



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

September 2026

This safeguarding policy has been reviewed using relevant guidance from Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026, HM Government), Keeping Children Safe In Education (2026), Charity Commission paper Strategy for dealing with Safeguarding issues in Charities (2017(updated 2022)) and After-school clubs, Community Activities and Tuition: Safeguarding advice for providers (Feb 2026)

Introduction

1. Church by the Bay has a Safeguarding policy for three main purposes:

- To as far as possible protect vulnerable individuals who come to events run by Church by the Bay from harm or abuse.
- To protect leaders and helpers who work with vulnerable individuals from the perception or incorrect accusation of causing harm or abuse.
- To protect the good name of the Church from the perception or incorrect accusation of causing harm or abuse – Christians are Christ’s ambassadors.

2 Corinthians 5 18-20:

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2. All members or regulars at Church by The Bay who take any part in work regularly (i.e. once a month) with vulnerable individuals are to be familiar with the principles of this policy, abide by it and be in possession of a relevant valid DBS check.
3. The Safeguarding Coordinators are Andrew Steventon and Hannah Lindsay. The Safeguarding Trustee is Jon Lindsay.

Contact details to report a non-urgent concern are as follows:

a.steventon@churchbythebay.org.uk

h.lindsay@churchbythebay.org.uk

All children’s and youth-workers have direct access to essential telephone numbers including the Safeguarding Coordinators and children’s social care services should a safeguarding concern arise.

4. The term ‘vulnerable’ is used throughout this policy. For the purposes of this policy, being ‘vulnerable’ is defined as in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect. (Vulnerabilities gov.uk, 2022) Children includes everyone under the age of 18 and is included under the vulnerable category for the purposes of this policy.
5. We are aware that abuse can be:
- Child to child abuse
 - Adult to child abuse
 - Adult to adult abuse

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1.The Role of the Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Coordinators

1.1 Why have a Safeguarding Policy?

Church by the Bay takes its responsibilities for the care and protection of vulnerable individuals very seriously and puts a high value on all its work with vulnerable individuals. We believe that we should provide individuals with the highest standard of care and that the experience of growing up within the Church community should be enriching. To ensure that this work is carried out in a way that brings glory to God and is in accordance with the Children Act of 1988, these guidelines have been produced. They are for the protection of both vulnerable individuals and those who work among them.

Each worker with vulnerable individuals must have read the Safeguarding Policy prior to undertaking duties. They must undertake to apply its contents and personally review the policy every 12 months.

1.2 Safeguarding Policy Statement

Church by the Bay regards Safeguarding and good working practice as a priority. In the interests of the safety and wellbeing of all vulnerable individuals, it has developed and operates a formal Safeguarding Policy.

We are committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all in our care. Many vulnerable individuals are involved in the life of the Church, under the guidance of a dedicated group of leaders and helpers. These people give their time freely and generously so that our children and vulnerable adults can grow in their faith in Jesus Christ. Both children and adults need a safe and secure environment in which to work.

Church by the Bay is committed to ensuring that everyone working regularly with vulnerable individuals:

- Has undergone a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at a relevant level to their position.
- Is adequately trained and supervised.
- Understands and follow the Church's Safeguarding Policy.

Church by the Bay:

- Recognises that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Is committed to supporting parents and families.
- Recognises the unique and individual worth of each individual.
- Is committed to nurturing, protecting and safeguarding vulnerable individuals.
- Exercises care in the appointment of all those working with vulnerable individuals in the Church.
- Is committed to following statutory and specialist guidelines in working with vulnerable individuals.
- Seeks to support all those affected by abuse.
- Is committed to supporting, training and resourcing those who work with vulnerable individuals.
- Is committed to the management and supervision of known offenders in the Church.
- Will review its Safeguarding Policy annually.

Should the Church have any Safeguarding concerns it will seek the advice of the Safeguarding Coordinators and if appropriate contact the statutory authorities and/ or Thirtyone:eight (our advisory body)

1.3 Where can I obtain a copy of the Safeguarding Policy?

The Safeguarding Policy may be viewed and/or a copy obtained from the Safeguarding Coordinators. A copy will also be available on the Welcome desk and on the Church website (in the About Us section).

1.4 Safeguarding Coordinators

The Church will appoint Safeguarding Coordinators. The responsibilities of these Coordinators are:

- To review and maintain the Safeguarding Policy.
- To help coordinate the appointment of any persons working with children or vulnerable adults with respect to Safeguarding, including arranging DBS checks, and a code of conduct outlining good practice and unacceptable behaviours.
- To maintain a secure and confidential record of all Safeguarding issues according to guidelines.
- To be available if a disclosure occurs and follow the disclosure procedure, including informing the appropriate authorities with support from Thirtyone:eight
- To keep the eldership of the Church abreast of new developments in Safeguarding.

The current Safeguarding Coordinators are:

Andrew Steventon
Hannah Lindsay

All the vulnerable individuals involved in activities within the Church should be familiar with who they are and how they can be contacted.

Safeguarding Trustee is Jon Lindsay who will oversee safeguarding and feed back to the trustees.

2. Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People

2.1 General Guidelines for running a club, activity or church service

Church service:

- Ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.
- Parents are to be responsible for their children (under 14s) on site and aware of where they are, ensuring they are supervised at all times
- Children are to use the children's toilets where possible, or where none are available they must be supported by their parent/guardian in adult toilets, or use the disabled toilets at the front of school.
- In family sermons where adult themes within the Bible text itself that will be mentioned, or specific issues of the day that are to be named e.g abortion or adoption, families will be advised of content in advance of the Sunday morning. (See appendix 7) If guests attend with children, church leaders will aim to discuss this with them prior to the meeting starting.
- By the nature of the Gospel, Church is open to all people. Individuals who wish to target children may therefore see Church attendance as an opportunity to build inappropriate relationships. People in the Church should be aware of this risk and apply a questioning attitude to new people's behaviour and attitude towards children.
- Any concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinators.

Groups:

- Only workers assigned to the group are allowed to participate in the activity. Other adults, whether church members or not, should ideally not enter the sections of the building being used by the group unless for a specific pre-agreed reason.
- All centrally organised open church groups will take place in a public building i.e. church building or hired building not in a private residence. It is permitted for a closed social event e.g. youth breakfasts to be within a leader's home who has a current DBS check with parental agreement and clear guidance of activities to be undertaken. The closed nature of the event means that only those who have attended youth group on a regular basis are able to attend.
- Consent forms are to be completed for all children attending groups: this will include any additional medical needs, SEND needs, including but not exhaustive of toileting needs, any medication required whilst in the groups, and allergies. A plan would be agreed with the parent about how these needs will be managed in the group setting.
- Clear behaviour expectations will be written and shared with each group which is age-appropriate and agreed to by parents on consent forms. These will be regularly reiterated in group settings to support familiarity and compliance.
- Ensure that each group includes a female helper.
- All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the child's needs, not the needs of the adult. Colleagues must be prepared to support each other and act or speak out if they think any adult is behaving inappropriately.
- Avoid taking young children to the toilet, but when unavoidable make sure another adult is informed or organise a toilet break for the whole group. Only female workers should escort very young children to the toilet. Encourage children to be independent and do not allow the toilets to be used as a playground.
- Ensure the level of personal care (e.g. toileting) required is appropriate to the needs of the individual.
- Have clear guidelines on personal privacy e.g. when working with children avoiding questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments.
- Do not allow anyone under 18 years of age to be left in charge of children of any age or those attending the group being left unsupervised.
- For groups where parents do not remain on site, a minimum of 2 contact numbers is required for parents or guardians.
- Child on child abuse (such as bullying, physical abuse e.g. hitting, kicking, hair pulling or any physical harm, and sexual harassment) should be addressed immediately and Safeguarding Coordinator informed.

- Smart phones and devices will not be used in youth group setting and this expectation will be made clear to youth at the beginning of the session and their parents on the consent form. Use of devices must be limited to reduce risk of access to harmful content.

2.2 Physical Contact and Safeguarding

Abuse is harm of a very serious nature so that it is unlikely that any type of appropriate physical contact in the course of day to day work with vulnerable individuals could be misconstrued as abuse. We aim to provide a warm, nurturing environment for vulnerable individuals whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour. All workers and volunteers must work with or within sight of another adult. If any activity requires physical contact, make sure that the young person and their parents are aware of this and its nature.

With regards to reasonable force, we do not have a zero-touch policy: however, it is expected that staff and volunteers do not touch vulnerable individuals as a way to manage misbehaviour (for example, forcing a child to return to mats if they have run away from them). Instead, an age-appropriate discussion with that vulnerable individual needs to be had to encourage them verbally to return. If this is ineffective, then their parent or guardian should be brought in. An exception to this is if a vulnerable individual is at risk of causing harm to themselves or others, or excessive damage to property and not responding to discussion or distraction. Any contact at all of this nature must be immediately documented by yourself and any adult witnesses and shared with a safeguarding officer.

2.3 Health and Safety Guidelines

Adult / Child Ratios

The minimum required staffing levels for children's groups are given below. More help may be required if children have SEND needs, are being taken out or are undertaking physical activities.

0–2 years	1 person for every 3 children
2–3 years	1 person for every 4 children
3–8 years	1 person for every 8 children
Over 8 years	1 person for the first 8 children and then one extra person for every extra 12 children

Each group should have at least two adults. Where possible a single leader should not be alone with a child of any age in a room. If groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with doors open one person per group is allowed. If there is a need to talk confidentially to a child, this should be done where possible within the sight of others. If a leader is in a situation where they are left alone with a child, they should have a clear method of summoning additional help. Leaders must seek parental permission if a child or young person is to be seen alone. Another adult must be nearby and the child or young person must know this.

Young people aged between 14 and 18 may help with groups but should be supervised by an adult helper who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and the Safeguarding procedures are followed. Adults asked to help on a very occasional basis may be seen as visitors but must be responsible to an appointed worker, and must be supervised at all times. If any adults or young people become part of a regular rota, they should become part of the team, be properly appointed and must also undergo an enhanced DBS check.

Premises

Meeting places should be warm, well-lit and well ventilated. They should be kept clean and free of clutter. Electrics should be up-to-date and supported by an up-to-date RCD. Toilets and hand basins should be easily available, with hygienic drying facilities provided. There should be enough space available for the intended activity.

Main entrances and exits need to be safe so that children cannot get out without the leaders knowing and strangers cannot get in. When the main door is open at the beginning and end of meetings, there should be a leader present. It should not be left open at other times. If children are being collected by parents, ensure they do not leave the building on their own. Two leaders should stay until all the children have been collected. If anyone other than the child's parent is collecting the child then the parents must have given permission for this prior to leaving the child. Any parents of visiting children must be asked to clearly identify themselves to the leaders before leaving the child.

If food is regularly prepared for children on the premises (cold snacks such as fruit or breadsticks are not included in this category), the facilities will need to be checked by the Environmental Health Officer and a "Food Handling and Hygiene Certificate" acquired. Drinks should always be available.

Other Health and Safety Advice

- Groups must have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults should be aware of the fire procedures. See Church by the Bay Fire Policies for further information.
- No smoking should be permitted in the areas where there are children. Alcohol and illegal drugs must not be used by those who have children and young people in their care, or at a time when their use could affect the care given to them.
- Unaccompanied children and young people should not walk to or from the premises along dark or badly lit paths.
- A record of the names, addresses and emergency contact numbers of the children attending the meeting should be kept in the immediate vicinity of the premises where the meeting takes place.
- In the event of a toileting accident, two leaders should deal with the situation. If the child has to be changed, it should be recorded in the log book and the parents notified immediately when the child is picked up to be taken home.

2.4 Guidelines for recording incidents

A confidential logbook shall be maintained. This is a secure stored record and remain confidential. This is maintained by the Safeguarding Coordinators. It is to record any safeguarding issues which are considered sensitive or significant or those which may not be significant on their own but may be part of a larger picture. Every child, young person, vulnerable adult, parent or carer should be able to view what is recorded about them in the logbook. Information should be kept in a way that does not breach the confidentiality of an individual. Whilst it is important to observe data protection requirements, safeguarding is always the priority. Information about the prevention and detection of crime is exempt from data protection requirements. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

2.5 First Aid and Health

A first aid kit and accident book should be available on the premises. Workers should be encouraged to attend First Aid training. A list of first aiders should be compiled and kept available. All accidents must be recorded in the accident book, detailing the date and time of when an incident occurred, the action taken, who took it and how long it took to do. At least two leaders should deal with any problem.

All premises used by children should have a first aid kit, the contents of which should be stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. Each group should designate one worker to check the contents regularly. All workers should be encouraged to have some first aid knowledge.

Confidentiality regarding a child's HIV status should always be maintained.

Good hygiene should always be practiced with all children and young people.

Disposable gloves and aprons should be available for use when dealing with broken skin, body fluids and faeces. These are kept in the preschool leaders' box for Sundays and are available at the Church building during the week.

Current First Aiders at Church by the Bay are:

- Jon Lindsay
- Mike Haslam
- Vanessa Rigby
- Erin Sammons
- Hannah Lindsay

2.6 Guidelines for corresponding with children and young people

Corresponding with children

Leaders will only contact children (here defined as 0-11 year olds) directly by post (e.g. a Christmas card, get well card etc). Any other form of initiated communication (email, phone, text) must always go through a parent or guardian. If a child emails a leader, any response from the leader should ideally be copied to the parent. If this is not appropriate another leader should be copied in.

Corresponding with young people (age 11-18)

In addition to contacting young people by post, leaders of the youth groups may on occasion use email to contact the whole group at one time. Leaders will not generally write emails to individual young people. On occasion when a leader emails a young person individually (for instance replying to a young person's question) the leader will always copy in another leader visibly (i.e. not blind copied).

Leaders will not generally contact young people on their mobile phones either by phoning or by text. The exception is contacting young people to confirm practical arrangements (e.g. ringing a young person to find out where they are, if they have not arrived etc). Any contact with a young person must only be done having first sought the parent / guardian's permission.

Any message received from or sent to a young person that raises concerns should be written down and passed to the Safeguarding Coordinators who will record it in the incident book.

Young people's leaders should not privately message young people on social media or any messaging services. While it is recognised that these are widely used, leaders should be discerning regarding the use of such media.

2.7 Guidelines for Transporting Children

By Car

Children and young people should not be taken in a vehicle without the prior consent of the parents. All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured. Any driver who has an endorsement of 6 points or more on their license should inform one of the Safeguarding Coordinators. Any driver who has an 'unspent' conviction for a drink driving offence or for Dangerous Driving or Racing on the Highway should not transport children. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts during Church activities. All cars that carry children should be in a roadworthy condition. All children must wear suitable seat belts. If there are no seat belts children should not be carried.

At no time should the number of children in a car exceed the usual passenger number. If a child is known to have a disability or special need, consideration should be given whether to have a non-driving adult in the car. This adult should sit in the back, behind the driver, with the child in the seat beside him or her. If a driver has to transport one child on his or her own, the child must sit in the back of the car. This should only happen for short distances or in case of emergency.

By Minibus

- A minibus with seat belts must be used.
- All children must have a proper seat.
- An escort must always be taken.

2.8 Guidelines for 'Off-Site' Activities

- All activities must be covered by insurance. Potentially hazardous activities must be assessed for risk before being agreed by the elders.
- The leader should take the consent forms with them on the outing.
- A First Aid kit should be carried.

When there is an outing, a named person must be responsible, back in the home area, in the event of an unforeseen delay or emergency. This person's name and contact details should be given to the child's parents and they should be available during the time that the group is away. This person should have the itinerary and be aware of the plans - estimated time of arrival at the destination, estimated time of return etc. The named person should have the names and addresses of everyone both adults and children, who are on the trip. In the event of an incident or accident the named person will be responsible for speedily contacting the parents.

2.9 Guidelines for Taking Young People Away

- No child under the age of 8 can be taken away on residential activities without being accompanied by their parent or guardian.
- It is important that parents should have full information before giving consent.
This should include:
 - Aims and objectives of the event or activity.
 - Date of the event and its duration.
 - Details of venue including arrangements for accommodation and supervision.
 - Travel arrangements.
 - Name of group leader and contact numbers.
 - Information about financial, medical and insurance arrangements.

Parental Consent

Each child or young person under the age of 18 (unless they are over 16 and living away from home or married) must have the written consent of his or her parent or guardian; this gives authority to the person named as responsible for the activity to take the young person away and to act 'as a careful parent would'. It does not transfer 'parental responsibility'.

Premises

Insurance, First Aid kit and fire precautions should be checked.

Insurance

Insurance must be adequate for the activities planned, especially any hazardous activities.

Accommodation

Boys and girls must have separate sleeping and washing facilities which are private to them. Mixed groups must have adults of both sexes involved. Adults should have separate accommodation but in close proximity to the young people. Any other arrangements e.g. 'sleep-overs', 'lock-ins', 'all-night' events should be carefully explained to parents beforehand and their consent sought for the arrangements.

Supervision

- Ratios of helpers to young people should be strictly followed.
- Adults should avoid being alone with children or young people.
- Parents should be informed beforehand if it is intended to allow groups of young people to go off unsupervised e.g. for shopping.
- All volunteer helpers should be clear about their responsibilities and who to ask for advice about concerns.

2.10 Guidelines for Holiday Clubs and Missions

- These are situations when there are likely to be extra helpers for part or all of the activity.
- The activity should be planned carefully. If in the course of one year several events for under-8-year-olds extend over more than 6 days, there is a requirement for the activity to be registered with the local Social Services Department (0300 123 6720).
- You should ensure that all the usual health and safety recommendations are in place. Make sure there are enough helpers for all the activities.
- If there are many new or one-off helpers, they should be divided into teams, ensuring that there is a known, properly-appointed leader responsible for each team.
- Ask the children's parents to fill in a consent form to cover all the activities.
- There will be occasions, such as the Church Weekend, where recommended and trusted helpers are from other churches (Moorlands, Parr Street etc).
- In these circumstances, it will be acceptable for DBS checks from their church to be seen by the Safeguarding Coordinators.

2.11 Children and the Internet

- People in the Church need to be aware of technological advances and dangers related to young people accessing the internet, potentially in church or church-led activities. There may be concerns raised to you or observed within groups relating to this. Online risk categories are:
 - Content
 - Contact
 - Conduct
 - Commerce.
- See appendix4 (page 21) for further details.

2.12 Online Church activities

- When using Zoom or Teams, it is essential to utilise the built in features to safeguard everyone in the meeting. This includes such measures as disabling screen share, disabling private messaging and using the waiting room to remove the ability for intrusion and inappropriate sharing.

Use of Social media Church by the Bay recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Church by the Bay uses social media creatively to support engagement, information sharing and share the good news about Jesus.

However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This section aims to encourage the safe use of social media by church and its representatives. The guidance in this section:

- Applies to all online communications which directly or indirectly represent the church
- Applies to all online communications posted at anytime and from anywhere.

When using social media, staff and volunteers will follow this guidance:

- At least 2 designated leaders must have login credentials to official pages for accountability.
- All digital communications must be respectful, avoiding public arguments, political hostility and disrespectful speech
- Explicit written consent needs to be gained from parents or guardians before publishing photos or videos of minors.
- No identifiable information of a minor or vulnerable person should be shared, such as their name or specific personal data
- All posts will be compliant with copyright guidance, such as correctly licensing and attributing all music, lyrics and images to respect intellectual property.
- Page administrators will monitor, hide or delete abusive, inappropriate or bullying comments

Any worrying online statements, safety breaches or safeguarding allegations must be passed to the safeguarding officers immediately.

3. Appointment, Support, Supervision and Training of Leaders and Workers

3.1 Procedure For Appointment

The following procedure is required for new workers with vulnerable individuals:

- Be considered by appropriate people to have the behaviours, character and ability required of a worker with vulnerable individuals.
- Be interviewed by appropriate people to discuss what the individual will be involved with and to discuss a 'job description', defining their role and responsibilities.
- The volunteer should be given a copy of the Church's Safeguarding Policy which they should read and agree to work within the guidelines.
- The volunteer will be asked to read and sign a code of conduct to commit to adhering to outlined good practice and to avoid unacceptable behaviours.
- A relevant DBS check should be completed if the volunteer does not have a certificate which has been issued in the previous 3 years by Church by the Bay.
- Each volunteer should be given guidelines on dealing with the disclosure of abuse and should receive ongoing training on Safeguarding and related issues as appropriate.

3.2 Support and Training

All workers should familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding Coordinators and feel free to approach them, or the Safeguarding Trustee or alternatively a Church Elder, about procedures relating to Safeguarding.

The Church has a responsibility to:

- Support all who work with vulnerable individuals by providing a safe and structured environment in which Safeguarding is seen as a priority.
- Provide pastoral support to all these workers and allow them to speak confidentially to appropriate persons if concerns are raised.
- Provide suitable training within the Church and if necessary encourage attendance at external training courses such as those provided by Thirtyone:eight. Financial support is available for this purpose, subject to the approval of the elders.
- The whole Church has a responsibility to report any concerns about any workers within the Church to the Safeguarding Coordinators.

3.3 Working with Offenders

Ex-sexual Offenders Within the Congregation

The Church is a place for all who fall short and sin, for the vulnerable and for those in need. Abusers are people in desperate need of help. Whenever help and support is offered to an ex-offender the protection of the children in the Church must come first. Remember that abusers of children are usually people who get on well with children and whom children like. Present research suggests that sexual offending can be a kind of addiction that is very hard to control and can only be managed. This must be born in mind when welcoming an ex-offender into the community.

Many ex-offenders will seek God's forgiveness for their crimes. Genuine repentance implies that the person concerned will accept that further help is required to prevent a re-occurrence of the offence and to deal with the

human and social effects of the sin. As well as professional therapy, this may require continuing supervision and discipline within the Church as part of the ministry to the offender. An ex-offender will need to accept that no further contact or work with children or young people can be permitted, and that a continuing pastoral role may be impossible. Sensitive care of the offender is needed in these circumstances.

Anyone who discovers that a person has been convicted of sexual abuse against a child must inform one of the Safeguarding Coordinators so appropriate steps may be taken.

It is our policy that no-one who has been convicted or who has accepted a caution for a sexual offence against a child will be permitted to work, in a paid or unpaid position, with children. A person who has been convicted or who has accepted a caution for a sexual offence against a child may be restricted from certain church activities.

A person convicted or who has accepted a caution for any other offence against a child or for whom there are unresolved serious allegations outstanding will only be allowed to work with children or be part of mixed-age activities following consultation and individual agreement. This agreement may contain restrictions from certain activities, specified levels of supervision or other instructions deemed necessary at the discretion of the Safeguarding coordinators and Church Elders.

How to plan the integration of known sexual offenders

Where a known offender joins the Church, it will be important to extend love and friendship to the individual, but at the same time the Elders will need to ensure that a frank discussion takes place with the person concerned and that efforts are made to sustain open communications. 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 accused of abuse or being tempted to abuse.

The following procedures should be followed:

- Maintain close links with any probation officer.
- Be open with the offender.
- Prepare an agreement which may include:
 - Attending only designated services and meetings.
 - Sitting apart from children.
 - Staying away from areas of the building where children meet.
 - Attending a house group where there are no children.
 - Declining hospitality where there are children.
 - Never being alone with children.
 - Never working with children.
 - Not being part of an activity that includes children.
 - Attending only agreed social events.
 - Restriction from certain roles of perceived leadership and trust.
- Ask the offender to sign the agreement.
- Enforce the agreement - do not allow manipulation.
- Consider with the offender whether to tell the Church.
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Coordinators and appropriate members of the Eldership are aware of the situation (if you don't tell the whole Church).
- Provide close support and pastoral care.
- If the agreement is broken be prepared to ban the offender from the Church and inform the probation officer.

4. What to do if a vulnerable individual Makes a Disclosure or Abuse is Suspected

4.1 Talking to vulnerable individuals on their own.

If a vulnerable individual asks to speak to you alone it is important to listen because any delay may prevent that person from disclosing a serious problem. (You should hold a current DBS check if you agree to speak to the person). The following guidelines should be followed if possible:

- Be open and available.
- Be relaxed.
- Listen before you speak.
- Never promise not to tell anyone.
- Avoid putting any pressure on the person.
- Remember none of us have all the answers.
- Help the person decide what they want to do.
- Remember you are not on your own.
- Always meet in an open area where others are around but not too close.
- In exceptional circumstances, if a person is distressed and more privacy is needed, use a separate room after telling another adult about the arrangements and make sure that the vulnerable individual knows where the nearest adult is.
- Preferably women should advise females, and men advise males.
- Keep a record of who is spoken to in case follow up is needed. Sign, date and time the notes (see section 4.2, Confidentiality, below). A template to record the incident is in Appendix 8. This should be returned to the Safeguarding officers once complete.
- If the individual is distressed, they should be entrusted to another adult at the end of the session.
- If a situation is encountered where the listener feels uncomfortable, they should speak to the Safeguarding Coordinators as soon as possible.

4.2 Confidentiality

At the first meeting, explain that you may need to tell certain, appropriate others (e.g. Safeguarding Coordinators) the content of the conversation. If the person is being harmed themselves, if they are harming others or if they know that a vulnerable individual is being harmed, *the information will have to be passed on*. The person will be told what will be done and how they will be supported if they need to talk to someone else. In these circumstances always make a written record, sign date and time, and follow the Safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Hearing an abuse disclosure from a vulnerable individual

Church workers may get to know the vulnerable individuals in their groups very well. A vulnerable individual may feel enough trust to be able to talk about unhappy things that are happening - at home, at school or at Church. This is both a privilege and a responsibility. Remember that the vulnerable individual may want the abuse to stop but still love the abuser. The vulnerable individual may think that it is possible to stop the abuse without anything else happening.

If a vulnerable individual asks to talk in confidence always tell them that it will depend on the circumstances. Your responsibility is for the vulnerable individual's safety and wellbeing. It will be necessary to get other people to help if they are being harmed. You should inform the vulnerable individuals of any steps you will take in advance of taking them. If it is possible, try to have another adult present whilst the vulnerable individual speaks, but do not prevent the vulnerable individual from speaking if this is not a possibility. If the vulnerable individual will not speak with another adult present, the conversation should take place in a public room with other people in the vicinity.

General points:

- Listen to the vulnerable individual attentively.
- Show acceptance of what the vulnerable individual says (however unlikely it seems).
- Maintain eye contact.
- Be honest.
- Be aware that they may have been threatened.
- Allow the vulnerable individual to talk, but don't press for information.

Helpful Things to Say:

- 'I believe you.' (or show acceptance of what they've said)
- 'I'm glad you've told me.'
- 'I will help you.'

Avoid Saying:

- 'Why didn't you tell me before?'
- 'I can't believe it.'
- 'Are you sure this is true?'
- 'Why? Where? When? Who?'
- Any false promises.
- 'I'm shocked.'
- 'Don't tell anyone else.'

Having listened to them

- Tell the vulnerable individual that they are not to blame for anything that has happened.
- Reassure the vulnerable individual that they were right to tell you
- Let the vulnerable individual know that other people will have to be told so that the abuse can stop.
- Try to explain what will happen next in a way that the vulnerable individual can understand.
- Reassure the vulnerable individual that he or she will continue to be supported during the difficult time to come.
- Seek advice from the Safeguarding Coordinators; if no-one is immediately available contact your local Social Services Department (0300 123 6720) directly.
- As soon as practicable (preferably within an hour of the conversation) write down as carefully as possible everything that was said, what the vulnerable individual has said, how they said it and how they appeared emotionally. (See appendix 8 for incident Safeguarding concern template) Record dates, times and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes. Sign, date and time the notes. Make sure a copy is given to one of the Safeguarding Coordinators.
- Do not talk to the alleged abuser.
- The Safeguarding Coordinators or appropriate leader should inform Social Services immediately and take advice prior to informing the parents or carers of the situation.

4.4 Reports from Parents or Others

Parents, other adults or a teenager may report abuse but be reluctant to inform the relevant authorities in such circumstances. They should be encouraged to discuss the matter with Social Services (0300 123 6720) or with another trusted professional with Safeguarding training. In any case it is the responsibility of the Church to inform the Social Services Department (0300 123 6720) of the allegation so that the vulnerable individual and others are protected.

4.5 Disclosures from Abusers - Matters of Confidentiality

People who abuse vulnerable individuals rarely admit to what they have done. It is however possible that admissions may be made. While there is a general presumption in favour of confidentiality of pastoral conversations of all kinds, this cannot apply in the case of disclosures concerning the abuse of vulnerable

individual. Thus, while a person's right to confidentiality is of great importance, it is not absolute. If a person hearing a disclosure considers that a vulnerable individual is at risk of significant harm, they must follow these procedures above without delay.

The Children Act 1989 states that if there is a conflict between the needs of a child and an adult 'the welfare of the child is paramount'.

Those who admit to offences against vulnerable individuals should be assured that, within the constraints of the law and subject to the obligation to safeguard the welfare of children, they will continue to receive the pastoral care and support of the Church.

4.6 Historical Allegations

It is quite common for adults who were abused as children to make allegations of the abuse some years after the event. This may be as a result of seeing the abuser approaching another child, or perhaps their own children have reached the age when they themselves were abused. The adult making the allegation may need advice about where to seek counselling and support.

The Safeguarding Coordinators must be informed of all allegations involving a member of the Church. It will be the responsibility of the adult concerned to decide whether they wish to seek legal redress. The Church will then decide whether there might be vulnerable individuals now at risk. If so, a referral will be made to the local Social Services Department (0300 123 6720) .

4.7 The Care of Survivors of Abuse

The Church will be involved with survivors of abuse in many ways:

- Abused children may come to the Church for help.
- Adult abuse survivors may turn to the Church for help.
- Some Church workers were sexually abused as children, and need the support of colleagues, congregations and superiors.
- Children may be abused by Christian family members.
- Children may be abused by Church workers.

The Church should think about ways of responding in a sympathetic and practical way. This means creating a loving environment within which healing can happen and which may require providing access to factual information and sources of professional help.

4.8 Procedures to be followed if there are Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure that a vulnerable individual is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm must be referred to the local Social Services Department. (0300 123 6720)

There are several ways in which concerns about a vulnerable individual can become apparent:

- By an allegation made by the vulnerable individual directly.
- By reports or allegations made by a parent or another person.
- By observing signs and symptoms of abuse.
- By the admission from someone who says they are harming a vulnerable individual.

The Safeguarding Coordinators should be informed if there are any concerns regarding vulnerable individuals and appropriate referrals will be made to the local Social Services Department (0300 123 6720).

If any individual is unhappy about the Church's response, there is delay, or for some reason they do not wish to go through our procedure, that person has a personal responsibility to make the referral to the Social Services Department (0300 123 6720) themselves.

In the case of serious allegations or if it is possible that a criminal offence has been committed (for example a physical or sexual assault) *care should be taken not to inform the alleged offender, and in some circumstances the child's parents so that any investigation is not compromised.* An agreement should be made with the police and Social Services Department (0300 123 6720) about who should be given information and when that information should be given.⁹ During Safeguarding investigations, it is normal for the alleged offender to be withdrawn from any contact with children or young people. This is a neutral act and is done without prejudging the person concerned. All actions regarding a Safeguarding concern must be recorded, signed and dated.

The Social Services Department (0300 123 6720) is the lead agency in matters of Safeguarding and co-ordinates any response. The police can be contacted in an emergency. When making the referral, give the appropriate person as much detail as possible, describing the event or disclosure, as well as information about the child and family. Distinguish between fact and opinion, what is first-hand knowledge and what has been heard from others. The referral should be followed up with a letter, a copy of which must be sent to the Safeguarding Coordinators.

The person directly involved with a disclosure or observation should:

- Be prepared to have further discussions with Social Services and police.
- Be prepared to attend a Safeguarding Case Conference.
- Continue to support the child (but not to ask any questions about the disclosure as indicated above) and seek personal support for themselves.
- Give evidence in court if required to do so.

4.9 Record Keeping: The Data Protection Act 1998 and The Human Rights Act 1998

It is important to keep accurate records of any Safeguarding concerns, disclosures or allegations. Facts observed or disclosed should be accurately recorded, signed and dated. Opinions should not be included. If any records are to be kept without the subject of the record's knowledge, it should be made clear why this is so, for instance if there appears to be a worrying pattern of behaviour which needs to be monitored. Try to be consistent about what is kept so that it can be justified if necessary. Actions taken and decisions made should all be noted. It should be recorded who knows about the information, for example, the subject of the record, the child's parents etc. Information should not be kept once a situation has been resolved and no longer than is necessary for the purpose it was collected.

4.10 Untrue Allegations

Occasionally an untrue allegation may be made. It is important not to make judgements and to allow any allegation to be carefully investigated to try to ascertain the truth. Untrue allegations can be the result of some other concern or unhappiness in a vulnerable individual's life. It is very important that people working with vulnerable individuals do not put themselves in vulnerable situations.

4.11 Inappropriate Behaviour by Vulnerable Individuals Towards Adults

Vulnerable individuals can sometimes make suggestive approaches to an adult.

- They may have a crush or may act inappropriately following previous abusive experiences. The behaviour may be a "cry for help". If an adult feels uncomfortable about a vulnerable individual's behaviour he or she must:
 - Tell another adult in the Church or the Safeguarding Coordinators. Agree with the colleague what measures should be taken to prevent a re-occurrence.
 - Make it clear to the vulnerable individual, with sensitivity, that their language or behaviour is inappropriate.
 - Record the incident in case accusations are made in the future. Sign and date the record and hand it to the Safeguarding Coordinators.

4.12 Procedures to be Followed During the Investigation of an Allegation

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in conjunction with the statutory authorities. The highest degree of confidentiality must be maintained during an investigation. Support should be given to the various parties involved with an allegation. Those supporting the alleged offender and those supporting the alleged victim or victim's family should not discuss the situation with each other. This is to avoid any possible contamination of evidence.

Following the outcome of an investigation, appropriate disciplinary procedures will apply. The result of an investigation may be inconclusive, there may or may not be a prosecution, or it may be decided that a person's behaviour has been ill-advised and foolish rather than criminal. After taking advice, the Elders may need to put restrictions on a person's future employment or volunteering, or require them to undertake a risk assessment, counselling, training, supervision or spiritual direction.

Allegations may be shown to be unfounded or malicious. In these cases, appropriate means will be taken to make clear that the person has been exonerated.

Any serious incidents, abuse or mistreatment will be reported to the charity commission as per their guidance (Charity Commission 2026).

Appendices

1. The Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998

The Data Protection principles enshrined in the Data Protection Act 1998 are included for information.

Personal data should be:

- Processed fairly and lawfully and only if certain conditions are met.
- Processed only for specified lawful purposes/in ways compatible with them.
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose.
- Accurate and up-to-date.
- Kept for no longer than necessary for the purpose.
- Processed in accordance with the strengthened subject access rights.
- Kept securely.
- Not transferred to any country without adequate data protection.

The Human Rights Act 1998 includes both the right to privacy in family life and also the right to life and the right not to be tortured. It is expected that the courts will uphold the need to pass on information for the purposes of protecting a child. The highest degree of confidentiality consistent with this should be maintained and only information necessary for the safeguarding of children passed on.

2. Responding to allegations or suspicions of child abuse: Duties of the Local Authority

The Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the Local Authority:

- To take reasonable steps to prevent children suffering ill treatment or neglect.
- To share information about any child within the area who is likely to suffer harm.
- To investigate where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need and their families by the provision of services.
- Recognition of suspected or actual child abuse is the responsibility not only of the statutory agencies (police, Social Services, health services, schools etc.) but also the community.

It is the duty of the Social Services Department under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 to investigate “where there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm”. After a referral has been made, the Social Services Department will decide whether what they have heard appears to constitute child abuse, and/or whether they need to offer advice and support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 for a child in need. They may also decide not to do anything. If they decide to investigate, they will normally do this jointly with specially trained police officers.

- They will gather information from people who know the child: for example teachers and GP.
- They will interview the child's parents.
- They will interview the child and perhaps other children in the family. This may be in the form of a video interview if it is considered that court proceedings might be a possible outcome. The child is always interviewed by specially trained staff.
- If the investigation concludes that the child or young person has suffered and/or is likely to continue to suffer significant harm a multi-agency Safeguarding Case Conference will decide whether the child needs protection and how that can be achieved. The child's name may be placed on the Safeguarding Register.
- The police will decide, together with the Crown Prosecution Service, whether a criminal act has been committed and whether a person should be cautioned or charged with an offence and taken to court.
- If the case is taken to court the child will probably have to be a witness, unless the person pleads guilty; there are special provisions to help a child through this process.

Significant harm

This concept was introduced by the Children Act 1989 as the threshold for intervention in family life for the protection of children. There is no absolute criteria on which to rely—consideration is given to the severity of ill-treatment; the degree and extent of physical harm; the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect; the extent of pre-meditation; the degree of threat and coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse. Significant harm can be caused by one traumatic event or a compilation of events that interrupt, change or damage the child's physical or psychological development. In each case it is necessary also to consider the family's strengths and supports.

3. Definitions of child abuse

From “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2026

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill-treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which 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: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from 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, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Neglect: 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, for example, 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 caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

4. Common Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

Physical Abuse

The first evidence of abuse may not be an obvious severe injury.

- Bruises
 - In or around the mouth.
 - Fingertip bruising on arms, chest or face indicating tight gripping or shaking.
 - Bruises of different colours indicating injuries of different ages.
 - Two simultaneous black eyes without bruising to the forehead.
 - Bruising showing the marks of a belt or implement or a hand print.
 - Bruising or tears around the earlobes.
 - Bruising to the head or soft tissue areas of the body.
- Bites
 - Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped and can leave a clear impression of teeth.
- Burns and scalds
 - Burns with a clear outline are suspicious.
 - Circular burns from cigarettes.
 - Linear burns from hot metal rods or electric elements.
 - Burns of a uniform depth over a large area.
 - Friction burns from being pulled across a floor.
 - Scalds producing a water line from immersion or pouring of hot liquid.
 - Splash marks around the main burn area caused by hot liquid being thrown.
 - Old scars indicating previous burns.
- Fractures
 - Any fracture in a child under 1 year old is suspicious.
 - Any skull fracture in the first 3 years is suspicious.
- Female circumcision
 - This is illegal except for health reasons.

Neglect

Often difficult to identify, neglect leads to the physical and emotional harm of a child. The signs and symptoms include:

- Failure of a parent to provide adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene, medical care or supervision.
- Failure of a child to grow within the normally expected pattern; they may show pallor, weight loss and signs of poor nutrition.
- Failure of a parent to provide adequate love and affection in a stimulating environment, a child may look listless, apathetic or unresponsive with no apparent medical cause.
- A child may be observed thriving when away from the home environment.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can also be difficult to identify. It is the result of ill treatment in the form of coldness, hostility and rejection; constant denigration or seriously distorted emotional demands; extreme inconsistency of parenting.

Some of the signs and symptoms are:

- Low self-esteem;
- Apathy;
- Being fearful and withdrawn or displaying “frozen watchfulness”.
- Unduly aggressive behaviour.
- Excessive clinging or attention seeking behaviour.
- Constantly seeking to please.
- Over-readiness to relate to anyone, even strangers.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse can be suspected based on physical signs, the child's behaviour or following a direct statement by the child. It is often investigated because of a combination of these signs.

- Physical signs (these will normally be identified by a medical practitioner. Others can be more generally observed):
 - Recurrent abdominal pain.
 - Unexplained pregnancy.
 - Difficulty walking and sitting.
 - Faecal soiling or retention.
 - Recurrent urinary tract infections.
- Behavioural signs:
 - Knowledge unusual for the age of the child.
 - Sexually provocative relationships with adults.
 - Sexualised play with other children.
 - Hints of sexual activity through play, drawing or conversation.
 - Requests for contraceptive advice.
 - Lack of trust or marked fear of familiar adults.
 - Sudden onset of soiling or wetting.
 - Severe sleep disturbance.
 - Change of eating habits.
 - Social isolation and withdrawal.
 - Role reversal in the home e.g. a daughter taking over the mothering role.
 - Inappropriate displays of physical contact between adult and child.
 - Learning difficulties, poor concentration.
 - Inability to make friends.
 - Using school as a haven, arriving early and seeming reluctant to leave
 - Reluctance to take part in physical activity.
 - Truancy, running away from home.
 - Self harm, mutilation or suicide attempts.
 - Dependence on drugs or alcohol.
 - Anti-social behaviour including promiscuity and prostitution.

Online abuse:

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and
- commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

It is recognised that there are some groups who are more vulnerable to mistreatment and abuse.

These are:

- Someone who is disabled or who has certain health conditions and specific additional needs
- Someone who has a mental health need
- Someone who is a young carer
- Someone who is in a challenging family situation (eg. drug or alcohol misuse)
- Someone who has a parent or carer in custody.

Those individuals with SEND they are at higher risk as:

- There are assumptions made that signs of possible abuse relate to their SEND needs without exploration
- They are more prone to peer isolation
- They are disproportionately affected by behaviours such as bullying without showing outward signs
- They may have communication barriers and difficulties managing or reporting challenges
- They may repeat seen or heard behaviours without understanding consequences.

Workers with these groups will be particularly alert to potential need for additional support.

Organised abuse

Organised abuse refers to any abusive practice which is planned or exercised by two or more perpetrators, or where more than one child is abused by the same person. This type of abuse does occur and needs very careful investigation. Good communication between everyone involved is essential. This type of abuse can include the production and dissemination of child pornography by various methods including the internet.

5. Equal Opportunities Statement

1. Church by the Bay is a Christian organisation committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to treating people on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor. No person will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds.
2. In employment we actively seek to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.
3. As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, some posts can only be filled by Christians. These posts are kept under regular review. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented in accordance with Employment and Race Directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.
4. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the Church undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any person on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

5. A Disclosure is only requested if relevant for the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.
6. Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent separately and in confidence to the Recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to, as part of the recruitment process.
7. Unless the nature of the position allows questioning about your entire criminal record, we only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
8. We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
9. At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
10. Every person undergoing a DBS check will be made aware of the DBS Code of Practice and a copy will be available on request.
11. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
12. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

6. Handling, Use, Secure Storage, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information

In consideration of our use of the Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure Service, to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, we agree to comply with the DBS Code of Practice, Data Protection Act and other legislation in regard to the correct handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information.

Storage and access

Disclosure information is never kept on an applicant’s personal file but is kept securely stored with access strictly limited to those who are entitled as part of their official duties.

Handling

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information have been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Usage

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

Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, Disclosure information may be kept for up to six months for the resolution of disputes or complaints, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If this happens it will be done in consultation with the Thirtyone:eight Disclosure Unit who will seek advice from the DBS giving full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights legislation. The conditions regarding safe handling and storage will continue to apply.

Disposal

Once the retention period has lapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately and appropriately destroyed (eg by shredding, pulping or burning). While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will continue to be kept securely. We will not keep any original documents or copies relating to the disclosure certificate. However, we may keep a record of it ie the name, date, and type of disclosure, the position for which it was requested, the unique reference number and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

7. God's word

God's word, the Bible (e.g. 2 Peter 1:19-21; John 14:26), is good for all people (e.g. Colossians 3:16-22). Made in His image (Genesis 1:27), we are given a word which is sweeter than honey (Psalm 19:9-10), that is a lamp to guide our feet through life (Psalm 119:105), that is breathed out by Him (2 Timothy 3:16), and which shows us Jesus (e.g. John 5:46), who is the only way to eternal life (John 14:6).

However, we recognise that there are times when the Scriptures present us with parts of life which are graphic, or uncomfortable for us. Even when it is such, it remains God's good word,, but we recognise some parents may consider some parts of the Bible as not appropriate for their children

At such time as the Bible reading and teaching is deemed to cover subjects which are anatomically graphic (such as reproductive organs and processes) or overtly sexual, the church leadership will inform parents at the start of a teaching series. If a family is visiting church, the church leadership will endeavour to inform the parents / guardians of the Bible passage and potentially sensitive content before the start of the church meeting.

The decision about whether children are present during the reading and teaching of that particular part of the Bible remains with the parents / guardians.

8. Safeguarding Concern /Incident Report Template

Church by the Bay Safeguarding Concern /Incident Report Template

This form is designed to report any safeguarding incidents or concerns. It should be completed by the worker who has been disclosed to, who witnessed the incident, was most directly involved or who provided first aid if relevant. Once completed it must be submitted to the Safeguarding officers for action or advice gained from 31:8 in their absence.

Name & role of person completing this form:	
Church by the Bay Group:	Date form is completed:

Details of child, young person or adult at risk:

Name:	Address:
Contact number:	Gender:
Date of birth:	Any further information that may be useful to consider:

Parents/carers details:

Name:	Address:
Contact number:	Email address:
Have parents/carers been notified of the incident?: Yes / No	If yes, please provide details:

Details of reportee:

Are you reporting your own concerns or responding to concerns raised by someone else?	Reporting my own concerns	
	Responding to someone else's concerns	
If responding to someone else's concerns, please provide their details below:		
Name:		
Relationship to child, young person or adult at risk:		

Email address:		
Contact number:		
Incident Details:		
Date/ Time:		Group name (if applicable):
Location of incident:		
Description of the incident or concern: (continue on separate sheet if necessary & include reference number): <i>(Include relevant information such as what happened and how it happened, description of any injuries sustained, behaviour witnessed and whether the information provided is being recorded as fact, opinion or hearsay)</i>		
Child, young person or adult at risk account of the incident or concern: <i>(use their own words)</i>		
Witness account of incident or concern: <i>(include further accounts on separate sheets as necessary. Include reference number on each accompanying account)</i>		
Details of any witnesses:		
Name(s): <i>(Consider anonymising where this will not negatively impact the ability to take immediate response actions)</i>	Relationship to child, young person or adult at risk:	Contact details:
Details of any persons involved in the incident or alleged to have caused the incident, injury or presenting risk:		

Name(s): <i>(Consider anonymising where this will not negatively impact the ability to take immediate response actions)</i>	Relationship to child, young person or adult at risk:	Contact details:
Outcome of incident & immediate actions taken: (tick box where relevant)		
Ambulance required? Y/N Name of hospital / medical facility attended if applicable: Police/fire/rescue services attended? Y/N Notes:	First aid treatment provided: and by whom	Medication given:
Any resulting change of plans or disruption to the programme, if applicable:	Disciplinary procedures enacted:	Were any immediate changes to risk management procedures made?
Signed By Author:	Name:	Date: