

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



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The legal definition of a child is someone who is under 18 years of age. The terms 'child' and 'children' in this document therefore relate to anyone under the age of 18 years.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 is the government's statutory guidance for all organisations and agencies who work with, or carry out work related to, children in the United Kingdom. The guidance aims to set the goalposts for inter-agency working and for promoting the welfare of children from all backgrounds, in all settings.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safer Recruitment Policy**

**Safeguarding Team**

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## Church Details

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## Introduction

Life Church Bath is committed to practices that safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We are committed to our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care.

### **We will safeguard children by:**

- Promoting an awareness of safeguarding across the whole church community
- Following carefully the procedure for safer recruitment in the selection of staff and volunteers
- Adopting a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Supporting staff and volunteers through supervision and training
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, parents, staff and the Life Church Bath community
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately
- Supervising any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, or who is under investigation and liaising with external agencies as appropriate to ensure all appropriate measures are taken
- Proactively keeping up to date with changes of legislation and recommendations of good practice.

## Statement of Intent

The care and protection of children involved in Life Church Bath activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the church has a role to play in safeguarding children.

We are committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Creating an environment in which children can feel safe while engaged in any of Life Church Bath's activities
- Creating a culture of dignity and respect towards children
- Reviewing our safeguarding policies and procedures annually
- Creating an awareness of safeguarding throughout the church community to ensure all concerns are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.

## Description of the Activities We Undertake with Children

We aim to run age-appropriate sessions on a Sunday morning when we aim to connect children to God and have fun together in a safe environment. These sessions may include crafts, games, bible stories, prayer, sharing testimonies, worship, conversations, and more. We also have Sunday Sessions and Found Youth on Fridays for youth aged 11-18. Found Youth takes place at St Matt's Church in Widcombe. We also run Stay and Play sessions weekly on a Monday (during school term times) at The Forum where children remain under parental supervision.

## Understanding Abuse

### Abuse:

“A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.” (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018; Department for Education)

### Neglect:

“Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.” (via NSPCC)

## Definitions, Signs and Symptoms of Abuse in Children

### What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

“Some children experience abuse and exploitation outside the home. This is often referred to as “extra-familial harm”. Harm can occur in a range of extra-familial

contexts, including school and other educational settings, peer groups, or within community/public spaces, and/or online. Children may experience this type of harm from other children and/or from adults. Forms of extra-familial harm include exploitation by criminal and organised crime groups and individuals (such as county lines and financial exploitation), serious violence, modern slavery and trafficking, online harm, sexual exploitation, teenage relationship abuse, and the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation.” (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023; Department for Education)

Four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018)’.

## Physical Abuse

‘A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scaling, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.’ (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018; Department for Education).

### **The following may be indicators of physical abuse:**

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse.

## Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or value only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of



what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.' (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018; Department for Education)

**The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging or anxious about doing something wrong
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

## **Sexual Abuse**

“Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.” (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018; Department for Education).

**The following may be indicators of sexual abuse:**

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behavior
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections, or underage pregnancy
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play, or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations

## **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or physiological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy due to maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

**The following may be indicators of neglect:**

- Children who are undernourished
- Children who are left hungry or dirty
- Stealing or gorging food
- Lack of growth & development
- Children who are often angry or aggressive
- Untreated illnesses or parents/carers who fail to seek medical treatment

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.' (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018; Department for Education).

### **The following may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:**

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that can't be accounted for
- Skipping school or being disruptive in class
- Experiencing health problems that may indicate a sexually transmitted infection
- Mood swings/changes in temperament
- Drug/alcohol misuse
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behavior, such as over-familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner, or sending sexualised images by phone.
- They may also show signs of unexplained physical harm, such as bruising, cigarette burns, etc.

## Radicalisation

“Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.” (BANES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership Procedures 2021).

We recognize that we have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem and be victims of bullying or discrimination. Extremists might target them and tell them they can be part of something special, later brainwashing them and cutting them off from friends and family.

The following may be indicators of radicalisation and extremism:

- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Unwillingness or an inability to discuss their views
- Increased levels of anger/sudden disrespectful attitude
- Increased secretiveness especially around internet use
- Children making significant changes to their appearance or demonstrating behaviors that are out of character.
- Children accessing violent extremist websites and social networks
- Children using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Children justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Children articulating support for violent extremism
- Children associating with others believed to be at risk of radicalisation
- Children having contact with extremist recruiters
- Unwillingness or an inability to discuss their views

(BANES Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership, Practice Guidance; 2024)

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation, also sometimes referred to as female genital cutting or female circumcision, refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the genital organs for non-medical reasons. There are no health benefits, it causes severe pain and significant long-term psychological and physical problems. The practice is illegal in the UK and it is also illegal to arrange for a child to be taken abroad for FGM. (BANES Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership, Practice Guidance; 2024)

The following may be indicators of FGM:

- One or both parents come from an ethnic group that traditionally practices FGM
- Another relative has undergone FGM
- Parents express views which show they value the practice
- A girl may have difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- A girl may spend longer in the bathroom or toilet
- Unusual behaviour/absence

## Spiritual Abuse (or abuse linked to a faith or belief)

There is a growing awareness and interest in spiritual abuse in faith communities as a subject (Oakley 2016). Existing work around this experience (which is characterised by a systematic pattern of controlling and coercive behaviour in a religious context) is still in its infancy, to the extent there is not currently universal agreement about this as a term. There is some discussion about it being categorised as a form of emotional and/or psychological abuse. It has been suggested that this form of abuse may include: manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability censorship of decision-making, requirement for secrecy and silence, coercion to conform, control through the use of sacred texts or teaching, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation as a means of punishment, and superiority and elitism. (Oakley 2018)

We are actively pursuing awareness and understanding on this topic. We are currently basing our knowledge on the following reports published by thirtyoneeight: 'An Exploration of Knowledge about Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief' and 'Understanding Spiritual Abuse in Christian Communities' by Dr Lisa Oakley and Justin Humphreys.

We also seek to ensure accountability for all those in a paid or volunteer role and have a group of overseers (Dan & Fi Reynolds, Barbie & Peter Reynolds and Paul & Sue Wakely) that ensure accountability for all those in leadership within the church.

## Self Harm

The reasons children and teenagers harm themselves are often complicated and will be different for every child or young person. Sometimes a child or teenager may not know the reasons they self-harm. For many young people, self-harm can feel like a way to cope with difficult feelings or to release tension. The physical pain of hurting themselves can feel like a distraction from the emotional pain they're struggling with.

Some difficult experiences or emotions can make self-harm more likely in children:

- Experiencing poor mental health, depression, anxiety or eating disorders
- Low self-esteem or feeling like they're not good enough
- Bullying or feeling isolated/lonely.
- Experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect
- Grieving or having problems with family relationships
- Feeling angry, numb or like they're not in control of their lives

It can be difficult to recognise the signs of self-harm in children and teenagers, but it is important to trust your instincts if you're worried something is wrong.

The following may be indicators of self-harm:

- Covering up, for example by wearing long sleeves a lot of the time, especially in the summer
- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns or bite marks on their body
- Blood stains on clothing, or finding tissues with blood on
- Becoming withdrawn and spending a lot of their time alone
- Feeling down, low self-esteem, outbursts of anger or blaming themselves for things
- Drug & alcohol misuse

## **Suicidal Behaviour**

Deliberate self-harm such as cutting or overdose may represent a serious desire to commit suicide in response to hopelessness caused by depressive illness, social circumstances or occasionally by a psychotic illness (e.g. one characterised by paranoid delusions and hearing voices).

In cases of deliberate self-harm and suicidal thoughts with intent, parents will be informed unless it is felt that by doing so it would place the child in danger.

## Roles & Responsibilities

### **The Trustees are committed to:**

- Following all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures.
- Providing the necessary resources for ongoing safeguarding training and development for all its workers.
- Ensuring that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children.

### **The Leadership Team are responsible for:**

- Following the Safeguarding Policy.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take to protect children.
- Supporting all those working with children.
- Engaging with all members of the Life Church Bath community who have been impacted by abuse to consider their needs and how to respond to these pastorally.

### **The Safeguarding Coordinator is responsible for:**

- The preparation of, and ensuring the awareness of, the safeguarding policy and its annual review.
- Implement the safeguarding policy and its procedures and support others in following the policy and procedures.
- Developing a safeguarding culture and awareness.
- Ensuring the child's voice is heard and represented.
- Signposting children to appropriate support services.
- Arranging and making sure workers and leaders attend relevant training.
- Keeping accurate records relating to safeguarding concerns confidential.
- Regularly informing the leadership team on good practise issues.

- Working in partnership with statutory and other agencies.
- Collating and clarifying the details of an allegation or suspicion, and reporting safeguarding concerns to statutory agencies.

### **The Safeguarding Team are responsible for:**

- Covering in the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator (e.g. illness or holiday).
- Being an alternative should an allegation ever be made against the Safeguarding Coordinator or someone close to them making it inappropriate for them to deal with the issue.
- Providing guidance to the safeguarding coordinator to assist their decision-making.
- Assisting in the annual review of the safeguarding policy.
- Advising on best practise

### **The Children's and Youth Pastors are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines are followed in all their activities and hold an up-to-date awareness of these.
- Working with the Safeguarding Team, following guidance and accepting input from the Safeguarding Team
- Ensuring that accurate and detailed records are kept in line with the Life Church Bath policy.
- Following and embracing the Safer Recruitment Policy
- Ensuring that Life Kids/Found Youth team are aware of the policies and ensure good practice is followed.
- Ensure that all groups are provided with a team that follows the stipulated ratio.
- Taking responsibility for sharing safeguarding concerns within their respective areas with the Safeguarding Team

## **Staff & Volunteers**



'All practitioners working in these (*voluntary, charity, social enterprise, faith-based organisations, and private sectors*) organisations and agencies who are working with children and their families are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities, whether paid or a volunteer' (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023)

## Safer Recruitment

Life Church Bath will ensure that paid staff and volunteers working with children will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safer recruitment. Please see our Safer Recruitment Policy for full details

## Training

Life Church Bath is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone.

All our workers receive induction training and undertake safeguarding training at a minimum of every 2 years. This may be in-house training, online or provided through an external agency such as BANES Local Safeguarding Children Board, or thirtyone:eight.

The Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor, Elders, Trustees and anyone with an identified responsibility for safeguarding will undertake safeguarding training at a minimum of every two years and ideally annually.

The Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator will undergo child protection training at a minimum of every two years, but ideally annually.

## Good Practice Guidelines

As Life Church Bath, working with children, we wish to operate and promote good working practise. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusations. As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for specific activities we are involved in. These can be found in Appendix C.

## Whistle Blowing

We recognise that as a church, we have a duty to conduct ourselves in a responsible and transparent way and to take into account legal requirements, requirements of funding bodies, the Charity Commission and any other public body. As a church we will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Therefore, we expect that all employees and volunteers will report improper actions and omissions. All malpractice and acts of omission will be thoroughly investigated. It is especially important that suspicions of abuse are immediately reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

## Children

Life Church Bath will act to ensure that all children have information about how, and with whom, they can share their concerns, complaints and anxieties. When communicating with children and young people, staff and volunteers will consider the level of understanding and maturity of the child or young person, as well as the level of responsibility they hold if on team, if a volunteer is unsure of a child's level of understanding they should refer to the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor.

## Parents

Parents/those in loco parentis are ultimately responsible for their child's welfare at all times. Parents are expected to be contactable for the duration of any session or to identify another adult who can be contacted in case of emergency. It is the aim of Life Church Bath to communicate clearly with parents and for the Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor and Safeguarding Team to be contactable. Contact details of the Children's Pastor, Youth Pastor and Safeguarding Coordinator can be found on the website or at the start of this document. Details of the Safeguarding Team can also be found on the website and prominently displayed around the church building. Our Safeguarding Policies can also be downloaded from our website.

It is important to note that if a disclosure is made, or a safeguarding concern is raised, that the welfare of the child is paramount. Therefore, if it is felt that a child is at risk of significant harm, we may not consult the parents before contacting Social Services, the Police or emergency services to seek urgent medical attention if required.

## Responding To A Disclosure

We recognise that children may share a worry or concern with anyone they trust. When a child discloses, they have been or are in fear of being abused, the first step is to actively listen and then be prepared to take the appropriate action.

## Procedure For Responding to a Disclosure

- Take the matter seriously and don't overreact.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Listen carefully to what the child is saying, allowing him or her to speak without interruption.
- Do not question him or her directly but you can use language like 'Tell me about...' 'Explain to me...' 'Describe to be...'
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you without making promises.
- Accept what the child says – it is not your role to investigate or question (thank the child for what they are saying). Accept and take seriously what the child says.
- Explain what you will do next and who you will tell, if age-appropriate and in age-appropriate ways.
- Don't talk to the alleged abuser (pass your concerns directly to the Safeguarding Team. You do not need to talk to anyone who is alleged to have harmed a child).
- Don't talk to parents or the person who brought the child. The decision for this must rest with the Safeguarding Coordinator or the on-duty member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Act promptly in reporting the concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator or in her absence, a member of the Safeguarding team.
- Complete a written report, using our 'Record of Concern' form detailing what happened as soon as possible, preferably within one hour, using the child's words or explanations (do not translate into your own words in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say).
- Do not share the information with anyone other than those necessary.

## Responding To Concerns

We recognise that someone working with children may suspect that a child is being abused or is likely to be abused, or that the child has been abused historically. Everyone has a responsibility to take all such matters seriously, reporting any concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Coordinator, or a member of the Safeguarding Team who will then decide how to proceed. If the Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the Safeguarding Team are in any way implicated, then you have a responsibility to make a direct referral/report to Children's Social Services.

Where parents or those with parental responsibility have concerns regarding a member of staff or a volunteer working with their child, they should speak to the Safeguarding Coordinator or, in her absence, a member of the Safeguarding Team. Nothing in this policy prevents a person's right as a citizen to make a direct report/referral regarding their concerns or to seek advice from organisations such as thirtyone:eight or the NSPCC. However, in most cases we feel it is appropriate to report concerns to the Safeguarding Team and it is our hope that members and visitors will follow the procedures laid out in this policy.

## Procedure For Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

If you suspect that a child is being abused or is likely to be abused, or that the child has been abused historically you have a responsibility to report your concern to the Safeguarding Coordinator or one of the Safeguarding Team who will then decide how to proceed. If the Safeguarding Coordinator is unavailable, then speak to the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

The December 2020 update to Working Together to Safeguard Children clarifies that the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

### **You Should:**

- Take the matter seriously
- Act promptly
- Report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the Safeguarding Team
- Not try to further investigate the matter yourself
- Not discuss your suspicions with anyone other than those mentioned above.
- Complete a written report, using our 'Record of Concern' form as soon as possible, preferably, within one hour

### **The Safeguarding Coordinator will:**

Collate and clarify the precise details as far as possible and decide how to respond, potentially acting on advice from thirtyone:eight.

If there are signs that the child

- Is suffering significant harm through abuse or neglect
- Is likely to suffer significant harm in the future

then the Safeguarding Coordinator will contact Children's Social Care. The timing of such referrals should reflect the level of perceived risk of harm, no longer than one working day of identification or disclosure of harm or risk of harm.

- Inform the Bath and North East Somerset Children's Social Work Services through their online reporting service: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/report-concern-about-child>
- Contact Children's Social Care 01225 396313/ 396312 (office hours) or 01454 615165 (out of hours) in cases of non-accidental injury, if concerned about a child's safety, if a child is afraid to return home or if it is felt a child is likely to suffer significant harm in the future.
- Contact the Police or appropriate emergency service in an emergency on 999
- Do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so by Children's Social Care
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the relevant medical professional of any suspicions.

## **For lesser concerns (e.g. poor parenting indicated by hunger, dirty clothes and smelly):**

- 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 help them access the appropriate support such as connecting them with the church pastoral care team.
- In cases of real concern, if they still fail to engage, contact Children's Social Care directly for advice.

**Please see record of concern form in Appendix A of this document.**

## **Contacting Children's Social Care or the Police**

When contacting Children's Social Care or the Police the following information will be shared:

- Child's name, address and date of birth or age
- Family composition, including the name(s), address and phone numbers of parent(s) or person(s) with parental responsibility
- What prompted the concerns, including dates and time of any specific incidents, what the child said, including the name of any alleged abuser
- Details of any advice given to the child

## **Other people who will be informed:**

- The designated trustee, and the chair of trustees who would report this to the Charities Commission
- The designated elder
- It may also be necessary to inform the Finance Manager, in order to inform the insurance company
- In ongoing situations, it may be necessary to involve other members of Life Church Bath such as the Children and Families' Pastor, the Youth Pastor or Life Group Leader

- The whole Life Church Bath Safeguarding Team would be made aware of the situation

## Allegations of Abuse Against Staff & Volunteers

An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer may arise from many different sources. It could be from a child, another adult, or a complaint by a parent. It may also arise in the context of the member of staff or volunteer and their life outside of work or at home.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a person who works with children (whether a volunteer or a paid member of staff) the Safeguarding Coordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, may need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) on 01225 396810.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day when an allegation is made and prior to any further investigation taking place.

This procedure should be applied when there is such an allegation or concern that a person who works with children, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children.

## Record Keeping

In some cases, it can be many years before incidents of abuse come to light. As such the following policy was drawn up and implemented from September 2007.

- We will retain all documents relating to those people working with 0-18 year olds whether paid or unpaid, employees or voluntary workers, current or past members of Life Church Bath, indefinitely. This will include volunteer application forms self-disclosure forms; references; all disclosure numbers and dates.

- Team rotas will be kept indefinitely. Team leaders will be responsible for noting any changes to the rota.
- Registers of children/young people will be kept indefinitely.
- A record of what took place at any meeting or event will be kept indefinitely
- A record of any allegation against a worker, whether substantiated or not, will be kept indefinitely.
- We will keep medical forms and permission slips relating to an activity for a minimum period of 10 years.
- All records, information and confidential notes will be kept securely. Only designated personnel will have access to these files.

The Safeguarding Coordinator along with the Safeguarding Team will, in line with GDPR, make a professional judgment on how long records should be kept.

## Supporting Those Affected By Abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who are part of Life Church Bath. When the support required is outside of the skill set currently available from the pastoral care team then a referral to outside organisations who have the relevant skill set may be made. This may be local organisations both statutory and non-statutory.

## Working With Offenders

When someone attending Life Church Bath is known to have abused children, is considered to be a risk to children, or is known to be under investigation, the Leadership will, with the Safeguarding Coordinator, arrange supervision for the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children, set clear boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and thorough consultation with appropriate parties and will be specific to the individual. These boundaries will also be written up in a personal contract which will be signed by the individual and a member of the safeguarding team.



## Supporting Staff & Volunteers

Support for a member of staff or volunteer about whom allegations have been made is important and will be managed by the Leadership team during and following any investigation.

## Supporting Parents and Member of Life Church Bath

Support for a parent or members of Life Church Bath about whom allegations have been made is important and will be managed by the Leadership team during and following any investigation.

## Contact Details

<b>Safeguarding Coordinator</b>	Amy Wyatt	07446905899
<b>Trustee for Safeguarding</b>	Ruth Martin	07971925484
<b>Designated Elder</b>	Jonathan Horsfall	07511003496
<b>Children's &amp; Families' Pastor</b>	Esther Kinnear	07765083865
<b>Youth Pastor</b>	Tim Rudge	07375551598

## Contact Details of Statutory Agencies and Organisations Offering Support & Advice

**The Bath and Northeast Somerset Children and Families Assessment and Intervention Team (CAFAIT) (office hours):** 01225 396313 or 01225 396312  
Out of hours emergency number:  
01454615165

**B&NES LADO** 01225 396810

**If a child lives outside of B&NES the appropriate authority will be contacted.**

**Police** 999

**Thirtyone:eight** 0303 003 11 11

**NSPCC** 0808 800 5000

**Action is taken in line with the following legislation/guidance:**

- The Bath & Northeast Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership Procedures (<https://bcssp.org.uk/>)
- HM Government's 'What to do if you are worried that a child is being abused' March 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

## Appendix A: Cause For Concern Form & Body Map (Children & Young People)

Record of concern about a child's safety and welfare

For use by staff and volunteers. Please take care in writing legibly.

<b>Date of Incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Name of person completing this form:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Child's Name</b>	
<b>Child's date of birth or age:</b>	
<b>Child's address (or approx. area):</b>	

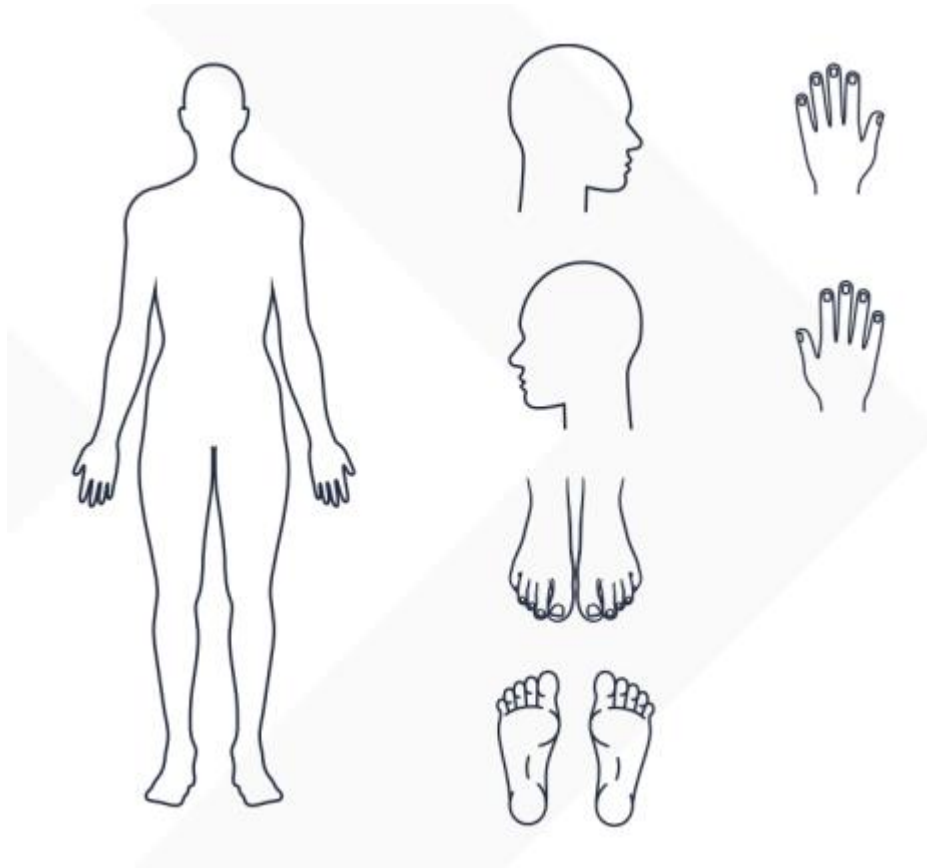
<b>Name of parent(s)/carer(s):</b>	
<b>Parent(s)/Carer(s) Telephone Number:</b>	
<b>Other known members of the household:</b>	
<b>Nature of concern:</b>  <i>(e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanor, appearance, injury. Please include as much factual detail as possible. Continue on separate sheet as necessary.)</i>	
<b>Exactly what the child said and what you/the person reporting said:</b>  <i>(Remember to never lead the child and record exact details of what was said. Continue on a separate sheet as necessary.)</i>	

<b>Any other relevant information:</b>	
<b>Action taken so far:</b>	
<b>Date and time of discussion with a member of the Safeguarding Team:</b>	
<b>Name of person from the Safeguarding Team you discussed this with:</b>	

**Please pass this form to the Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the Safeguarding Team without delay or email to [safeguarding@lifechurchbath.com](mailto:safeguarding@lifechurchbath.com)**

## Body Map

- **Children should not be undressed by Life Church Bath staff or volunteers to assess injuries**
- **Staff and volunteers are not permitted to take photographs of marks or injuries**
- **First Aid is to be administered where appropriate, but for serious medical concerns, staff/volunteers must seek suitable medical attention.**



Source:

<https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/child-protection-body-map/>

## Appendix B: Notes to help you fill in a record of concern about a child's safety and welfare

1. Life Church Bath is required to ensure that our duty of care towards children is carried out in line with the principles within our Safeguarding Policy, the document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People 2023' and The Care Act 2014.

### **2. Essential principles of recording the information received or disclosed or observed:**

- a. Remember – do not investigate or ask any leading questions
- b. Make notes within 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 use When, Where, What, Why and How
- f. Do not share this information with anyone other than a member of the Safeguarding Team. They will advise on who else will need to be informed, how and when.
- g. Make use of the other relevant information section to add any other relevant information regarding the child or family that you may be aware of.

### **3. What constitutes a safeguarding concern?**

Any incident that has caused or is likely to cause significant harm to a child.

### **4. Information regarding another household member?**

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 significant?**

It is important to give whatever detail is available of the child's explanation of the matter to help offer context to the concern.

## **6. Discussion with someone from the Safeguarding Team**

It is important to raise your concerns with a member of the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

## **7. Passing information to the Safeguarding Coordinator**

The Safeguarding Coordinator, or in her absence, a designated member of the Safeguarding Team, holds ultimate responsibility in responding to any safeguarding concerns within Life Church Bath and therefore it is important that they have oversight of the actions being taken and make relevant and appropriate links between statutory agencies if required. They will make the most appropriate link between Life Church Bath and external agencies. They have responsible for the safe keeping of all documentation and records. Please email [safeguarding@lifechurchbath.com](mailto:safeguarding@lifechurchbath.com).



## Appendix C: Code of Conduct (Staff and Volunteers)

The code of conduct for staff and volunteers aims to help protect children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made. Staff and volunteers must at all times show respect and understanding for individual's rights, safety and welfare. They must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the ethos and principles of Life Church Bath and this will be achieved by:

- Understanding and following our safeguarding policy
- Listening to, and respecting the voice of the child
- Respecting boundaries and privacy of those being cared for
- Knowing how to deal with issues of discipline.
- Developing an awareness of disability issues as well as issues of equality and inclusion.

### 1. **Respect**

- Treat children with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for their interests, rights, safety and welfare
- Listen carefully to what a child is saying
- Value each child for who they are
- Encouraging and praising children wherever possible
- Recognise the unique contribution a child can make

### 2. **Lead By Example**

- Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour in both children and other workers
- Be prepared to be challenged by a child or an adult working with children
- Respect a child's right to privacy to maintain personal dignity (for example going to the toilet)
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including

inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures).

- Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary. This may be your team leader for that morning, the Youth Pastor or Children's Pastor or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

### 3. One-to-One Contact

- Mentoring, 1:1 pastoring youth and 'Youth Connect' is the only activity where it is permitted for one adult to work with one child.
- Work in an open environment and avoid private or unobserved situations. Stay in the same room as the rest of the group whenever possible.
- Let another team member know if you have to talk in a more private setting with a child, wherever possible staying within hailing distance.
- In a 1:1 mentoring style relationship please follow the specific guidelines for this.

### 4. Physical Contact

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Engage in sexually provocative or rough, physical games including wrestling, massage or horseplay.
- Do something of a personal nature for a child that they can do themselves.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touch of any kind.

## General

Staff and volunteers WILL:

- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations and suspicions to the Safeguarding Coordinator or the on-duty member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Not make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality.

## Unacceptable Behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns

- Taking unnecessary risks.
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way.
- Breaching our policy on uploading photos onto private social media pages.
- Checking your phone or using your phone whilst on duty unless to contact the emergency services, a parent or team member.
- Not allowing a Team Leader to see 1:1 messages, whether via text, via an app or email.
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances whilst 'on duty'.
- Working/volunteering whilst under the influence of any drug or substance which adversely affects your performance. This not only applies to alcohol and illegal drugs but also some prescription drugs.
- Favoritism/exclusion - all children should be equally supported and encouraged.

## Breaching the Code of Conduct

If a member of staff or a volunteer behaves inappropriately, they will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the Safeguarding Coordinator as appropriate).

Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave Life Church Bath.

We may also need to make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's social care departments or DBS.

In less serious situations a 1:1 meeting with the Children's / Youth Pastor and the Safeguarding Coordinator will take place, along with the possible suspension of the worker whilst further training is undertaken.

If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the safeguarding team.

## Good Practise Guidelines

- When on duty all team members must be identifiable as the team members for that activity. For example, Life Kids team members must wear the Life Kids T-shirt.

- Generally speaking, no team member should be left alone with an individual child except in emergency situations.
- In a discussion or conversation where privacy and confidentiality are important, make sure that the team leader, or another team member, knows that the conversation is taking place, and knows where and with whom. Another adult should ideally be present or within hailing distance. If the adult is not of the same sex as the child, an adult of that sex should always be present.
- Any team member who has not successfully completed their probationary period (usually 12 weeks or 4 sessions) should not be left alone with a child / children at any time and must not act as team leader.
- All activities should always be arranged to take place with groups of children and with a minimum of two adults, preferably male and female, within the following ratio guidelines, based on recommendations by Thirtyone:eight

<b>0–2-year-olds</b>	<b>1 adult to 3 children</b>
<b>2–3-year-olds</b>	<b>1 adult to 4 children</b>
<b>3–8-year-olds</b>	<b>1 adult to 8 children</b>
<b>8–18-year-olds</b>	<b>1 adult to 10 children</b>

- Mentoring, 1:1 pastoring youth and ‘Youth Connect’ is the only activity where it is permitted for one adult to work with one child.
- Permission must be obtained from parents before children are permitted on outings or activities away from the Forum.
- In the case of any activity additional to the current regular activities, parents must be given full details of the arrangements and intended activities well in advance.
- The Children’s Pastor or Youth Pastor should be informed of any child who behaves in an aggressive manner.

- Toileting must not be undertaken by one person but must be a shared responsibility amongst team members (excluding those on a probationary period and young helpers (under 18s) who must not be involved in toileting).
- If a child is wet or soiled, their parent or carer must be called to change them.
- All children should be treated with dignity and respect.
- No physical punishment should be used.
- Reasonable restraint of a child may **ONLY** be used by a worker when necessary to protect the child, themselves, or others from harm, or to prevent property damage.
- Children with additional needs may have a personal plan that is agreed with the parent prior to attending any Life Kids or Found Youth session. The team need to be aware of this and how to escalate concerns.
- Sleeping arrangements for overnight activities must allow male and female children separate accommodation and adequate privacy, and workers must not share any sleeping accommodation with children.

Where any team member's actions or words give cause for concern, the Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor should be informed. No action should be taken prior to proper discussion with the Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

## Appendix D: Safeguarding Commitment Form

**Full name:**

**Team applied for:**

**I declare that:**

- I have read and agree to follow the code of conduct set out for all staff and volunteers working with children and young people at Life Church Bath and will work within the procedures set out in the Life Church Bath Child Protection Policy
- I have read and understand the role description set out for those serving on the Life Kids or Found Youth teams and understand my role and responsibilities as a member of the team.
- I have completed a DBS application
- I have not been convicted or have been the subject of an allegation of child abuse, sexual misconduct or act of violence involving or directed towards children.
- I understand that if an allegation is made against me about child abuse or neglect the matter will be referred to the police and other relevant authority for investigation.
- I will report any concerns or suspicions I have about a child's welfare, or the conduct of another volunteer or member of staff in relation to Child Protection & Safeguarding. I will report any disclosures or allegations to the Safeguarding Team.

**Applicant's Signature:**

**Date:**

## Appendix E: Guidelines for Praying with Children & Young People

Some of the main things that underpin any effective ministry to children and young people, including prayer, are:

- Acceptance
- Respect
- Non-judgmental listening
- Sensitivity
- Discernment
- Patience

In applying these values in the area of prayer, not only will you build trust and respect, but you will also be providing a good 'prayer' model so that children and young people can learn how to pray for others in a sensible and responsible way.

Although it may seem obvious, it is important parents/carers are aware that prayer is an integral part of church life and that on occasions you may pray for their child whether corporately, or individually at the child's request. In the unlikely event of a parent/carer requesting that their child does not participate in individual prayer, this must be respected.

### Things to consider when praying for children & young people:

#### Prayer

1. Prior to praying always make sure you have the child's permission and always pray in an open area where other leaders are around. If there is a general invitation to come forward for prayer either in a children's / youth meeting or in the wider church meeting, then it will be helpful to have children's workers available to pray with the children/young people rather than relying on other leaders who may be used to dealing with adults. These people should be easily identifiable as a member of the Life Kids or Found Youth Team. Only those authorised by the church leadership should be involved in this ministry.
2. Ask the child what they are requesting prayer for and remember to listen carefully to their reply. Speak quietly and calmly and don't laugh or dismiss

anything they want to pray for, even if it is something you consider trite or irrelevant (e.g. my cat is poorly). If they do not have any specific needs, you can simply ask God to bless them.

3. Those praying with children and young people should always be alert to safeguarding children's issues and other concerns, such as bullying. In these circumstances do not forget about or delay taking appropriate action.
4. If the child becomes distressed, stop praying and gently ask them what has caused the distress and talk to another leader if appropriate. Before continuing to pray, consider with whom they might feel more comfortable. It may be appropriate to then talk to the child's parents/carers, assuming you have no child protection concerns.

## Practicalities & Language

1. Consider your body language when praying for a child or young person. Try to ensure you are on their level rather than towering over them perhaps by both of you sitting down; but do avoid crowding. Refrain from playing your hands on a child/young person's head or shoulders without asking the child if it is OK to do so as they may find this frightening or threatening. If you think they may appreciate something like an arm around their shoulder or their hand being held, always ask them if it is OK to do so before doing it.
2. Remember that a child/young person may not, for example, understand the use of the gift of tongues and it is important therefore not to do anything that may cause confusion or distress. You could explain that you are going to use a special prayer language but also pray in a language they can understand.
3. Use clear and uncomplicated language. Reflect back what the child has said to you to show you understood their prayer request and don't make assumptions e.g. if the child says they are feeling tired, you could reply "let us pray for you as you are feeling tired" not "I think you are depressed, let's pray about that." Keep the prayers simple and short so you can be confident your prayers have been understood by the child.

## Giving Advice

1. A child or young person could be very susceptible to suggestion, particularly if they are distressed. Be careful what you say even if you believe you have heard from God about their situation. It may be wise to pray this through on your own or with another leader. Never advise a child or young person to stop taking medication or cease seeing professionals involved in their care or welfare.



## Confidentiality

1. Never promise total confidentiality. Should a child wish to disclose to you within a prayer ministry context, a situation such as abuse, you have a duty to pass this on to a member of the Safeguarding Team. You may need to gently give clear boundaries but reassure the child that if you share anything about their situation with someone else it will be on a 'need to know' basis only and you will make sure they are supported and cared for.

## Deliverance

1. When consideration is being given to pray for anyone in the area most commonly known as deliverance, they should always be referred to those within the church authorised in this area of ministry who have recognised expertise and experience. Where this type of praying is being considered for a child or young person, we would ask you to consider the following notes of caution:

*Victoria Climbié was a vulnerable little girl who was being abused by her 'carers', sustaining over 100 injuries to her body from which she eventually died. An inquiry into her death found that her 'carers' managed to convince the pastor that she was possessed by demons, and she was severely traumatised by 'deliverance' prayer sessions held at the church. Tragically, Victoria came to believe she was demonised, evil and wicked.*

Children are easily frightened and very susceptible to suggestion. They may also be upset by shouting and will easily believe they are bad, wicked, etc. A child should never be told they are demonised/possessed/oppressed.

It is important not to miss psychological or physiological factors e.g. behavioural issues, learning difficulties, mental health problems, copies or unconventional behaviour. These may well be the cause of a child's difficulties and should be handled with care.

## Appendix F: Guidelines On Touch

As adults many of us in the church setting are used to hugs or having hands laid on us when being prayed for. However, many children are not used to being hugged, or even touched, by non-family members and some parents do not want their child to be hugged or touched. This is even more noticeable in the case of unchurched children or children with some sensitivities. In addition, we must also remember that for the child, churched or unchurched, who has suffered physical or sexual abuse that any touch could be unwelcome and make the child feel very uncomfortable or frightened.

### **The following are guidelines when it comes to physical contact with children & young people:**

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc), encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.
- When praying for a child or young person only put your hand lightly on the child's head or shoulder. Ask permission before doing so. Do not put your hand on a child's stomach or any other part of their torso or above knees or elbows or below shoulders.

- Staff and volunteers should never engage in sexually provocative or rough physical games, including horseplay.

## Appendix G: Communication with Children & Young People via Electronic/Social Media Platforms.

The main routes of communication with children will be:

- Verbally in a meeting/children's group
- Communication via parents/guardians

### Life Kids

The above routes will be the **only** routes for Life Kids, unless a phone conversation is approved by a parent or legal guardian (the exception being when initiated by the child. In this situation, a written report must be made as soon as possible after the conversation and given to the Safeguarding Coordinator or a member of the Safeguarding Team).

### Found Youth

We recognise that many children in Found Youth have their own mobile phone, are on social media and use apps such as WhatsApp.

Wherever possible all communication with Found Youth should take place in a group chat, or other open setting and not on a personal social media site, page or app. Permission will be sought from parents before communicating with youth via WhatsApp.

### 1:1 Messaging

However, we recognise that on occasions, there will be communication 1:1 via texting or an app, perhaps to arrange a time and place for a member of youth to connect with someone on team, for instance in a mentoring situation.

All communication thus initiated by a member of the Youth team must take place between 8am and 9pm. Communication after 9pm may only take place when initiated by a member of the youth and when it is time sensitive, or the young person is in danger. If a young person contacts you after 9pm and the message can wait, please do not reply until the following day.

### Guidance on what can and can't be sent

Sending kisses by using an 'x' or an emoji may not be used. Other emojis that cannot be misinterpreted may be used but always think before you send.

Personal photos may not be exchanged, but a photo of something like a book that you recommend is fine.

## **Accountability**

All team members must be ready to show the Youth Pastor and / or the Safeguarding Coordinator the content of any WhatsApp / messages whether sent in a group setting or 1:1.

## **Consent**

Consent to communicate in the above way is sought from the young person, and their parent / legal guardian via the Youth Consent Form.

## **Questions to Ask Yourself Before Communicating 1:1 With a Youth Person:**

1. What time is it? A leader must only initiate a conversation between 8am and 9pm.
2. Is this the safest and most appropriate way to communicate with this young person at this time?
3. Is the content of the message appropriate? Have I written anything that could be misconstrued by the young person, their parents, the Youth Pastor or the Safeguarding Coordinator?
4. If I have used emoji's – are they appropriate?
5. I have not sent personal or inappropriate photos

## Appendix H: Children or Youth Meetings Taking Place in a Private Home

Wherever possible the home of a person with an enhanced DBS will be used.

- The Safeguarding Coordinator will be asked if a certain home is suitable before the youth / children's team use that home.
- Unless it is someone with a 'home-based' DBS, the home will not be used more than twice in a twelve-month period.
- Parents will be notified where the event is taking place (the address), the time of the event and who the homeowners are.
- Clear guidelines for the youth at the event will be drawn up – such as: they can only be in the lounge and kitchen of the house and use the downstairs toilet. Parents and youth will be notified of these guidelines.
- The youth team are the ones responsible for the youth at the event and will supervise the youth and the interaction of adults with the youth when those adults are not part of the youth team.
- The homeowners, when not part of the youth or children's team, will not be counted in the adult:child ratio.
- The guidelines above do not apply to a 1:1 situation between a Mentor and Mentee. In that situation, please refer to that guidance.

## Appendix I: Mentoring/Pastoring Youth in a 1:1 Scenario

In a mentoring situation it is acceptable for there to be one adult and one youth. Only approved people who have an Enhanced DBS done by Life Church Bath may mentor members of Found Youth 1:1.

The mentor and mentee must be the same sex. The meeting must take place in a public venue, such as a coffee shop. It can take place in the young person's home if the parent or legal guardian is present in the house, albeit not in the same room.

### What is mentoring?

The goal of the mentoring programme is to provide a point of connection for the young person, in addition it is hoped that the programme will improve the well-being of the young person by providing a role model that can support the child spiritually, socially and/or personally.

### The Youth Pastor

Written permission from a parent or legal guardian must be obtained before a mentoring relationship is commenced for any youth who has not reached their 18th birthday. This can be via email.

The Youth Pastor must know and keep a record of each member of Found Youth who is being mentored and by which member of the Found Youth Team.

The Youth Pastor will regularly connect with Mentors to support them and develop them in this role.

### The Mentor

Written permission from a parent or legal guardian must be obtained before a mentoring relationship is commenced for any youth who have not reached their 18th birthday. This may be done by the Youth Pastor or a member of the youth team. It is the responsibility of the Mentor to know that written permission is in place before meeting with a member of Found Youth.

Once the agreement is in place, it is hoped that the Mentor will connect with the Mentee directly and not through the parents. The youth consent form will inform the way the Mentee is contacted.

A record of the meetings must be kept by the Mentor; date, time and venue of meeting. A brief record of what happened at the meeting, and any action points must also be made. The records must be available for inspection by the Youth Pastor and the Safeguarding Coordinator at any time.

## **The Mentee**

The Mentee has the right to a degree of privacy in the relationship so that trust can develop. However, the Mentor may need to include the Youth Pastor or the Safeguarding Coordinator, or a member of the safeguarding team or perhaps the parents if the Mentee discloses something that needs escalating. The Mentor must never promise confidentiality.

## **The Parent/Guardian**

The parent or legal guardian will be given the name of the Mentor, their contact details and expected frequency and location of meetings.

The consent form will inform how their child is contacted, wherever possible this will be direct contact between the Mentor and the Mentee.

The conversations that take place between the Mentor and Mentee will not be divulged to a parent without prior agreement of the young person.



## Appendix J: Taking Photos of Children & Young People

From time to time we may wish to take photos of the children / young people and the activities they are involved in. This may be for the use in printed material, in a slide presentation or on the church website/social media platforms. Photos of groups of children will generally be used for this purpose.

If we wish to use a photo of a single child / young person, permission will be obtained from their parent/carer and from the child themselves if the child is 11 or older. No child / young person will be identifiable by means of name and/or address either in printed publications or on the web. All parents have the right to request that their child does not appear in any photo – including a group photo as indicated on registration forms.

If a young person is looked after (in foster care) or adopted, a conversation must always be had with their carers regarding the use of photographs or videos.

### Photos and Social Media

It is unacceptable for any staff or volunteers to post pictures of youth or children's events on personal social media platforms. Individual children are allowed to post photos on their own Facebook page or other social network sites and are free to tag.

Permission from parents will be sought for use of any photos of children & young people on the church's official social media platforms.

## Appendix K: Use of Zoom

- Parents will be notified of the programme for youth for the upcoming month and will be aware of when Zoom calls are taking place.
- Zoom call details will be communicated to youth (or if no personal contact details, to their parents) by email or other suitable electronic means,
- At least two Found Youth team members will be present at each Zoom meeting and will both have joined the meeting before youth are allowed entry. Both Found Youth team members will be the last to leave the meeting,
- The Found Youth team members will let people into the meeting and verify the identity of each participant.
- All participants should display their full name (and not the name of a parent, other Zoom account holder, or nickname).
- All participants are to be fully dressed.
- A register of attendees, youth and team leaders present, will be kept as for all youth meetings.
- No one is permitted to record, screenshot or digitally save the Zoom session.

## Appendix L: Transporting Children & Young People

These guidelines apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children and young people, organised by or on behalf of the church. They do not apply to private arrangements for transportation made, for example, between parties with parental responsibility.

- Only those who have gone through our recruitment procedures for workers should transport children.
- All drivers should have read the child protection policy and agree to abide by it.
- Parental consent should be given, and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the Children's or Youth Leader (as appropriate)
- The driver should hold a full driving license, have adequate insurance and the vehicle should be road worthy.
- It is reasonable to expect that the driver may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Consideration could be given to dropping off the least vulnerable child last and planning routes accordingly. Two workers in a car does not in itself guarantee protection for a child - there have been incidents where workers have acted abusively together and in this situation a child could be less protected.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk there and then arrange to meet the child / young person at a location where there are other adults around. (Remember a child / young person may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist children stay in the same groups on the out-going and return journey. This will avoid the confusion over whether a child has been transported home or at worst left behind.
- If travelling in convoy with cars and minibuses, please note that the maximum speed for a minibus is 50 mph on single carriageway roads, 60 mph on dual carriageways, and 70 mph on motorways.
- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own.
- Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- It is advisable to be aware of instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular child e.g. where there has been a disagreement or where a child / young person has a 'crush' on a driver.

- If parents transport children around e.g. to and from activities, ensure that all are made aware that such arrangements are the responsibility of the parents involved and not the church or organisation.

## **All children carried as passengers in cars are subject to the following rules:**

- All children between the ages of three and before they have reached twelve years of age, unless the child is over 135cm in height, must use the correct child restraint. (Exceptions: where a child travels in a taxi, or private hire vehicle, over a short distance in an unexpected necessity, where two child restraints are already fitted preventing a third from being fitted.)
- Children over 135cm in height or aged 12 or 13 must wear adult seat belts if fitted.
- Passengers over 14 years of age must wear adult seat belts where fitted (it is the passenger's responsibility and not the drivers for ensuring this).

## **Specific guidelines when using a minibus:**

- When using a minibus, ensure there is at least one other adult in the vehicle with consideration to the suggested adult:child ratio for the age of the children / young people being transported.
- Only minibuses with fitted seatbelts are to be used.
- Be aware of the Minibus (Condition of Fitness Equipment and Use) Regulations 1977 and Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1996
- Any motor vehicle adapted to carry more than eight passengers for hire or reward is regarded in law as a Public Service Vehicle (PSV). A small bus permit is therefore required for all minibuses used to carry between 6 and 16 passengers. All minibuses used to transport children should therefore have a small bus permit, the necessary insurance, and a driver with a valid driving license that entitles them to drive a minibus.
- The law no longer permits car drivers who passed their test after 1st January 1997 to drive minibuses without passing a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) driving test or unless they are driving under a section 19 permit. This does not apply to license holders who were over 21 years of age in 1997. Check what categories a worker is entitled to drive by examining their driving license.

## Appendix M: Record Keeping & Handling of Disclosure Information

As is well known, it can be many years before incidents of abuse come to light. As such the following policy was drawn up and implemented from September 2007.

- We will retain all documents relating to those people working with 0 – 18s, whether paid or unpaid, employees or voluntary workers, current or past members of Life Church Bath, indefinitely. This will include volunteer application forms; voluntary disclosure forms; references; all disclosure numbers and dates.
- Team Rotas will be kept indefinitely. Team leaders will be responsible for recording who served on each week, both Christian name and surname, and for noting any changes to the rota. We have recently (2024) moved all team rotas to ChurchSuite meaning that all current and future rotas will now be archived electronically via ChurchSuite.
- Registers of children / young people will be taken at each event and kept indefinitely. Registers must have the full date, including year, and the full name of children and full name of team attending
- A record of what took place at any meeting or event will be kept indefinitely.
- A record of any allegation against a worker, whether substantiated or not will be kept indefinitely.
- We will keep medical forms and permission slips relating to an activity for a minimum period of 10 years.
- Records of accidents will be kept for 3 years or until the child reaches the age of 18, whichever is the longer.
- Under GDPR regulations the Safeguarding Coordinator along with the Safeguarding Team will make assessment on when it is appropriate to dispose of historical records.

### Handling of Disclosure Information

### Storage and Access

Disclosure information will not be kept on an applicant's personal file. It will be stored separately in a secure, lockable, non-portable cabinet, with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

## Handling

In accordance with GDPR and Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. A record will be kept of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed, if other than a Recruiter for Life Church Bath / Bath Christian Trust or the Youth & Children's Leaders, as it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

## Usage

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

## Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, Disclosure information will not be kept for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, consultation will be made with thirtyone:eight , our registered/umbrella body and/or the DBS/SCRO. Advice can then be given to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual. The above conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access still apply in these circumstances.

## Disposal

Once the retention period has lapsed, Disclosure information will be suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. shredding, pulping or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). No copies of the Disclosure information will be kept, in any form. However, a record will be kept of the date of the issue of a disclosure and the unique reference number of the disclosure.