stated within the safeguarding policy (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect). With regards to adults there are 6 further categorisations. Whilst it may be helpful to record a specific category in the above form, if possible, this may not always be the case. Therefore, it is important to seek advice from your safeguarding lead or thirtyone:eight at this stage.
4. **Why do you need information regarding 'other household members'?** – It has been demonstrated as important to include information about significant adults in the household especially when concerns relate to children as this has been a recurrent risk factor in several serious case reviews.
5. **Why is the view of the child/adult significant?** It is important to give whatever detail is available of the child or adult's explanation (or verbatim) of the matter to help ascertain if it is plausible and to help offer a context to the concern identified.
6. **Passing information to the Safeguarding co-ordinator** – Your safeguarding co-ordinator holds ultimate responsibility in responding to any safeguarding concerns within the church/organisation and therefore it is important that they have oversight of the actions being taken and make relevant and appropriate contact with statutory agencies if required. They will remain the most appropriate link between the organisation and external agencies.

Part 2: Record of concern about a child/adult's safety and welfare

(for use by Safeguarding Lead - This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible)

Information received by Safeguarding Lead:	Date:	Time completed:	From whom:		
Any advice sought , if applicable	Date:	Time completed:	Source of advice: name/organisation:		
	Advice received: Advice received about informing parents or in the case of adults, seeking consent/capacity ¹ :				
Initial Assessment of concern following advice ²					
Action taken with reasons recorded <i>(e.g. Referral completed, monitoring advice given to appropriate staff, CAF etc)</i>	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
	Referral		To whom		
	Signposting to other community resources				
	Pastoral Care and other support from church				
	Ongoing Monitoring				
	Y	Who spoken to:	Date:	Time:	By whom:

Parent/carer informed?					
	N	Detail reason:			
Any other relevant information					
Name of Safeguarding Lead:			Signature:		

OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS³:

S.No.	Date	Outcome (if known)	Service currently involved	Ongoing support offered by church (this can include monitoring)- include dates
1.				

Guidance notes for Form 2:

Following are some helpful pointers in completing the above form(s)

1. ***Importance of consent from parents/carer or adults (in the light of mental capacity)*** – With regards to children, consent of the parents is considered important before a referral is made to external agencies, unless of course doing so will place the child(ren) at greater risk of harm. With regards to adults, it is important to be aware that their consent is crucial before reporting concerns onto statutory agencies. The individual's mental capacity will also be a significant factor to consider at this stage. You can always seek the advice of local authority social services.
2. ***Initial assessment-*** Based on the advice you may have received from relevant individuals/agencies (i.e. this could be school/thirtyone:eight/CEOP etc), what are the concerns categorised as?
3. ***Overview of actions*** - Includes a summary of the actions taken so far and who holds responsibility for it. You can use this section to add on information gathered when monitoring the situation or offering pastoral care over a defined period of time.