

# Safeguarding Policy

## Our Policy

The church recognises its responsibilities in safeguarding all children, young people and adults at risk, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability.

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all associated with the church and will pray for them regularly. In pursuit of this, we commit ourselves to this policy and to the development of sound procedures to ensure we implement our policy well.

## Our details

Name:	Blenheim Free Church
Address:	Victor Close Blenheim Road Maidenhead Berkshire, SL6 5HS
Telephone:	01628 776873
Email:	enquiries@blenheimfreechurch.org.uk
Senior leader:	Peter Cranch peter@blenheimfreechurch.org.uk
Safeguarding coordinator:	Maureen Spackman
Coordinator contact:	phone: [Redacted for web]
Deputy coordinator:	Lizzy Campbell Phone: [Redacted for web]
Affiliations:	Member of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (www.fiec.org) Reading Affinity
Qualified First Aider:	Peter Cranch
Insurance details:	Public liability insurance is held with Congregational
<b>Key contacts</b>	
THIRTYONE:EIGHT:	Churches safeguarding helpline: 0303 003 1111
Social Services:	01628 683150 (8:45 am to 5:00 pm) Emergency Duty Team: 01344 786543
Police:	Emergency: 999 or 112 Non-emergency: 101

## **Policy contents and related documents**

Page 1	Key contact details
Page 3	Our commitment Safer recruitment
Page 4	Safeguarding training Management of workers Safeguarding awareness Pastoral care Risk assessments Supervision ratios
Page 5	Parental consent Relatives and carers First aid and Food hygiene Transport Photographic and video images Electronic communications and social media Recognition and response to allegations and suspicions of abuse
Page 6	Review and implementation
Appendix 1	Leadership safeguarding statement
Appendix 2	Guidelines for the use of electronic communications including use of social media
Appendix 3	Working with adults at risk
Appendix 4	Working with alleged or known offenders
Appendix 5	Definitions of abuse

## **Our commitment**

- As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults.
- We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.
- We believe that all people are made in the image of God and have intrinsic dignity and we have a duty to care and protect all people irrespective of age gender, ethnicity and disability.
- We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.
- We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”
- As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance.
- We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

## **The Leadership undertakes to:**

- Follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all our workers and will regularly review the safeguarding policy and procedures against changes in legislation and best practice guidelines.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.

## **Safer recruitment**

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- Suitable training is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation’s safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- Should an applicant not be appointed the interviewer will give honest feedback to the applicant on both the interview and references that have been taken up. The church leadership will support the unsuccessful applicant and direct their abilities to other areas of church life.

## **Safeguarding training**

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

## **Management of Workers**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with the safeguarding policy towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

## **Safeguarding awareness**

The leadership will raise awareness of safeguarding issues with church members. It will promote safeguarding through recruitment and training of workers.

## **Pastoral care**

Where abuse or alleged abuse has occurred the Leadership will offer support and pastoral care to the person who is the subject of the abuse. Where appropriate they will be referred to statutory or voluntary agencies.

Should an allegation of abuse arise then pastoral care will be offered to the suspected offender without compromising the children, parents or carers involved.

When a known offender is known to be present or someone known to be a risk to children or vulnerable people they will be offered pastoral support and boundaries will be set that they will be required to keep.

## **Practical Guidelines**

### **Risk assessments.**

Caring for children and vulnerable adults involves taking responsibility for their well-being at all times, being prepared for unforeseen eventualities and anticipating situations where they could be at harm. Then taking steps to minimise these risks. When special activities take place and a potential risk is identified then a risk assessment will be carried out.

### **Supervision ratios**

The ratio of adults to those under 18 years will vary according to age and activity. As a guide the following ratios are recommended:

- 0 – 2 years 1 adult to 3 children
- 2 – 3 years 1 adult to 4 children
- 3+ years 1 adult to 8 children

Workers/helpers who are under 18 are not included in these ratios. No individual under 18 should be left in sole charge of children of any age.

If there is only 1 child in a Sunday School class then a 1 to 1 child to teacher ratio must be avoided.

A register of all children and workers/helpers will be kept of all children's activities.

## **Parental consent**

Written parental consent is to be obtained for any person under 18 years to attend certain activities. If children turn up unexpectedly to a church event without parental consent then the parent or carer should be contacted to ascertain whether they know where they are and are happy for them to stay. For further visits a parental consent form is required.

## **Relatives & carers**

A parent or carer who is not a church member may be present at children's activities (e.g. Sunday School) as an observer. For some children it may be appropriate for the parent or carer to stay for an extended period to help the child settle in. Vulnerable adults attending church activities may have a carer in attendance.

## **First Aid & Food Hygiene**

The church premises are equipped with a first aid kit. A qualified first aider will be present at most church activities. A record of all injuries should be entered in the First Aid record book. If someone is in need of urgent medical attention the emergency services must be contacted immediately and parents/carers should be contacted as soon as possible.

Only people trained in food hygiene should be involved in preparing food at the church.

## **Transport**

Drivers transporting elderly people or children must have a full driving licence and valid insurance. They must ensure that all passengers wear seat belts. Parental consent must be obtained before transporting children and a member of the Leadership informed

## **Photographic and video images**

Permission must be obtained before taking a photograph or video of children or adults at risk including group photos. Photographs and video recordings may be taken for the purpose of assisting the activity (craft activities, drama, etc.) and should be deleted when the purpose for which they were taken is finished. For children parental consent is required. Consent must be obtained for images used on publically available notice boards, advertising, websites and social media.

## **Electronic communications and social media**

Electronic communications and social media are a positive way of communicating with people. All church members are to take responsibility for the safe use of emails and social media. Avoid all abusive, mocking and banter. No person under 18 years should be contacted individually by email or social media.

For communications about personal struggles, conflicts, relationship problems, questions about faith send a courteous reply and arrange for a meeting. If the communication suggests abuse or neglect this should be reported and investigated.

## **Recognising and responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse**

When someone discloses they have been or are in fear of being abused or a helper suspects that abuse may have taken place or there is a risk that it will take place then the helper should carefully listen and be prepared to take appropriate action. In addition the helper should emphasise that disclosing the information is the right thing to do, that information given will be taken seriously, and the person disclosing the information is not at fault for doing so. No promise should be made to keep the information secret and the information may need to be shared with others. Write down what has been said as soon as possible. The Safeguarding Coordinator should be informed and where necessary advice from THIRTYONE:EIGHT obtained. Where appropriate go directly to Social Care Services or the police.

Suspicious and allegations of abuse must be passed on to the Safeguarding Coordinator who will collect all the available information and may refer the matter to the statutory authorities. Parents and carers should not be informed unless the statutory authorities advise otherwise. Seek medical help if required and inform doctor of any suspicions. It may be necessary to inform the insurers.

Should the allegation of abuse be made against a worker or helper they should be suspended until the matter has been investigated. The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care and support to the subject of abuse when an allegation of abuse has been made.

A written record will be made and kept in a secure location.

Suspicious should not be discussed with anyone other than the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Information in the possession of the Leadership will only be shared on a need to know basis.

### **Review and implementation**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed every 3 years.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of Blenheim Free Church, Maidenhead

## Appendix 1

### LEADERSHIP SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

- The Leadership recognises the importance of Blenheim Free Church's ministry to children, young people, and adults with care and support needs and the responsibility of everyone to protect those entrusted to our care.
- Blenheim Free Church is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people, and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being. Specifically:
- We recognise that everyone has the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that everyone has a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that is discovered or suspected.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every person should be valued, safe and content. We want to make sure that children, young people, and adults we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm or neglect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of all individuals and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe that every person should enjoy and have appropriate access to every aspect of the life of the Church unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children, young people, and adults with care and support needs.

#### **We are committed to:**

- Following the requirements of UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children, young people, and adults with care and support needs, and good practice recommendations.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers / helpers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Supporting the Safeguarding Coordinator in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children or adults.
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake work with children, young people and adults with care and support needs.
- Supporting those at the Church affected by abuse.

#### **We recognise:**

- Children's Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.
- Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for making enquiries into all allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect of an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.

## **Appendix 2**

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION INCLUDING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.**

Blenheim Free Church recognises that social media may be a positive method of communication with all types of people when used as a medium for good witness, encouragement and promotion of events. The Church expects any workers involved in church ministry to take responsibility and to be accountable for their use of electronic communication including social media, especially in regard to communication with young people or adults with care and support needs.

#### **General Communication**

Ensure that general communication about the activities of a group is accessible to everyone we are seeking to communicate with.

Generally, use electronic communication for passing information or simple non-emotional communication.

Where possible try to communicate with individuals in a group e.g. WhatsApp group so that communication is open and there is accountability between members of the group.

Avoid communication of a 'mocking' or 'banter' nature that could be misconstrued.

Avoid in communications late in the evening, or early in the morning.

Avoid giving any young person or adult focused attention online for a prolonged period of time. (e.g. limit the number of comments or messages in any period).

#### **Personal / Pastoral support**

If a young person or adult uses electronic communication at a deeper relational level (e.g. talking about personal struggles, conflicts with others, disclosures, questions about faith, issues with relationships) then send a courteous reply saying that it would be better to either arrange to meet in a public environment or suggest a joint meeting with another worker or leader from the church.

If a disclosure is made that suggests that there may have been abuse or neglect, this should always be reported and responded to in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.

Never use electronic communication for words of correction or rebuke.

#### **Data Protection**

All pictures or video footage taken during any Church activity should either be shared in a public domain or deleted.

Only share images of identifiable individuals on social media where you have consent to do so.

Do not store footage or images unless you have consented to do so for a specific purpose in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and Good Practice Guide.

Only share images on social media of groups of young people and do not identify or 'tag' them.

#### **Accountability**

All workers should realise that their social media platforms may be accessed by young people, family members or other people who may have an interest in the activities of the Church.

All content on a worker's social media should be worthy of a good Christian witness. If images, comments or other content is inappropriate, or can be easily interpreted wrongly then it is the responsibility of the worker to remove it.

Workers should keep each other accountable by identifying any areas of concern on each other's social media pages.



## **Appendix 3**

### **WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK**

#### **Premises**

The church building will be made as accessible as possible to all people. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating will be addressed wherever possible, and where necessary, aids and adaptations put in place.

#### **Language**

Every effort will be taken to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility. We will be mindful of the language used within worship and the language used to describe people (such as derogatory words focusing on aspects of someone's disability, race or sexuality rather than the person themselves).

#### **Worship**

In all worship services, we will consider the varied requirements of our congregation and try to be as inclusive as possible, for example:

- Providing some copies of large print type for all printed materials
- Speakers always facing the congregation and not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading
- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly

## Appendix 4

### WORKING WITH ALLEGED OR KNOWN OFFENDERS

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children or adults at risk, or a serious allegation has been made, the church leadership team will monitor the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its commitment to protect vulnerable groups, will set boundaries for that person which they shall be required to keep. These will be set out in what is known as a Safeguarding Contract.

When it is known that a person who has been convicted of abusing children, young people or adults is attending our church, it is important that their behaviour within the church community is properly managed and that a contract is put in place. There are also times when it will be appropriate to take such measures with a person who has faced allegations of abuse, but hasn't been convicted.

Anyone with a conviction of violence will not be permitted to work with children or have unsupervised access to any child.

In determining the details of the contract:

- The Safeguarding Coordinator will inform and take advice from THIRTYONE:EIGHT
- There will be a discussion about who should be informed about the nature of the offence and the details of the contract.
- The rights of the offender to re-build their life without people knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against the need to protect children, young people and adults at risk.
- The Safeguarding Coordinator should determine whether the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register. If so, the safeguarding coordinator should make contact with the offender's specialist probation officer (SPO) who will inform the church of any relevant information or restrictions that they should be aware of.

An open discussion will be held with the person concerned in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract will be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour. The person will be required to sign the contract and it will be monitored and enforced. If the contract is broken certain sanctions will be discussed and considered with THIRTYONE:EIGHT

## APPENDIX 5

### DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

#### Understanding, Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk 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 a child or children. There are many different ways in which people suffer abuse. The list below is, sadly, not exhaustive.

Type of Abuse	Child	Adult at Risk
<i>Physical</i>	Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.	To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering to an adult at risk.
<i>Emotional</i>	The persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.	The use of threats, fear or power gained by another adult's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological distress. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.
<i>Sexual</i>	Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.	Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour.  No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.
<i>Neglect</i>	Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.	A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs are not met. Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.
Type of Abuse	Additional Definitions	
<i>Financial</i>	The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	
<i>Spiritual</i>	The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context; the abuse of trust by someone in a position of spiritual authority (e.g. minister). The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.	
<i>Discrimination</i>	The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	
<i>Institutional</i>	The mistreatment or abuse of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.	

<i>Domestic Abuse</i>	Domestic abuse is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody regardless of their age, gender, sexuality or social status. Domestic abuse can be physical, sexual or psychological, coercive abuse and whatever form it takes, it is rarely a one-off incident. Usually there is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour where an abuser seeks to exert power over their family member or partner.
<i>Cyber Abuse</i>	The use of information technology (email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, etc.) to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner.
<i>Self-harm</i>	Self-Harm is the intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is used as a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. An individual may also be neglecting themselves, which can result in harm to themselves.
<i>Mate crime</i>	'Mate crime' is when people (particularly those with learning disabilities) are befriended by members of the community, who go on to exploit and take advantage of them.
<i>Modern Slavery</i>	Modern slavery is the practice of treating people as property; it includes bonded labour, child labour, sex slavery and trafficking. It is illegal in every country of the world.
<i>Human Trafficking</i>	Human trafficking is when people are bought and sold for financial gain and/or abuse. Men, women and children can be trafficked, both within their own countries and over international borders. The traffickers will trick, coerce, lure or force these vulnerable individuals into sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, domestic servitude or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice.
<i>Radicalisation</i>	The radicalisation of individuals is the process by which people come to support any form of extremism and, in some cases, join terrorist groups. Some individuals are more vulnerable to the risk of being groomed into terrorism than others.
<i>Honour Forced Marriage</i>	An honour marriage / forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. The motivation may include the desire to control unwanted behaviour or sexuality.
<i>Female Genital Mutilation</i>	Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). FGM is a cultural practice common around the world and is largely performed on girls aged between 10 and 18. Performing acts of FGM is illegal in the UK as is arranging for a child to travel abroad for FGM to be carried out.
<i>Historic Abuse</i>	Historic abuse is the term used to describe disclosures of abuse that were perpetrated in the past. Many people who have experienced abuse don't tell anyone what happened until years later, with around one third of people abused in childhood waiting until adulthood before they share their experience.

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- unexplained injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to such injuries
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- a child or adult at risk discloses behaviour that is harmful to them
- unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness in children
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourished, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.