

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

2024



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## SECTION 1

### Details of the place of worship/organisation

Name of Organisation: GODFIRST CHURCH CHELTENHAM

**Church Office Address:**

The Chapel  
Knapp Road  
CHELTENHAM,  
GL50 3QQ

**Place of Meeting:**

THE PARABOLA ARTS CENTRE,  
PARABOLA ROAD,  
CHELTENHAM,  
GL50 3AA

Tel No:01242 697414

Email address: howard@godfirst.org.uk

Membership of Denomination/Organisation: ADVANCE/ Newfrontiers

Charity Number: 1148222                      Company Number: 8090929

Insurance: KINGDOM BANK: EMPLOYERS LIABILITY INSURANCE

### Introduction

Godfirst Church Cheltenham is part of the Advance network of churches and a member of the Evangelical Alliance. It is led by a team of Elders and governed by a Board of Trustees. The Lead Elder of Godfirst is Howard Kellett. He is supported by an assistant Pastor, two employed part-time administrators and church members in a voluntary capacity.

Currently the church meets together every Sunday morning at the Parabola Arts Centre, Cheltenham Ladies College. The church offices and regular weekly church activities are based at Godfirst's premises, The Chapel. During the course of a Sunday morning, there are several children's work teams meeting across the venue. There are a number of youth and several vulnerable adults that attend the main meeting. The premises are open to visitors. At least 3 church members are involved in welcome at the start of the morning and all church members are encouraged to watch out for visitors (to welcome them) and to take responsibility for their children and young people at times when they are not in their own meetings. During the week, members of Godfirst meet together in houses.

The Chapel is open to the public and regularly hosts activities as service and outreach into our community. Activities are conducted according to practices as stipulated in Appendix 6.

## 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 accept the principles of 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 build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight (previously CCPAS: the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) and prepared using their Model Safeguarding Policy as our template.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached
- 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(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations

## SECTION 2

### RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

#### Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

- 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

#### DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (CHILDREN)

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

### **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 for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, 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.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued 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 the 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 cyberbullying), 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.

### **Sexual abuse**

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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

*Definitions taken from thirtyone:eight's document **InFocus**: Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)<sup>1</sup>*

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE (CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE)**

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

### **Physical**

- 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**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- 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**

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- 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 with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia\*

### **Neglect**

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc

\*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

*Definitions taken from thirtyone:eight's document **InFocus**:<sup>2</sup>*

### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE (ADULTS)**

- **Physical abuse:** including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions
- **Domestic violence:** including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence
- **Sexual abuse:** including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting



- **Psychological abuse:** including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks
- **Financial or material abuse:** including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits
- **Modern slavery:** encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment
- **Discriminatory abuse:** including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion
- **Organisational abuse:** including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation
- **Neglect and acts of omission:** including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
- **Self-neglect:** this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more.

Definitions taken from thirtyone:eight's document **InFocus: Definitions of Abuse – Adults** <sup>3</sup>

## **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE (ADULTS)**

### **Physical abuse**

- History of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems left unattended

### **Domestic violence**

- Unexplained injuries or 'excuses' for marks or scars

- Controlling and/or threatening relationship including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence and Female Genital Mutilation
- Age range extended to 16yrs

### **Sexual abuse**

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosures or hints of sexual abuse
- Self harming

### **Psychological abuse**

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of a carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia

### **Financial or material abuse**

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents
- Sudden inability to pay bills
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property

### **Modern slavery**

- Physical appearance; unkempt, inappropriate clothing, malnourished
- Movement monitored, rarely alone, travel early or late at night to facilitate working hours

- Few personal possessions or ID documents
- Fear of seeking help or trusting people

### **Discriminatory abuse**

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance care

### **Organisational abuse**

- No confidence in complaints procedures for staff or service users
- Neglectful or poor professional practice

### **Neglect and acts of omission**

- Deteriorating despite apparent care
- Poor home conditions, clothing or care and support
- Lack of medication or medical intervention

### **Self-neglect**

- Hoarding inside or outside a property
- Neglecting personal hygiene or medical needs

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more

*Definitions taken from thirtyone:eight's document **InFocus Signs of Possible Abuse in Adults** <sup>4</sup>*

### **How to respond to a child or vulnerable adult wishing to disclose abuse**

If a vulnerable person wants to talk about harm, it is essential that the employee, member or volunteer:

- Listen carefully to the child or adult. Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the person to 'shut down', retract or stop talking
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- Let them know they've done the right thing. Reassurance can make a big impact to the person who may have been keeping the abuse secret

- Tell them it's not their fault. Abuse is never the child or vulnerable adult's fault and they need to know this
- Say you believe them. A person could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person to believe them and help them
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.
- Don't talk to the alleged abuser. Confronting the alleged abuser about what the child or vulnerable adult told you could make the situation a lot worse for them
- Explain what you'll do next. If age appropriate, explain that you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help
- Don't delay reporting the abuse. The sooner the abuse is reported after the discloser the better. Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

### **Helpful responses**

- You have done the right thing in telling me
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

### **Don't say**

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else.

Information taken from thirtyone:eight's "Safe and Secure, Standard 7, In Focus Effective Listening" <sup>5</sup>

### **Safeguarding awareness**

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

children's and youth workers and those working with vulnerable adults will go through an induction process (see our recruitment section) and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis (every 3 years) provided by our Safeguarding Coordinator and trusted training sources.

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.

## **RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Under no circumstances should the volunteer to whom a disclosure was made, carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to **Sarah Parkes** (hereafter the "Designated safeguarding leader") tel no: **07794431480** and **safeguarding@godfirst.org.uk** who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Coordinator, then the report should be made to **Nathanael Hickling** (hereafter the "Deputy Safeguarding Lead") tel no: **07845768846**
- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Secondary Officers, then the report should be made in the first instance to THIRTYONE:EIGHT directly on Telephone **03030031111**. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police
- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Coordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services or take advice from thirtyone:eight as above
- **The Children's Social Services** office telephone number **01452 426565** (8am and 5pm Monday to Friday)
- **The Adult Social Services** office telephone number **01452 426868** (8am and 5pm Monday to Friday)
- Outside of office hours (as stated above) you can contact **Adult or Children & Families Services Emergency Duty Teams** on **01452 614194**
- **The Police Protection Team** telephone number is **101**

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator **may** need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern.

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place. (See Appendix 3, Responding to Abuse: Worker's Action Sheet)
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership recommends that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Coordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty and power to investigate.

### **Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:**

#### **Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm

- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services

### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference

### **Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:**

#### **Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse**

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions

### **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with procedures laid out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

### **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs.**

If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

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- Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life
- If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions
- Contact thirtyone:eight and/or Adult Social Services for advice



## SECTION 3

### PREVENTION

#### 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:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Safeguarding and the workers role are discussed in person
- The recruiter will check in with worker following their first session to ensure both competence and that safeguarding practices are being followed
- References have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate (secure phone call, verified email, post)
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- For non UK applicants, we will do all we can to try to obtain a criminal record check from their home country as well as the DBS check. The Safeguarding Deputy will consult <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants> to obtain the correct check from the individual's home country. Overseas applicants must have been in the church for a year before joining the team
- The applicant has to attend the safeguarding training as soon as possible after joining the team
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns

#### Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership team we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs (see Appendix 5, Godfirst Code of Conduct). The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office (see document in Appendix 4, Quick Reference Guide: Abuse of Trust), and it is therefore unacceptable

for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop whilst the relation of trust is ongoing.

## SECTION 4

### PASTORAL CARE

#### 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 have contact with or are part of Godfirst Church Cheltenham. We would take advice from thirtyone:eight, the Police, Social Services and any appropriate external agencies. Our pastoral care team would also be involved in this process.

#### Working with known offenders

As a general principle, we will aim to ensure that people are *known* in the church. Specifically through Godfirst Communities, attending the Participating Membership Day (membership course) and completing the 1:1 with an Elder.

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

With this in mind, the Leadership will:

- Ensure that the offender does not work with or be placed in any position of responsibility that puts them in contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Insist on a contract with the offender, (where appropriate information is shared) giving details of the boundaries we expect the individual to keep and the support we will offer them. The contract will be tailored specifically to individual circumstances and informed by risk assessments from the statutory agencies/thirtyone:eight. On breach of contract, church discipline would immediately being, and advice will be sought from thirtyone:eight or other agencies as appropriate
- Ensure the offender is never allowed to be alone with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Particular times of concern would include, before and after the Sunday meetings, during mid-week gatherings, or other social events
- Will ensure there is pastoral care for the offender

**SECTION 5**

**Commitment to best practice guidelines**

As an organisation / place of worship working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practices. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in outside of Sunday/midweek meetings.

**Signed by:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Howard Kellett (Lead Elder)

\_\_\_\_\_ Christopher Appel (Elder)

\_\_\_\_\_ Tom Hunting (Elder)

\_\_\_\_\_ Adam Stanton (Elder)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 6

### REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1. ThirtyOne:Eight – Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children) – obtained 19/01/2022  
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/safeguarding-manual/infocus/statutory-definitions-of-abuse-children/>
2. ThirtyOne:Eight – Signs of Possible Abuse (Children and young people) – obtained 19/01/2022  
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/safeguarding-manual/infocus/signs-of-possible-abuse-children-young-people/>
3. ThirtyOne:Eight - Definitions of Abuse (Adults) - obtained 19/01/2022  
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/safeguarding-manual/infocus/definitions-of-abuse-adults/>
4. ThirtyOne:Eight - Signs of Possible Abuse in Adults - obtained 19/01/2022  
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/safeguarding-manual/infocus/signs-of-possible-abuse-in-adults/>
1. ThirtyOne:Eight – Safeguarding Coordinator Role - obtained 19/01/2022  
<https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/resources/help-guides/help/im-a-safeguarding-coordinator/>
2. HM Government - Working together to safeguard children – obtained 11/04/2022  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/942454/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_inter\\_agency\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

### Useful Websites

1. DBS barring referral guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-referrals-guidance--2>

### Change History

SAFEGUARDING POLICY, GODFIRST CHURCH CHELTENHAM

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Version	Author(s)	Date	Change summary
1	V Allen	5 <sup>th</sup> May 2017	First issue
2	V Allen	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2018	Edits to 'About Godfirst Church', First Aid
3	L Hunting	19 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2018	Edits: CCPAS to Thiryone:eight. Change of Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer. Removal of Andy Allen as Elder. Change to Appendices.
4	C Appel	19 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2022	Updated new policy details
5	A Thomas	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	Change of Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer. Adding of Christopher Appel as Elder.
6	A Thomas	30 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2023	Adding of Adam Stanton as Elder
7	C Appel	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Update edits and confirmation of policies concerning youth Removal of Steve Moat as Elder
8	C Appel A Thomas	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	General updates and edited

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## APPENDIX 1

### LEADERSHIP SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Eldership of Godfirst Church Cheltenham, Howard Kellett, Christopher Appel, Tom Hunting and Adam Stanton recognises the importance of its ministry/work with children, young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the Leadership on: \_\_\_\_\_

This place of worship/organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being. Specifically that:

- We recognise that we all have 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 we discover or suspect
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation 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 and adults with care and support needs

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

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities



- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by thirtyone:eight

**We recognise:**

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about 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
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

**We will review this statement and our policies and procedures annually.**

If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of worship/organisation:

SAFEGUARDING POLICY, GODFIRST CHURCH CHELTENHAM

Created: May 2017

Last reviewed: May 2024

- Christopher Appel (Safeguarding Coordinator)
- Angela Thomas (Safeguarding Deputy)

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from the Godfirst Church Office.

**Signed by:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Howard Kellett (Lead Elder)

\_\_\_\_\_ Christopher Appel (Elder)

\_\_\_\_\_ Tom Hunting (Elder)

\_\_\_\_\_ Adam Stanton (Elder)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2

### INFOCUS - REPORTING A 'SERIOUS INCIDENT' TO THE CHARITY COMMISSION

Under Charity Commission regulations a Serious Incident occurs where a result has, or could, entail '...a significant loss of funds or a significant risk to the charity's property, work, beneficiaries or reputation'. They should be reported as soon as possible.

As far as allegations of abuse are concerned Charity Commission guidance states:

'You (the place of worship or organisation) should report this if any one or more of the following occur:

- There has been an incident where the beneficiaries of your charity have been or are being abused or mistreated whilst under the care of your charity or by someone connected with your charity such as a trustee, member of staff or volunteer
- There has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated and this is connected with the activities of the charity
- Allegations have been made that such an incident may have happened regardless of when the alleged abuse or mistreatment took place
- You have grounds to suspect that such an incident may have occurred'

The Charity Commission states that these are 'zero tolerance' issues which would always be investigated by them. Serious incidents also include not having adequate safeguarding policies in place and failure to carry out disclosure checks on workers and trustees (where legally possible); in summary, anything that could affect the good reputation of the charity.

Those charities whose incomes exceed £25,000 must declare all Serious Incidents as part of their Annual Returns. Failure in the latter respect also signifies failure regarding the charity's legal obligations. Charities can make a report in the following ways:

#### Writing to:

The Charity Commission (England and Wales)

PO Box 211

Bootle

L20 7YX

**Telephoning:**

Helpline (available 9am to midday, Monday to Friday) 0300 066 9197

24 hour voicemail service 0300 065 2199

**Emailing:**

RSI@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

The guidance and further information can be found on the Charity Commission website [here](#)

**Charity Commission Reporting Serious Incidents - guidance for trustees**

**APPENDIX 3**

**Responding to Abuse – Workers’ Action Sheet**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Name of Child/Young Person/Vulnerable Adult \_\_\_\_\_

Address **(ministry leader to fill in later)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth **(ministry leader to fill in later)** \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name of Person Reporting Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Time of incident \_\_\_\_\_

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken (including person(s) contacted)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by person reporting the incident \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Time statement written \_\_\_\_\_

If there is a concern that a child, young person or adult with care and support needs may have been abused or a direct allegation of abuse has been made, it is important the person receiving this information does the following:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking) including a description of any injury, its size, and if possible a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body.
- Write down exactly what has been said, when it was said, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity).
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all hand written notes even if subsequently typed up. These notes should be passed on to the safeguarding co-ordinator to assist them should the matter need to be referred to the statutory agencies such as Adult or Children's Social Services or the police.

Workers need to share concerns with the co-ordinators as well as clear allegations made by, or about, children, young people and adults at risk. Sharing 'gut feelings' at an early stage, may assist helping those who need it.

**CCPAS**  
Quick  
Reference  
Guide

## Abuse of Trust



**Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.**

Government guidance advocates that all organisations (including places of worship) produce a Code of Conduct on sexual activity between individuals within a relationship of trust that should contain the following points:

- A clear policy statement on the paramount need to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults and protect them from sexual exploitation by those looking after them within a relationship of trust.
- An explanation of the relationship between the Code on abuse of trust and policies and procedures for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults more widely from other abuse.
- An explanation of the circumstances in which a relationship of trust will arise, the responsibility that arises from that relationship and the definition of those to be protected by the Code.
- A clear statement that any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the individual or individuals in their care should be avoided; and that any sexual relationship within a relationship of trust is unacceptable so long as the relationship of trust continues.
- A clear supporting explanation of what behaviour is and is not acceptable within the particular organisation.
- The detailed procedures to be put in place and the sanctions for abuse of trust

See 'Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust', Home Office 1999.

**MORE INFO.** Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, Sections 16-19 where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Contact your Local Authority to discuss concerns about abuse of trust with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

**CCPAS** [www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)

**ISA** [www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk)

CCPAS  
PO Box 133, Swanley,  
Kent, BR8 7UQ.  
[www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)  
0845 120 45 50  
[info@ccpas.co.uk](mailto:info@ccpas.co.uk)

**CCPAS**  
Setting standards in safeguarding

**SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN  
CHELTENHAM LADIES COLLEGE AND THE CHAPEL**

**WHILST A NUMBER OF THE STATEMENTS IN THIS CODE OF CONDUCT ARE DO'S AND DON'TS WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE ALL THOSE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE AN EXAMPLE OF JESUS TO THEM. WE PRIMARILY WANT TO IMITATE CHRIST IN THE HOPE THEY TOO WILL WANT TO FOLLOW HIM.**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As a volunteer, you are crucial in safeguarding our children, young people and adults at risk and therefore play a crucial role in protecting them. If someone is acting in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, or if you are suspicious of anyone hanging around the children's classrooms or toilets, feel empowered to challenge them, ask them if they are lost, or go and find your team leader to speak with them. Pass any concerns on to Christopher or Angela.

**Day-to-day safeguarding guidelines:**

Fire procedure:

- Make sure you regularly remind yourself of the fire procedure and that all registers for the children/youth are always up-to-date as children/youth arrive or leave the session so that you always know how many children/youth are in your care

First aid:

- We have a first aid kit in the Welcome Area
- The accident book is in the Welcome Box (under the welcome table)
- Please go to one of our first aiders (Christopher Appel, Angela Thomas & Nat Hickling) who will provide basic first aid and support dealing with **all** injuries. They will note injuries in the accident book. Please ensure the team leader knows and that the parents are told when they come to collect their child.

Lone working:

A kids team volunteer should never plan to work alone. A minimum of two DBS'd volunteers need to be on a kids team each week. In a situation where you end up alone with a child or young person, you should aim to pull in another worker or move to somewhere public.



Though we would always aim to have a minimum of 2 volunteers on team, please be aware of current government best practice guidelines for ratios:

- 0-2 year olds – 1 adult : 3 children
- 2-3 year olds – 1 adult : 4 children
- 4-8 year olds – 1 adult : 6 children
- 9-12 year olds – 1 adult : 8 children
- 13-18 year olds – 1 adult : 10 children

Mobile Phones/ Social media:

- Do not take any child or youth's phone numbers unless you have asked permission from their parents
- Never take a mobile phone when accompanying children to the toilet. We want to avoid reproach and make it clear that no photos are being taken
- Whilst it is good to have a mobile phone to hand in case of an emergency during the children/youth sessions, please don't have your phones out for personal use during the session

Photos:

- No one should take photos of any young person or child at church unless specified by Christopher or Angela. Young people and children should only be photographed with parental consent

Physical contact:

- Keep everything public
- Should be age appropriate and in response to the child's needs and not the needs of the adult
- Avoid anything that could be construed as sexually stimulating to the adult/child
- Should be monitored and challenged by others

Praying:

Giving someone permission to pray for you shows real openness and courage. Here are some basic guidelines to help us to pray with others in a respectful and helpful way:

- **Be respectful** – ask their permission to lay hands on them. Only lay hands on their shoulder so they feel safe and there is nothing that could be misconstrued. Not all people like to have hands laid on them and that's fine. Ask whether they are comfortable with what is happening before you start praying
- **Be safe** – never pray for a child alone, so that at least two adults or leaders know what has been said and what God may have been doing. Also, one can be praying while the other asks God if He wants to say anything. Always be in a room with other people around
- **Be releasing** – get the children and young people to pray for one another with an adult present so they learn how to pray for others and it reinforces what we say about God answering the prayers of children and young people
- **Be watchful** – pray with your eyes open so you can be aware of what the Spirit is doing
- **Be a reporter** – write down any words or pictures you have and give them to their parents

#### Recruitment:

- As part of your role you have been subjected to a thorough recruitment process. If, at any point, there is a change in your circumstances which means you are no longer suitable for work with children, you are required to speak to Christopher or Angela
- You will be required to attend safeguarding training and functional team training as a part of the role
- Supervision will be conducted by your team leader from time to time where feedback may be given

#### Toileting:

- Crèche Teams: We do not change nappies or take children to the toilet. Parents are responsible for making sure their children have gone to the toilet prior to attending crèche if they are toilet trained. If a child needs the toilet during the session, the parent should be collected from the auditorium
- Kids Teams: Only suitably DBS-checked leaders may take children to the toilets. Female leaders will, unless otherwise previously arranged, take all the kids to the female toilets, whilst a male leader will equally most often take all the children into the male toilets. Each child is to be ushered into an individual cubicle. Do not go into a cubicle with a child. Do not wipe bottoms. If helping

them with belts, zips etc then do it in public view in the main toilet area, preferably whilst talking through what you're doing so anyone entering the toilets knows what is happening

#### Transport:

- Where a child or young person requires a lift home from an activity, this should be done only with the consent of a parent and the knowledge of a team leader
- During an organised kids or youth activity, two volunteers (ideally one of each sex) should be present and children/young people should not be in a situation where they are alone with a worker

#### **Specific guidelines for working with the Youth:**

How should we respond to disclosures that aren't related directly to abuse (e.g. they tell you they've smoked weed, keep getting drunk, have had sex, have self-harmed etc). Our Godfirst guidelines about this are as follows:

- Listen and don't tell them off
- Don't be judgemental. Rather be compassionate and kind
- Get any medical treatment needed (e.g. after cutting) as if a regular injury
- Don't promise confidentiality. Tell them that you may need to tell someone in order to protect them
- Although we reserve the right, at the discretion of Christopher or Angela, to inform the parents, please encourage them to tell their parents themselves and offer to be there as they tell their parents if they'd like
- Do speak with Christopher or Angela about any concerns and for advice on how to progress. They may ask you to log it so we can keep an eye on any concerning issues
- Follow it up by asking them how they're doing and prompting them to talk with their parents

#### Additional communication and interaction guidelines:

- Youth Leaders may only meet one-on-one with a member of the Youth Group of the same sex in a public space

- All normal group communication is to be done using the Youth WhatsApp Group. HOWEVER, this group is only accessible to youths who are over the age of 13 years due to the WhatsApp age limitations
- Standard communication also occurs on the Youth Parents Group and youth age kids under 13 need to be briefed by their parents regarding relevant information
- Under abnormal circumstances when private communication cannot be avoided, youth members whose parents have given express permission in the termly permission form, may be contacted directly
- Youth Leaders and Youth members are not to be friends on personal apps like: Instagram, Snapchat or Facebook and any other platforms where personal messages can be sent.
- Where one-to-one communication is essential for the sake of discussing details of an event not relevant to the whole group, one-to-one WhatsApp communication is acceptable when done according to this policy
- A 'G1 Youth Leaders Safeguarding' Whatsapp Group has been created. When one-to-one communication takes place between a Youth Leader and a youth, a screenshot of that conversation must be taken and uploaded on this Safeguarding group
- In the circumstances where Youth Leaders and Youth members are friends and would like to pursue communication as friends, Parents are required to sign the 'Godfirst Direct Communication Permission Form'. This form needs to be filled in annually by the parents of the relevant minor
- Regardless of what level of friendship and parental permissions, there is to be NO communication between Youth Leaders and Youth between the hours of 9pm and 7am
- No images are to be shared in personal conversations other than photos of written documents or Bible passages
- No deleting of messages in personal communications
- Where friendships are in place, the parents must be made aware of instances where a Youth Leader and youth members plan to go out together
- When a Youth member reaches 18 years of age, the restrictions on communications and apps are no longer applicable

## **APPENDIX 6**

### **SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN THE CHAPEL**

#### **Current list of Godfirst activities taking place in The Chapel:**

- Tiddlers and Toddlers Group (carer and toddler group)
- Chapel Cafe (adults and children enjoying free coffee and community)
- Thursday Tea (afterschool club for parents and kids with basic refreshments)
- Chapellas (Community Choir)
- Alpha/321 Courses (evangelism courses with a meal)
- RE:Think Evenings (evangelism evening)
- Godfirst Ukrainian Congregation (Ukrainian speaking church meeting on a Sunday)
- Multiple internally orientated courses, leaders meetings and prayer and worship nights

All these events are subject to the stipulated Godfirst Safeguarding Policies for children and vulnerable adults.

#### General use:

- All parents are responsible for their own children's safety and well-being whilst using the Chapel facility
- Office staff are to work upstairs and wear a Godfirst orange lanyard when coming downstairs and walking amongst the activities
- All ministry leaders are responsible to know which volunteers were present during their activity and to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy
- The ministry team leader for any given activity is responsible for naming a specific 'Fire Marshall' for the duration of the activity. They are responsible for following the fire safety guidelines
- Any external group bookings in the Chapel will need to present to the office their Safeguarding Policy unless they provide written confirmation that they will adhere to the Godfirst Safeguarding Policy

#### Fire Safety:

- The Chapel undergoes twice-yearly fire safety inspections and is inline with current organisational best practice
- The emergency fire alarms, fire equipment, lifts and lighting are tested and serviced according to the appropriate guidelines
- The fire evacuation plan is located at the entrance of The Chapel and it is mandatory that all leaders are aware of the evacuation routes and gathering points
- The Chapel has a fire capacity of 60 persons when no fire warden is dedicated to manning the main door. When capacity is expected to exceed 60 persons a fire marshal is dedicated to open the main doors in the event of a fire, thereby raising the venue capacity to 100 persons
- For mobility impaired visitors, as well as in the event of a general medical emergency, an Evacuation Chair is accessible at the top of the stairs when the lift is not appropriate to use, as in the case of a fire
- Following an evacuation due to fire threat, if an attendance register for children is active, the list must be cross-checked to verify they are no longer in the building

#### Use of kitchen:

- No children under the age of 11 are allowed into the kitchen area
- Under exceptional circumstances, children and guests are permitted into the kitchen area under supervision of an authorised leader

#### Attendance Register to be kept:

- For any events involving children under 16 an attendance register is to be kept by the responsible leader.

#### First Aid:

- A first aid kit is available in the kitchen area
- The first aid kit is the responsibility of the parent in the event that a child under 18 requires minor first aid
- For any serious injury please call 999

Please contact Christopher or Angela if there are any safeguarding concerns for any further activities taking place in The Chapel.

Best practice document. This is a working document. Activities may change. Document will be updated as we move ahead. Trustees and Elders are committed to working according to the best practices underlined and to update...

The fluid nature of changing nature of activities