

Safeguarding Policy

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Youth (aged 11-18)

Revised: September 2020
Date for review: September 2021

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Safeguarding Policy Aims

As a church, we desire to bring glory to God by knowing Jesus and making him known.

To that end, the aims of our Safeguarding Policy are:

1. To uphold the honour of God's name
2. To keep the gospel from disrepute

We do this by:

1. Protecting the children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our care
2. Protecting the caregivers who serve in this ministry

Safeguarding is an important part of our service in the gospel and one which we take seriously, aiming for a standard of excellence as we implement this policy.

The Directors of the St Nicholas Cole Abbey Centre for Workplace Ministry Ltd ("SNCA") have adopted "Promoting a Safer Diocese: A Safeguarding Policy for the Diocese of London." (the "Diocesan Safeguarding Policy"). It can be accessed in full on the website below:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/>

The Directors of SNCA have also adopted and have due regard to the House of Bishops' "Promoting a Safer Church" safeguarding policy statement ("House of Bishops' Policy"). It can be accessed in full on the website below:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Parish%20Safeguarding%20Handbook%20March%202019.pdf>

The SNCA safeguarding policy applies the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and House of Bishops' Policy to the particular situation of SNCA and its various ministries.

There are four parts to the SNCA Safeguarding Policy:

1. The General Policy
2. The Children's Policy – for those working with children (0-11),
3. The Young People's Policy – for those working with young people (11-18),
4. The Vulnerable Adults Policy
5. The Record Keeping Policy
6. The Domestic Abuse Response Policy
7. The Safeguarding for Small Group Leaders Policy

The full SNCA policy can be found here:

<https://www.stnickschurch.org.uk/safeguarding/>

Key Safeguarding Roles

The names and contact details of individuals with responsibility for safeguarding within the various SNCA ministries are set out at the end of this document.

(1) The Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

- a. is the individual given responsibility for safeguarding within SNCA and all its various ministries;
- b. will assist and advise if a Safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed;
- c. may delegate some of their responsibilities to ministry leaders but will assist and advise ministry leaders if a safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed;
- d. will also be included in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children where their DBS check is blemished, or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme.

(2) The Ministry Leaders

are responsible for safeguarding in their respective ministry areas. This includes:

- a. ensuring all caregivers within their area are recruited in accordance with this safeguarding policy and,
- b. acting as safeguarding officers for any disclosures of abuse within the relevant ministry.

(3) The Children's Champion

is tasked with ensuring that the needs of the children and young people in the church are recognised and addressed.

(4) The Vulnerable Adults Champion

is tasked with ensuring that the needs of vulnerable adults attending any of our meetings are recognised and addressed.

(5) Caregiver

refers to anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults. All caregivers share a particular responsibility for:

- a. loving the person as Christ loves them
- b. setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- c. praying for those in their care and pointing them to God's word

Every applicant who wishes to serve in any ministry area involving children or young people must complete a screening process prior to serving.

IMPORTANT:

- All caregivers must read **Section A** of this policy
- They must then read any additional information from **Section B** that is relevant to the area of ministry they are serving in
- A list of key **Contact Details** can be found on the last two pages of this policy

If an existing caregiver moves to serve in a different ministry area they must read the relevant information for the new area before commencing their role.

All caregivers are encouraged to complete the online Diocesan safeguarding training. We are working towards implementing regular safeguarding training more widely.

SECTION A

Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Child Abuse

Child abuse is serious. All caregivers need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

1. Definitions

Who is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

What is abuse?

*Working together to safeguard children*¹ states that 'somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or 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.' It recognises four areas of potential abuse for children: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Abuse can be described under any one of these four categories or a combination of categories, and can be carried out by an adult or another child.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying).

Sexual abuse: involvement of children or adolescents, in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect: including failure to meet the basic essential needs of a child, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to provide adequate supervision and / or access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Although not a formal category of abuse, it is important to be mindful of the danger of spiritual abuse.

Spiritual abuse: is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to 'force' religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God's name.

¹ Published by HM Government, 2013, quoted in *Policy for safeguarding in the Diocese of London*, 2015.

Bullying and Cyber Bullying: Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else – such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying that happens online, using social networks, games and mobile phones, is often called cyberbullying. A child can feel like there is no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

2. Recognising signs of abuse

Warning signs: these are not necessarily proof of abuse, but they should signal a warning.

Physical abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Bruises, black eyes, broken bones Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly untreated or inadequately treated injuries Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks Cigarette burns, human bites, scalds and burns	Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed Having trouble sleeping Behaving aggressively or being disruptive Showing fear of certain adults Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem Using drugs or alcohol

Emotional abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Speech disorders Delayed physical development Substance abuse Ulcers, severe allergies	Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting) antisocial, disruptive Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) Passive and aggressive – behavioural extremes Delinquent behaviour (especially adolescents) Developmentally delayed

Sexual abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas Genital discharge or urinary tract infections Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting Sexually transmitted infections	A marked change in the child’s general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can’t be explained medically A young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so their school work is affected They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age

	The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, “secret” friendship with an adult or young person
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Neglect	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Abandonment	Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep during activities
Unattended medical needs	Steals food, begs from classmates
Consistent lack of supervision	Reports that there is no carer at home
Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene	Frequently absent or late
Lice, distended stomach, emaciated	Self-destructive
Inadequate nutrition	School dropout (adolescents)
	Extreme loneliness and need for affection

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of abuse.

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be seriously considered. They should make us stop and think - not jump to conclusions inappropriately.

3. Guidelines for when a child tells us they have been abused

It is not easy to give precise guidance but the following may be of help:

General points

- (1) Above all else, listen, listen, and listen!
- (2) Keep calm, and show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
- (3) Let them know you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality
- (4) Be aware the child may have been threatened
- (5) Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen
- (6) Avoid leading the child and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said - you might put something into their mind that was not there. If the case were to end up in court, the case could be thrown out if it is thought that the child had been led

Helpful things you might say or convey

- (1) I am glad you have told me
- (2) It's not your fault
- (3) I will help you

Concluding / Next Steps

- (1) Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that you believe them
- (2) Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent the child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)

- (3) Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what the child said and when they said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times, including when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto the relevant ministry leader or CSO.

4. Responding to concerns of abuse

If you suspect or witness abuse, or someone discloses information about a safeguarding concern or allegation:

- (1) If a child is in immediate danger or emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctors of any suspicions you may have.
- (2) You must contact the ministry leader or CSO immediately (for email addresses see the back of this document). If the allegation is against your ministry leader, contact the CSO.
- (3) At all stages in the reporting process, you retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact the CSO (for contact numbers see the back of this document).
- (4) Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate concerns of abuse themselves. Our responsibility is (in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST)) to refer concerns to statutory authorities who will do the investigating required.
- (5) Apart from telling your ministry leader or CSO, this information must be treated as confidential. Do not inform/confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances.
- (6) You should also consider your own feelings and ask your ministry leader for pastoral support if needed.

Even if you may feel the child's story is unlikely, this must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that they have been abused by a younger person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or a close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

5. Procedures for responding to abuse – outcomes

When a safeguarding concern is reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) by a ministry leader or CSO:

- (1) If the DSO advises further action, the ministry leader or CSO must act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given.
- (2) If the DSO advises no further action required, this is not the end of the process. The Church Safeguarding Officer or the relevant ministry leader must arrange a further meeting to discuss whether alternative action should be taken or whether to accept that no further action is required.
- (3) This meeting should include the CSO and the ministry leader, and they can involve others as necessary.

Guidelines for responding to a disclosure of historic abuse

In the course of their work ministers and those offering pastoral support may hear disclosure from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.

The Church is required to take advice from the Diocese and may need to report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the Police.

When someone tells you they have been abused, or have committed abuse, whether recently or many years ago:

General points:

- (1) Above all else, listen
- (2) Keep calm, and show understanding/acceptance of what is said, however unlikely it seems. Reassure the individual that they were right to tell you
- (3) Never push for information. Avoid leading questions and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- (4) Let the individual know what you are going to do next and that you will keep them informed. Let them know that you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality

Action you must then take:

- (1) You must contact your Ministry Area Leader and tell them what you know (you do not need to disclose any names at this stage unless told otherwise). If the allegation is against your Ministry Area Leader, contact the Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)
- (2) You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact either your Ministry Area Leader or the CSO
- (3) Apart from telling your Ministry Area Leader/CSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with co-leaders, SLOB leaders or other church members
- (4) Under no circumstances should you investigate concerns of abuse yourself
- (5) The contact details for your Ministry Area Leader and the CSO can be found on the back page of this document
- (6) Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto your Ministry Area Leader
- (7) Consider your own feelings and ask your Ministry Area Leader for pastoral support if needed, and consider with your Ministry Area Leader what pastoral support is needed for the individual involved.

SECTION B

Supplementary Information for Specific Ministry Areas

The youth ministry at St Nick's consists of regular meetings on Sundays for those aged 11 to 18. Regular meetings typically run during school term dates. There are also additional occasional formal and informal events throughout the year, such as a weekend away and socials. 'Young people' in this document refers to all those aged 11 to 17 on September 1st of the current academic year.

(1) Sunday Youth Group

(a) Safeguarding young people as they arrive and depart

The SNCA Safeguarding policy is applied during the time period a young person is in the care of the leaders of the advertised activity. This will include formal times of ministry (e.g. Sundays, weekends away and organised social events) and informal ministry (e.g. informal social activities).

Transition of young people from parents/guardians to caregivers

It is the responsibility of parents to arrange safe travel to and from St Nick's. Parents, if unaware, should be told when and where the group happens. The youth start in the service but gather with their caregivers during the first song and are taken upstairs. This marks the official start of the caregiver's responsibilities.

After the first group time, the leaders bring the youth down into the main congregation to listen to the sermon and then take the young people back upstairs during the final song for the second group time which runs until 12.20pm.

At 12.20pm the caregivers will take all young people downstairs and hand them over to a parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian is unknown to the caregiver then another known adult (preferably a DBS screened leader) must vouch for them being the parent/guardian of the child. This marks the official end to the caregivers' responsibility for the child.

Occasionally, there may be no formal youth group due to insufficient numbers of young people or leaders. On these days, the youth remain in the care of their parents/guardians throughout the service.

Registering

A register must be kept of all young people and leaders present at each youth ministry group. Completed registers will be kept secure for an indefinite period. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come about events happening now the church will be able to find out who was present on a given date.

A child registration form should be filed for each young person in a youth group. These forms should be filled out by a parent/guardian and available in registration folders for the leaders to

consult. Leaders should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the young people in their specific group.

(b) Safeguarding young people whilst they are in our care

Caregiver Ratios

Two caregiver rule: Two caregivers must be present in each room at all times.

It is not necessary for the two caregivers to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, young people should not be left unattended in a room. At other times with some planning this scenario need not occur.

In addition to always having two caregivers present, we endorse the Church of England **minimum** requirements which are:

Age of children	Number of Adults	Number of Children
8+	1	For the first 8 children
	+1	For every further 12

Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested but the individual group may have fewer adults. Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested but the individual group may have fewer adults.

If not enough caregivers turn up on the day, the caregivers must either:

- (1) Recruit another DBS-screened individual to help
- (2) Meet in the same venue as other screened caregivers, in full view of those caregivers

For all groups and activities: -

1. Undertake a health and safety risk assessment.
2. A registration form must be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities which should include up to- date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and any special needs.
3. An attendance register must be kept and be available at all group meetings.
4. A First Aid kit must be available on any premises that are used by young people.
5. An accident and incident logbook must be available, and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Any significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between the young people).
6. There should be access to a telephone, if possible.
7. In premises where young people's groups meet, the Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers should be displayed
8. Parents must sign a consent form before young people are transported in a private car, and before any photography or images are taken

In addition, when taking young people offsite:

1. The church leadership must be informed and agree to the activity.

2. Details of the activity and any itinerary must be given in advance to parent/s and consent forms received in advance of the activity taking place.
3. Details of the activity and a list of contacts must be left with someone in the church.
4. Details of the activity and arrangements must be given to the incumbent and/or CSO.
5. A risk assessment must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is covered by PCC insurance.
6. A leader must be designated to take responsibility for First Aid.

Discipline

All caregivers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing young people towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating them from the group for a brief time (particularly if the behaviour is endangering or upsetting other young people).

Caregivers should never use any form of physical punishment. If a young person becomes uncontrollable and their behaviour is a danger either to themselves or those around them, appropriate and proportional physical restraint may be used. Caregivers should never yell at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

Acceptable touch

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by young people and adults. Some physical contact with young people, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- (1) Always ask permission.
- (2) Be mindful of your body position.
- (3) Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- (4) Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church helper.
- (5) Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
- (6) Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).

In addition:

- (1) You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
- (2) You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
- (3) You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- (4) You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.

(5) You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I ever hug a young person?

Yes you may if they are clearly distressed - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Occasionally a young person will initiate a hug. Bear in mind your normal character – if you rarely hug anyone you should probably not ever hug a young person in your care. If hugging is one way you interact with all kinds of people you might need to rein yourself in a bit but not necessarily completely. Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's, and 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.

Can I play rough and tumble games with young people?

Yes you may – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Bear in mind that the chummier you are with young people in this way the less likely you are to have any authority in their eyes. Remember too that they are not as strong as you. These sort of games should always be kept fun and should be appropriate for the situation. Leaders should take the initiative to end these sort of games if they are becoming inappropriate. Leaders should not initiate, encourage or participate in cross-gender rough and tumble, whether between two young people or between a leader and a young person.

Can I ever physically restrain a young person?

Yes. If a young person is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should be required rarely.

If there are only two caregivers present, must one of them be female?

No.

What should I do if there are only 2 caregivers in a room with young people and the other one has to leave in an emergency?

In an emergency setting the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, young people should not be left unattended in a room. At other times with some planning this scenario need not occur.

Can I take a picture of a child in my care?

No. Care givers must never take any pictures of young people they are caring for unless they have received explicit permission from the child's parents / guardians. For the avoidance of doubt, care givers must also never post any pictures of the children in their care on social media platforms including but not limited to Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and or Snapchat.

Risk management / Illness / Accidents

Caregivers should consider the health and safety of all young people and caregivers when organising activities or planning games. Young people with infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the youth groups.

If a young person appears ill whilst in the church's care, caregivers will use their discretion to determine whether the young person should be isolated from other young people by a caregiver, (who will remain with them) and whether parents/guardians should be contacted to collect their child.

A basic first aid kit must be readily available at all times. All caregivers should be familiar with its location. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called first and the parents will be located and informed immediately. Caregivers will report all injuries, whether major or minor to the Children's Coordinator.

Caregivers should be familiar with evacuation procedures, including where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound.

(c) Safeguarding young people with special education needs and disabilities

Safeguards for young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are essentially the same as for all young people. Young people with SEND have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, and to be protected from harm as other young people.

However, research suggests that young people with SEND may be generally more vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and / or neglect than other young people. Young people with SEND can be abused and neglected in ways that other young people cannot, and the early indicators suggestive of abuse and neglect can be more complicated. They face an increased risk of abuse and neglect, including bullying, for a variety of reasons including:

- (1) Greater dependency on parents/ carers for practical assistance in their day to day lives, such as feeding or personal care;
- (2) Impaired capacity to recognise, resist or avoid abuse, or feeling too scared to report abuse/ bullying;
- (3) Speech, language and communication needs/ barriers which can make it more difficult to tell other adults what is happening and get them to understand;
- (4) Increased likelihood of social isolation, with fewer outside contacts than non-disabled children, resulting in less access to someone they trust to disclose abuse to;
- (5) An embedded cultural/ societal assumption that abuse and neglect does not happen to disabled children, leading to a lack of vigilance, spotting of the signs of abuse and reporting of concerns;
- (6) Empathy on the part of professionals/ practitioners with parents/ carers, who are felt to be under considerable stress, leading to certain behaviour/ treatment being accepted by other adults rather than concerns being raised;
- (7) Behavioural/ physical indicators, such as (self-)injury or withdrawal, can be interpreted as part of the child's disability or condition rather than as the result of abuse/ neglect (or vice versa), and therefore abuse/ neglect can be missed and go unreported;
- (8) Being perceived as physically or behaviourally different from others, and therefore more likely to be the victim of bullying or intimidation.

Where the participants in a group or activity at SNCA includes a young person with SEND, caregivers must be especially vigilant to the potential increased risk of abuse and neglect, and the additional action that will be needed to ensure this policy and procedure is enacted for that young person as it would be for any other young person.

Caregivers must be additionally aware of the following possible indicators of abuse or neglect for a young person with SEND:

- (1) A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on a non-disabled child, such as the shin, might be of concern on a nonmobile young person;
- (2) Malnourishment, potentially due to not getting enough help with feeding;
- (3) Force feeding;
- (4) Unjustified or excessive use of restraint;
- (5) Rough handling or extreme approach to behaviour modification (e.g. withholding of liquid, food, medication, clothing);
- (6) Poor grasp of a child's means of communication;
- (7) Ill-fitting equipment, e.g. calipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting;
- (8) Misappropriation of a child's finances;
- (9) Invasive procedures that are unnecessary or carried out against the child's will;
- (10) Misuse of medication, or deliberate failure to follow medication or therapeutic programmes;
- (11) Age or culturally inappropriate care and support.

Even subtle changes in behaviour may be a young person communicating that something is wrong and/ or that they are being abused. It is vital caregivers for a young person with SEND are aware of changing patterns of behaviour and potential causes. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a young person with SEND, caregivers should act upon them in accordance with this policy as they would for any other young person.

Where a young person with SEND has communication needs, special attention should be paid to gaining a clear understanding of the child's perception of events, wishes and feelings. This may require the involvement of children's social care or speech and language clinicians for non-verbal young person.

(d) Safeguarding guidance on communicating electronically with young people

Leaders should avoid *unnecessarily* communicating on a one to one basis with young people via text message; email; instant messaging and through social network sites.

Where communication does occur by the above methods the following steps should be taken:

1. The content of any messages should be limited to youth ministry related matters;
2. If possible, messages should be sent to a group and not an individual young person, for example sending a copy to the youth ministry leader or the young person's parent/guardian
3. Apart from exceptional circumstances, no communication should occur between 10pm and 8am.
4. Use clear unambiguous language to reduce the chance of being misinterpreted.

General Guidance

Do:

1. The CSO/Ministry Leader should be able to access and review any conversations with children if needed, and to pass on to parents if applicable. Children should be made aware that any communication can be shared as such. Save any messages and threads through social

networking sites, so that you can provide evidence to the CSO/ Ministry Leader of your exchange when required.

2. Have your eyes open and be vigilant.
3. Maintain the upmost integrity – honesty, transparency, consistency and accountability are key. Treat online communication with children as you would communication that is face to face. Always maintain the same level of confidentiality.
4. Report any safeguarding concerns that arise on social media to the CSO/ Ministry Leader.
5. Always assume that everything you write is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; and that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church. Always think before you post.
6. Draw clear boundaries around your social media usage associated with your private life and your use of different social media for public ministry. Keep church accounts and profiles separate from your personal social media accounts e.g. only use a Facebook page, Twitter or blogs for public ministry, while keeping a separate Facebook profile for private life.
7. Always ask parents/carers for consent to:
 - a. Use and store photographs of children from activities or events in official church publications, or on the church's social media, website and displays.
 - b. Use telephone, text message, email and other messaging services to communicate with young people.
 - c. Allow young people to connect to the church's social media pages.
8. Avoid one-to-one communication with a child unless parental approval has been granted - but it should in any event be limited to avoid dependency or intensity.
9. Use clear and unambiguous language in all communications and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.
10. Save and download to hard copy any inappropriate material received through social networking sites or other electronic means and show immediately to the CSO/ Ministry Leader.
11. Use passwords and log off promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.

Do not:

1. Use a personal Facebook or any other social media account in your work with children.
2. Add children as friends on your personal accounts.
3. Facebook stalk (i.e. dig through people's Facebook pages to find out about them).
4. Say anything on social media that you would not be happy saying in a public meeting, to someone's face, writing in a local newspaper or on headed notepaper.
5. Comment on photos or posts, or share content, unless appropriate to your church role.
6. Use visual media (e.g. Skype, Facetime, Zoom) for one-to-one conversations with children – use only in group settings.

In particular, do not allow content to contain or share links to other sites that contain:

7. Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements;
8. breaches of copyright and data protection;
9. material of an illegal nature;
10. offensive sexual or abusive references;
11. inappropriate language; or
12. anything which may be harmful to a child or which may bring the church and gospel into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

Apart from in exceptional circumstances, no communication with a child should occur between 10pm and 8am.

Video Conferencing / Virtual & Electronic Meetings

Software/ Platforms

1. Avoid the use of social media tools which share contact details with all users for example, Skype / Facetime / WhatsApp. They also carry with them the risk that leaders may inadvertently connect young people up with other people or themselves.
2. Instead use a video conferencing platform such as Zoom: <https://zoom.us/>. This has a free to use version which will give you a 40 minute chat. Alternatively, there is a paid account allows you to host longer sessions. Users only need to have an email address for account setup.
3. The use of Zoom will be beyond the normal running of the group and therefore requires explicit permission before use in the following ways:
 - a. Parents must give consent and be informed of what is being done, when, and roughly what will be covered during sessions. Replies from the parents must be sought as a form of consent.
 - b. The email addresses of parents/carers and/or a designated WhatsApp group including parents/carers and youth leaders can be used to send a meeting invitation. This ensures parents/carers can be aware of what is happening and can set up the young people to access the session appropriately with any oversight if they wish.

Joining as a Leader & Young Person

1. 'Normal' youth group rules will apply, including with regards to leaders and safeguarding process – i.e. there will be at least 2 safely recruited youth leaders present who would normally have 'real time' contact with this group. At least 2 leaders must ensure that they are both live and connected before young people arrive and until all young people leave or the call ends.
2. If new youth members wish to join the group, they should have standard consent forms filled in as well. This will also enable them to join in physical meetings once the pandemic is over.
3. If new leaders are to be recruited to facilitate online meetings, then the usual safer recruitment process must be followed (including DBS checks and online safeguarding training) before they can participate.

Conduct During Meetings

1. Codes of conduct – appropriate behaviour for leaders should be followed as would be expected in the usual youth group setting. Discussions will take place with leaders in relation to this and appropriate guidance circulated via email.
2. As always, leaders should be inclusive. Consideration will be given to whether there are any young people in the group who would struggle to participate in this way and what extra

support could be put in place for them. Leaders should be made aware of and sensitive to technical difficulties.

3. Numerous technical solutions will be adopted to increase online safety. To avoid hackers 'zoom bombing' and to limit their impact should this occur, the host will change their zoom settings by
 - a. disabling file transfers to prevent digital virus sharing,
 - b. enabling the host to eject any attendee,
 - c. changing screen sharing so that only the host can share,
 - d. removing the ability for individual participants to have private chats, and
 - e. disabling the ability for anyone to make a local recording of the meeting.

(2) Weekends Away

If any weekend away advertises childcare, or if provision is made for volunteers to help in addition to parents or designated guardians, then the childcare for that weekend comes under our Safeguarding Policy and must be run accordingly, following the same procedures as our Sunday Youth Group. All caregivers must be screened as outlined in the main policy, and the same regulations concerning ratios, registration, discipline, food and accidents must be followed as in the Sunday Youth Group, with the following alterations/additions:

Registering

If parents will not be present on a weekend away, leaders should obtain written consent from parents for each young person attending the weekend. Along with this consent leaders need to obtain:

1. Emergency contact details for parents
2. Relevant medical information
3. Any further consent where required by an external organisation providing activities.

For weekends where parents are also present, caregivers are not responsible for any children (i.e. under 18s) outside the advertised times of the children's or youth programmes. In all such times children are the responsibility of their parents or a designated guardian.

Driving

Caregivers must not drive young people except where they have been authorized to do so.

In such cases, the following apply: any leader driving with young people in their car, to, from or at the venue should take special care. Leaders should obey speed limits and not drive in convoys.

There should always be more than one leader or more than one young person in the car. If this is not possible the leader should ask the young person to sit on the back seat.

General Principles

1. Leaders should never be alone in a room with a young person
2. Leaders should not go into rooms of young people of the opposite gender except in an emergency situation
3. Leaders should not sleep in the same rooms as young people
4. Leaders should familiarise themselves with the weekend away site so they are aware of where fire exits are located. Leaders should inform the young people of where fire exits are located and where the assembly point is should the fire alarm sound.

5. Leaders should consider the health and safety of all young people and leaders when organising activities or planning games.

(3) Official Youth Trips and Socials

1. Leaders should set an example in following basic road safety when taking young people out on trips.
2. For driving guidelines please see the relevant section under weekends away.
3. Activities should be appropriate. In particular leaders should consider the age-appropriateness of films that are shown.
4. Leaders should give clear instructions about meeting and pick-up points and times.

(4) Informal Meetings/ Mentoring /Personal Work

Personal work is not a formal part of the weekly meetings. However, there may be appropriate opportunities to study the Bible during informal meetings. When meeting outside of regular fixed activities leaders should typically seek to meet with more than one individual.

These informal meetings may be arranged with the following conditions:

1. There is consent from the young person's parent or guardian
2. The children's co-ordinator has been consulted on the appropriateness of meeting and has been informed that meeting(s) will happen
3. Whenever possible meetings should be pre-arranged and not happen 'on demand'
4. A record should be kept of when and where meetings have taken place (e.g. in a diary)
5. If possible, meetings should take place within the parent or guardian's home in a room with an open door when a parent or guardian is present.
6. If this is not possible meetings should take place in a public place, such as a coffee shop.
7. One to one meetings should never take place in a leader's home without another DBS screened leader in sight.

(5) Other Events/Activities

From time to time there may be extra events where young people may be present.

(1) Midweek Small Groups

Youth are welcome to the small group evenings at the discretion of the small group evening leader, but remain in the care of their parents/guardians throughout.

(2) Occasional Seminars/Training days

(For example Christianity Explored, Evangelism Training, Marriage/Parenting Days)

Childcare may be provided if required. All caregivers must be screened in accordance with the SNCA Safeguarding Policy. Caregiver ratios must be maintained.

A parent/guardian must drop off and collect their children at the pre-arranged venue. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

(3) Babysitting

Babysitting is an area in which we are unable to provide formal provision. Families can make informal arrangements within the congregation and must take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of the volunteer.

(4) Informal gatherings

Occasionally other social meetings may be engaged on a friendship basis outside normal youth structures, where leaders are not acting in a capacity as caregiver. Whilst not specifically covered by this supplement and the SNCA safeguarding policy, the above guidelines should be adhered to where possible.

(5) External Events

Some children may attend events run by St Helen Bishopsgate Church (e.g. City Summer School, trips to Sorted Nano) which are covered by St Helen's Church Safeguarding policy.

Contact Names and Details

Safeguarding Committee

Tricia Owusu-Sekyere (Chair)
Church Safeguarding Officer
safeguarding@snca.co.uk

Mikey Williams
Assistant Minister; Children's Co-ordinator; Children and Vulnerable Adults Champion
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SNCA Staff

Chris Fishlock
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Suzie Normanton
Church Manager
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Tom Wright
Assistant Minister (Ministry Leader for London Bridge Talks)
tom.wright@snca.co.uk

National Contacts

Thirtyone:Eight
Helpline: 0303 003 11 11
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

City of London Corporation Children and Families Team
020 7332 3621 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)
020 8356 2710 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

City of London Social Care Services
020 7332 1224 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)
020 8356 2300 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

Child Line

NSPCC

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR
Tel. 0800 1111
(full number is just these 8 digits)

Child Protection Helpline,
0808 800 5000

Family Lives (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222
Domestic Violence Helpline (for females) 0808 2000 247
Mankind (for males) 01823 334244

Further resources

‘Protecting all God’s children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England’, 2010

‘Policy for Safeguarding in the Diocese of London’, 2015

‘The Church of England, House of Bishops, Parish safeguarding handbook’ – promoting a safer church, October 2018

‘The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016’ (Chapter 14)

London Multi Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures 2015

www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding