

Safeguarding Policy

(Children and Young People)

This policy is reviewed annually.

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WALTHAMSTOW CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

In accordance with our Safeguarding Policy, we have appointed a Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator whose name, address and telephone number appear below.

Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Lily Harrison
22 Poplars Road
Walthamstow
London
E17 9AT

Landline : 020 8509 0392
Mobile : 07974 908066

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

This statement was agreed at the Church members meeting held on 20th May 2021

It will be read annually at the Church Annual General Meeting where progress in carrying it out will be monitored.

- ❖ As Christians, we are called to love our neighbour (Matthew 22:39).
- ❖ Our Lord Jesus Christ also said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them." (Matthew 19:14).
- ❖ Therefore, we are committed to supporting our parents and families.
- ❖ As members of this Church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all, especially those who are vulnerable at whatever their stage of life.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual, neglect and emotional abuse of vulnerable people, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- ❖ We recognise that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole Church.
- ❖ As a Church we are committed to respectful pastoral ministry of adults providing support and empowerment to participate and make their own decisions.
- ❖ As a Church we are committed to being a caring community which provides a loving environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse.
- ❖ The Church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people and to providing supervision.
- ❖ The Church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with vulnerable adults.
- ❖ The Church is committed to the Home Office Code of Practice: 'Safe from Harm' and to 'Working together to safeguard children – A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (December 2023).
- ❖ Each worker with children, young people or vulnerable adults must know the recommendations and undertake to observe them. Each shall be given a copy of the Church's agreed procedures and good practice guidelines. When a new worker takes up a role, the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator or their deputy or an elder will go through the recommendation with the person in question. Each year, all children's, youth workers and those who work with vulnerable adults will attend a meeting to go through the appropriate policy and recommendations.
- ❖ At the start of each academic year, this statement will be explained in an age-appropriate manner to young people and children at our groups, which may include talking about online abuse if age appropriate.
- ❖ The Designated Safeguarding Coordinator is Lily Harrison. She will deal with any concerns or matters arising from safeguarding issues and coordinate the DBS checks. If, in an emergency, Lily Harrison is not available, Andrew Ferdinando should be approached.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults are part of our Church today. They have much to give as well as to receive. We will listen to them. As we nurture them in worship, learning and in community life we will respect their wishes and feelings of the children, young people and vulnerable adults.

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Name	Walthamstow Central Baptist Church
Address	101A Orford Road Walthamstow London E17 9QR
Telephone Number	020 8503 7577
Email address	central101@btconnect.com
Denomination	Affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

Church Statement

The Church has an ongoing children's and young person's ministry. The Church takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

Church Mission

The Church is committed to:

- ❖ Valuing, listening to, and relating effectively to children and young people whilst ensuring their protection within Church activities.
- ❖ Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all the children's/youth workers within the church.
- ❖ Encouraging and supporting parents/carers
- ❖ Supporting those affected by abuse in the church
- ❖ Having a system for dealing with concerns and possible abuse

Our Commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe environment for children and young people in our care. This forms part of our obligation to love one another (John 13:34). We acknowledge that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

We concur with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child where it 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.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above, as far as they do not go against anything taught in God's Word, the Bible.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers, seeking to keep workers informed of current guidelines.
- support the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action, they may need to take in order to protect children and young people.

Areas of Policy

The Church recognises that some children and young people today are the victims of neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Accordingly, the Church has adopted the policy contained in this document, (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to the following areas:

- ❖ Responding to allegations of abuse, including those against leaders or members of the Church.
- ❖ Appointing children's / youth workers
- ❖ Supervision of activities and practical issues
- ❖ Helping victims of abuse
- ❖ Working with offenders

The local Social Services telephone number between 9am and 5pm is **020 8496 2310** (Waltham Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub team), the out of hours number known as the emergency team is **020 8496 3000**.

Good Practice Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse

A. Good practice with children and young people

The Church will ensure that:

- ❖ as far as possible an adult is not alone with a person under the age of eighteen where their activity cannot be seen. On Church premises this may mean leaving doors open or two groups working in the same room.
- ❖ all persons who are in any counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important ensure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom.
- ❖ that access to the building is safe and well lit.
- ❖ on a Sunday morning the back of the Church is locked to any visitors by 10:55am.

You, the worker should:

- ❖ treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age, mental capacity; watch language, tone of voice, and where you put your body;
- ❖ follow the instructions of group leaders with regard to keeping registers and registration forms (for example, ensuring accurate records are kept of the attendance of children and staff, including those giving lifts, and ensuring data is kept securely in line with our Data Protection Policy;
- ❖ not engage in any of the following:
 - invading the privacy of children when they are showering, changing or toileting;
 - rough play that could lead to injury or sexually provocative games;
 - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person even in fun
 - initiating unnecessary physical contact;
 - any scapegoating, ridiculing, embarrassing or rejecting a child or young person;
- ❖ learn to control and discipline children without physical punishment (this includes their own children whilst at church or on church activities);
- ❖ make sure another adult is present if for example a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed. Where possible allow the child to clean themselves in a cubicle with both adults outside of the cubicle;
- ❖ not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overtly physical in nature;
- ❖ not invite a child or young person to your home alone; invite a group or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure parents know where the child is;
- ❖ not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people if you take a group away or during a sleepover in the church building;
- ❖ avoid using social media to communicate with young people under the age of 18. Where emails or texts are used copy other adults in (preferably a parent);
- ❖ avoid accepting friend requests on social media from young people under the age of 18;
- ❖ avoid taking photos and videos of young people under the age of 18, that do not have a clear purpose. Where photos are taken for church purposes, the photos should be stored on a church computer and be deleted from personal devices;
- ❖ where lifts are to be given:
 - only give lifts where a parent / guardian has signed to allow their child to be transported (except in emergencies);
 - only give lifts where cars / drivers meet the following criteria:
 - drivers must be over 21, having held a full driving licence for over 1 year;
 - drivers must have fully comprehensive insurance cover;
 - cars must be taxed and have a valid MOT certificate;
 - drivers and cars meeting the above criteria will be noted on a list of approved drivers / cars by the deacons. The deacons or their representative shall sign the list each year to say they have seen the relevant documents;
 - not give lifts to a child or young person on their own unless there is a second adult in the car;
 - have children in the back of the car and adults in the front;
 - use car seats / booster seats according to the law.
- ❖ where children are accompanied as they walk home :
 - only accompany them when permission has been given by the parent(s)
 - always have two adults present when walking children home

B. Appointing Young people and children's workers

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidelines on safe recruitment.

In appointing workers (volunteer or otherwise) the Leadership will be responsible for ensuring the following procedure:

- An interview with an Elder.
- Over 16s : Agreement to an enhanced DBS police check, with the worker not being involved in young people's or children's work until they have an up-to-date enhanced DBS check. Alternatively, if the worker has a DBS check from another organisation, AND is registered with the DBS Update Service, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may carry out a status check on the worker, instead of a new DBS check.
- For workers / volunteers who have been attending the church for less than two years, a phone reference shall be taken up.
- To sign and agree to abide by the guidelines in this policy.

Criteria for NOT appointing workers are:

- Any indications of previous offences against children or young people.
- Previous sexual offences
- Violent or inappropriate behaviour
- Unsuitability for this type of ministry.

Workers will be given their own personal copy of this document for reference.

Workers will be given opportunities to meet together with their children and young people's leaders to discuss work programmes and areas of concern.

C. Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training for the safeguarding co-ordinator and developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues amongst all workers to help protect everyone.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and young people 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.

D. How to respond if you are worried about one of the adults within the church and their behaviour

If you see another member of staff acting in ways that might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to the group leader or other church leader about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or manners.

If, after having spoken to the person, you are still unhappy about their behaviour or their lack of willingness to change their behaviour, you should talk to the pastor (or other church leader). The pastor will then deal with the situation. It maybe that the pastor asks the person to step down from the role in children and young people's ministry. If the person who raised the initial concern feels that the situation is unresolved, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator who will consult with the other elders and then speak to Thirtyone:eight if it is considered necessary.

E. Responding to Allegations against Young People or Children's workers.

If an allegation of abuse is made against a Worker, this should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator or, if not available, an elder. If the allegation concerns the

Designated Safeguarding Coordinator, you should inform the Pastor or one of the other elders. Workers should not themselves inform the worker who has been accused.

Immediately an allegation is made, written details of the allegation should be obtained by the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator or, if not available, an elder.

The Designated Safeguarding Coordinator or, if not available, an elder, will decide what to do next.

- ☐ If the suspicions or allegations are of a serious nature (particularly those where a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm, or where a criminal offence may have been committed), they will immediately contact Social Services, Thirtyone:eight or the Police directly for advice.
- ☐ Other cases can be dealt with internally, although less serious allegations may still need to be examined objectively by someone independent of the church, and so may be, at the discretion of the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator, or, if not available, an elder, referred to Waltham Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub team.
- ☐ The Church recognises that an over hasty or ill-judged decision to suspend a children's worker immediately from attendance and involvement at an activity when an allegation of abuse is made, can be very damaging for them. There may be other options.

The Designated Safeguarding Coordinator or, if not available, an elder, will decide when to inform the accused worker of the allegation. If the matter has been referred to Social Services or the Police, this decision shall be made in conjunction with the relevant outside agency.

The Church recognises that the allegations may be false, misplaced, exaggerated or mistaken, and that where this is the case, there may be malicious and deliberate intent, or a genuine mistake. Regardless of the motives underlying any allegations, they may also be well-founded. Everyone who deals with allegations of abuse should maintain an open and enquiring mind. It is also essential that all agencies concerned act in a manner and at a speed suitable to the nature and level of the concern once suspicions are brought to their attention.

If after investigation by outside agencies the allegation is considered serious enough for the person to be removed from their role, even if they step down of their own accord, the elders need to inform the DBS.

RECORD KEEPING

Make notes as soon as possible about what is causing you concern. Record dates and times of events and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such record should be kept safely for an indefinite period.

Procedures if abuse is disclosed or discovered.

The Church and all its appointed children's and youth workers are committed to the protection of children from physical, sexual, neglect and emotional abuse.

Children can be abused by adults as well as by other young people or children. Whatever the situation child abuse is an abuse of power and a breach of trust.

The authorities will be notified if the designated safeguarding coordinator believes that a child is either suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

Sometimes a single traumatic event constitutes 'significant harm' to a child; and, sometimes, a build-up of concerns or a series of incidents over time also gives rise to 'significant harm'.

The law recognises the following categories of abuse under the Children Act (1989):

<p>Neglect 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.</p> <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Hunger → Poor personal hygiene → Inappropriate clothing → Frequent lateness or non-attendance → Untreated medical problems → Poor social relationships → Compulsive stealing or scrounging → Tiredness 	<p>Sexual Abuse</p> <p>Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, physical contact including non-penetrative act, and non-physical contact including making pornographic material, being exposed to sexual activity, encouraging to behave sexually and verbal sexual abuse.</p> <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on the body. → Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the anal or genital regions → Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age → Public masturbation → Teaching other children about sexual activity → Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places. → Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness → Withdrawal from friends → Pregnancy (in older young people) → Grooming → Sexting
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<p>Physical Abuse Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating, otherwise causing physical harm, or factitious illness by proxy</p> <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Unexplained injuries or burns → Refusal to discuss injuries/improbable explanations. → Untreated injuries/illness → Admission of punishment which appears excessive. → Shrinking from physical contact → Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted. → Fear of undressing → Fear of medical help → Aggression/bullying → Over compliant behaviour or 'watchful attitude' → Running away → Significant changes in behaviour without explanation → FGM 	<p>Emotional Abuse Persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on child's emotional development.</p> <p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continual self-deprecation → Depression, withdrawal → Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations → Self-harm or mutilation → Compulsive stealing/scrounging → Drug/solvent abuse/eating problems (over-/under-eating) → 'Neurotic' behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb-sucking → 'Don't care' attitude or desperate attention-seeking behaviour. → Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
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What to do if a child makes a disclosure or you observe abuse

A disclosure can be indirect or direct. A young person might tell someone at the church about something of a personal or sensitive nature. (Direct disclosure). The concern might be considered to be a potential safeguarding or child protection concern. Equally, someone in the church might overhear something of a personal or sensitive nature that might be considered to be a potential safeguarding or child protection concern. This might also be accompanied by visible signs of discomfort or distress in a young person.

This would be considered as an indirect disclosure. Whatever the circumstance of the disclosure:

DO:

- ✓ Listen carefully.
- ✓ Show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- ✓ Keep calm – look at the child directly – be honest.
- ✓ Tell the child you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality.
- ✓ Even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse.
- ✓ Be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell.
- ✓ Record the conversation in the child's words and note the time.
- ✓ Sign and date the record you make.
- ✓ Take it seriously.
- ✓ Reassure the young person that they are right to tell.
- ✓ Explain what happens next - including support.
- ✓ Pass on the information as soon as possible.

HELPFUL THINGS YOU MAY SAY OR SHOW

- ✓ You've done the right thing to tell me.
- ✓ It's not your fault.
- ✓ I will help you.

DON'T

- Ask leading questions.
- Interview the child such as asking who? Where? When? Why? How?
- Say 'Why didn't you tell anyone before?'
- Say 'Are you sure this is true?'
- Make false promises.
- Make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else".
- Make promises you cannot keep –you can not keep it between you.
- Jump to conclusions, speculate or blame.
- Try to investigate the situation yourself.
- Delay in referring to the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator or, if not available, the deputy.

If the child is in immediate danger call the police on:

101

(if no response dial 999)

Main police switchboard number. Request to speak to Child Protection Team

CONCLUDING

- Again, reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (if the abuse is taking place in their home you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the police to prevent a child or young person returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).

Contact the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible or if unable to do so, refer to Social Services direct or Police.

AFTER FINISHING WITH THE CHILD

- Report your discussion as soon as possible with Lily Harrison (Safeguarding Co-ordinator), if she is implicated contact an agency such as Thirtyone:eight for advice or go directly to Social Services / Police / NSPCC.
- You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than the nominated person in the above point.
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Waltham Forest Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub team 020 8496 2310

Out of hours Emergency Duty Team 020 8496 3000

Police (Central Switchboard) 101

Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator 0208 509 0392
Lily Harrison

Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS) 0303 003 1111

WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

Where someone attending the Church is known to have abused children then it will be important to extend friendship to the individual, but at the same time the leadership will ensure a frank discussion takes place with the person concerned and efforts will be made to sustain open communication. It will be necessary to establish clear boundaries for both the protection of the young people and to lessen the possibility of the adult being wrongly suspected of abuse.

Sexual offences are often addictive; the offender may be tempted to re-offend and might try to gain access to young people by befriending their parents. The offender may try to manipulate and control and be coming to Church specifically to contact children.

The Church will look for direct contact with the person's supervising probation officer and also expect that the supervising officer would be making contact with the Church on any issue relating to the safety of children.

The Church leaders will meet with the offender and discuss the possibility of drawing up a contractual statement similar to the example below:

- ✓ I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children or young or vulnerable people;
- ✓ I will attend meetings/house groups as directed by the Church leadership;
- ✓ I will sit where directed in the Church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children, young or vulnerable people;
- ✓ I will not enter certain parts of the building designated by the leadership, not any area where children's activities are in progress;
- ✓ I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children or vulnerable people in the home;
- ✓ I accept that and will sit with me during Church activities accompanying me when I need to use other facilities. They will know that I am a Schedule 1 offender / registered with the police under the terms of the Sex Offenders Act;
- ✓ I accept that there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care;
- ✓ I accept that will provide me with pastoral care;
- ✓ I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, I may be barred from attending the Church and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies and any other relevant organisation and the Church congregation;
- ✓ I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every months and will remain for an indefinite period.

(This document would need to be signed and dated by the offender and by the Church representatives)

Date

Signed

Robert Jeffery – Pastor

It should be made clear that as people change role, their successors will take on becoming involved. An agreement must remain in place so long as the person is part of the congregation, whether or not they are on licence or their name appears on the Sex Offenders Register.

If the person leaves the church for another church, then the police should be involved, and a new agreement should be made. If the person leaves without informing anyone where or whether they might attend worship, the police should be informed.

Whenever possible, the agreement should be drawn up as a two-way covenant. The Church will agree to levels of support and appropriate access to worship etc while the offender agrees to the appropriate behavioural guidelines included in the agreement.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed	Date	Robert Jeffery
Signed	Date	Roger Neil
Signed	Date	Maurice Titmarsh
Signed	Date	Thomas Kitchen
Signed	Date	Lily Harrison