

Safeguarding Policy

Our House Church Yateley

Policy Version: 1.0

Approved By: Church Leadership / Trustees

Approval Date:

Review Date:

1. Statement of Commitment

Our House Church Yateley is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all children, young people, and adults at risk.

We recognise our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all people entrusted to our care, and we affirm that every person is made in the image of God and should be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Our church will:

- Promote the wellbeing and safety of children, young people, and adults at risk.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Recruit, train, and support all staff and volunteers responsibly.
- Work in partnership with statutory agencies and other organisations.
- Follow UK safeguarding legislation and recognised good practice.
- Ensure safeguarding is embedded in all areas of church life.

This policy applies to:

- Church leaders and trustees
 - Employees
 - Volunteers
 - Ministry team members
 - Children's and youth workers
 - Pastoral workers
 - Contractors acting on behalf of the church
 - Anyone representing the church in any capacity
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2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by relevant legislation and guidance in the United Kingdom, including:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

- Care Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Relevant Charity Commission guidance

The church acknowledges its duty of care to children, young people, and adults at risk.

3. Definitions

Child

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support; and
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- Is unable to protect themselves because of those needs.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting people from abuse, neglect, harm, and exploitation, and promoting their welfare and wellbeing.

4. Principles

The church will:

- Value every person equally.
 - Listen carefully to children, young people, and adults at risk.
 - Take all safeguarding concerns seriously.
 - Act promptly when concerns arise.
 - Maintain appropriate confidentiality.
 - Follow safer recruitment practices.
 - Ensure accountability in leadership and ministry.
 - Promote a culture of openness and transparency.
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5. Recognising Abuse

Abuse may take many forms. The church recognises the following categories.

Abuse of Children

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Online abuse
- Grooming
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Spiritual abuse
- Child criminal or sexual exploitation

Abuse of Adults at Risk

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Self-neglect

Possible indicators of abuse include:

- Sudden behavioural changes
- Withdrawal or fearfulness
- Unexplained injuries
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or language
- Poor hygiene or malnutrition
- Anxiety around certain individuals
- Financial irregularities
- Signs of coercion or control

These indicators do not automatically prove abuse but should always be taken seriously.

6. Safeguarding Structure and Responsibilities

Church Leadership / Trustees

Trustees are responsible for ensuring safeguarding arrangements are functioning effectively, reviewing safeguarding practice regularly, ensuring adequate resources are available, and ensuring serious safeguarding incidents are reported where legally required.

If concerns relate to the DSL, reports should be made directly to trustees, statutory agencies, or external safeguarding organisations.

The church leadership and trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are in place and functioning effectively.

Responsibilities include:

- Adopting and reviewing this policy annually.
- Ensuring appropriate procedures are followed.
- Supporting the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Ensuring adequate insurance and safer recruitment practices.
- Providing resources for safeguarding training and implementation.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The church will appoint at least one Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Grace Hopley

Telephone: 07468574548

Email: admin@ourhouseyateley.co.uk

Deputy DSL

Name:

Telephone:

Email:

The DSL is responsible for:

- Receiving safeguarding concerns and disclosures.
 - Maintaining confidential safeguarding records.
 - Making referrals to statutory agencies when appropriate.
 - Advising church leaders and volunteers.
 - Ensuring safeguarding training is completed.
 - Liaising with external safeguarding professionals.
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7. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Anyone who has a safeguarding concern must report it immediately to the DSL.

If a child or adult is in immediate danger, contact emergency services by calling 999.

Responding to a Disclosure

If someone discloses abuse:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Reassure the person they have done the right thing.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Record the facts as soon as possible.
- Report the concern to the DSL immediately.

Recording Concerns

All concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- Date and time
- Names of people involved
- Exact words used where possible
- Observations and actions taken
- Name of the person making the report

Records must be stored securely and confidentially.

Low level concerns may include poor boundaries, inappropriate comments, favouritism, unnecessary contact, concerning behaviour, or actions falling below expected safeguarding standards.

Low level safeguarding concerns should also be recorded and reviewed appropriately.

8. Safer Recruitment

The church is committed to safer recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers working with children, young people, or adults at risk.

Measures include:

- Written role descriptions
- Application forms
- Interviews or discussions
- References
- DBS checks where eligible and appropriate
- Safeguarding training
- Probationary supervision where appropriate

No individual with unresolved safeguarding concerns may work with children or adults at risk.

9. DBS Checks

The church will obtain Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for eligible roles in accordance with UK legislation and guidance.

The church will:

- Assess which roles require DBS checks.
 - Renew checks periodically where appropriate.
 - Keep records of DBS status securely.
 - Refer individuals to the DBS where legally required.
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10. Code of Conduct for Workers and Volunteers

All workers and volunteers must:

- Treat everyone with respect.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Avoid favouritism.
- Work in observable environments where possible.
- Avoid being alone with a child unless necessary and approved.
- Avoid inappropriate physical contact.
- Use appropriate language and behaviour.
- Never engage in abusive, humiliating, or exploitative behaviour.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly.

Workers and volunteers must not:

- Give alcohol, drugs, or inappropriate material to children.
 - Develop inappropriate relationships.
 - Communicate secretly or inappropriately online.
 - Use personal social media irresponsibly.
 - Take photographs without permission.
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11. Children's and Youth Ministry Procedures

The church will implement practical safeguards for all activities involving children and young people.

Ratios

Recommended minimum supervision ratios:

- Under 2 years: 1 adult to 3 children
- Age 2–3 years: 1 adult to 4 children
- Age 4–8 years: 1 adult to 6 children
- Age 9–12 years: 1 adult to 8 children

- Age 13–18 years: 1 adult to 10 young people

At least two adults should normally be present.

Risk assessments should be completed where appropriate.

No unauthorised adults should enter children's areas.

Rooms should remain visible and accessible where possible.

Parents remain responsible for children outside organised groups.

Children should not wander the building unsupervised.

Registration

The church will maintain:

- Attendance registers
- Parent/carer contact information
- Relevant medical and allergy information
- Consent forms where necessary

Toileting and Personal Care

Workers should:

- Respect privacy and dignity.
- Encourage independence.
- Ensure another adult is aware when assistance is provided.
- Follow agreed procedures for intimate care.

Transport

Transport arrangements should:

- Have parental consent.
 - Use licensed and insured drivers.
 - Avoid one-to-one transport where possible.
 - Ensure seat belts and legal safety requirements are followed.
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12. Online Safety and Communication

The church recognises the importance of online safety.

Workers must:

- Use approved communication methods.
- Maintain professional boundaries online.
- Avoid private messaging with children where possible.
- Include parents/carers in communications where appropriate.

- Report concerning online behaviour.

Photographs and videos of children may only be used with appropriate consent.

The use of livestreams and social media involving children also requires appropriate consent.

Workers and volunteers should maintain appropriate professional boundaries online.

13. Supporting Adults at Risk

The church seeks to create an environment where adults at risk are:

- Valued and respected
- Included in church life
- Protected from abuse and exploitation
- Supported in maintaining independence and dignity

Pastoral support should always respect consent, confidentiality, and personal autonomy.

Support may include listening appropriately, pastoral support, prayer where appropriate, and signposting to specialist agencies and statutory services.

The church seeks to respond compassionately and appropriately to victim survivors and others affected by abuse.

14. Allegations Against Workers or Leaders

All allegations against church workers, volunteers, or leaders must be taken seriously.

The church will:

- Report allegations promptly to the DSL.
- Seek advice from statutory agencies where appropriate.
- Cooperate fully with investigations.
- Protect all parties from unnecessary disclosure.
- Consider suspension where necessary to protect others.

No internal investigation should take place before consulting safeguarding authorities if abuse may have occurred.

15. Managing Known Offenders and Those Who May Pose a Risk

The church is committed both to safeguarding and to pastoral care.

Where someone attending the church is known to pose a risk:

- A written safeguarding agreement may be implemented.
- Boundaries and supervision arrangements will be established.
- Relevant leaders will be informed on a need-to-know basis.
- External safeguarding professionals may be consulted.

The safety of children and adults at risk will always take priority.

16. Health and Safety

The church will maintain a safe environment by:

- Completing risk assessments for activities and events.
 - Maintaining safe premises.
 - Ensuring first aid provision.
 - Recording accidents and incidents.
 - Following fire and emergency procedures.
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17. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Safeguarding information will be:

- Kept confidential on a need-to-know basis.
- Stored securely.
- Shared appropriately with statutory agencies.
- Managed in accordance with UK GDPR and data protection legislation.

Confidentiality must never prevent appropriate safeguarding action.

18. Training

The church will ensure that:

- All workers and volunteers receive safeguarding induction.
- Relevant workers complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role.
- DSLs receive additional specialist training.
- Refresher training takes place regularly.

Training records will be maintained.

Training should include safeguarding culture, recognising abuse, professional boundaries, responding to disclosures, and reporting concerns.

19. Complaints and Whistleblowing

Anyone with concerns about safeguarding practice, unsafe behaviour, misconduct, abuse of power, failures in safeguarding practice, attempts to conceal safeguarding concerns, or inappropriate behaviour within the church may raise concerns without fear of retaliation, discrimination, or victimisation.

Concerns may relate to:

- Unsafe safeguarding practices
- Inappropriate conduct by leaders, workers, or volunteers
- Failure to report safeguarding concerns
- Abuse of authority or position
- Attempts to minimise or hide safeguarding concerns
- Breaches of safeguarding procedures

Concerns may be reported to:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Church leadership or trustees
- Statutory authorities
- The Charity Commission where appropriate
- Thirtyone:eight or other safeguarding advisory organisations

Where concerns involve church leadership, trustees, or the DSL, individuals may report concerns directly to statutory agencies or external safeguarding organisations.

All whistleblowing concerns will be taken seriously, recorded appropriately, handled sensitively, and responded to appropriately.

20. Partnership with Parents and Carers

The church values partnership with parents and carers and will:

- Communicate clearly about activities.
 - Obtain appropriate consent.
 - Share safeguarding expectations.
 - Encourage open communication.
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21. External Organisations and Hirers

External groups using church premises must:

- Have appropriate safeguarding policies.
- Accept responsibility for their own safeguarding arrangements.
- Provide evidence of insurance where appropriate.

The church reserves the right to refuse bookings where safeguarding standards are inadequate.

22. Policy Review

This safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
 - Significant incidents occur
 - Organisational changes require updates
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23. Important Contacts

Emergency Services: 999

Police Non Emergency: [101](tel:101)

Hampshire Children's Services: [0300 555 1384](tel:03005551384)

Hampshire Children's Services Out of Hours: [0300 555 1373](tel:03005551373)

Hampshire Adult Services: [0300 555 1386](tel:03005551386)

Hampshire Adult Services Out of Hours: [0300 555 1373](tel:03005551373)

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): [01962 876364](tel:01962876364)

NSPCC Helpline: [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000)

Childline: [0800 1111](tel:08001111)

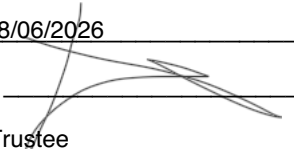
Thirtynine:eight Helpline: [0303 003 1111](tel:03030031111)

Prevent / Anti Terror Hotline: [0800 789 321](tel:0800789321)

24. Adoption Statement

This policy was adopted by the leadership/trustees of Our House Church Yateley on:

Date: 08/06/2026

Signed: 

Role: Trustee

Appendix A – Safeguarding Reporting Form

Safeguarding Concern Report

Details of Person at Risk

- Name:
- Date of Birth:
- Address:
- Contact Details:

Details of Concern

- Date and time of concern:
- Nature of concern:
- What was seen/heard/disclosed:
- Immediate actions taken:

Reporting Person

- Name:
 - Role:
 - Signature:
 - Date:
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Appendix B – Volunteer Declaration

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the church safeguarding policy.
- I agree to follow the policy and code of conduct.
- I understand my duty to report safeguarding concerns.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

