## NGC LOGO

## NEW GENERATION CHURCH

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2021

**Updated March 2021**

**Next update due March 2022**

New Generation Church

New Generation Centre,

Birkbeck Road,

Sidcup, Kent,

DA14 4DJ

Tel No: 0208 309 6056 Email address: office@newgen.org.uk

Charity Number: 1114139 Company Number: 5760552

Insurance Company: Ansvar Insurance

New Generation Church runs various activities along with our regular church meetings. Most of these activities are held at New Generation Centre in Birkbeck Road, Sidcup. We run a parents and toddlers group, youth groups and a monthly event for pensioners.

**Our commitment**

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

The policy and practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by THIRTYONE:8.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with:

* Mobile phone use and social media policy
* Equal opportunities and anti-harassment policy
* E-safety bullying policy
* Anti-bullying policy Children and young people
* Online safety policy

**The Leadership undertakes to:**

* endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
* provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
* ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
* support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
* The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

**Understanding abuse and neglect**

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

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

*1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*

*2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

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

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

**Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)**

**What is abuse and neglect?**  
Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical abuse**  
Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse**  
Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.  
It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse**  
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect**  
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

* provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
* protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
* ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
* ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

**Child sexual exploitation.**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

**Extremism**

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

**Significant harm**  
This relates to the degree of harm that triggers statutory action to protect a child. It is based on the individual child's health or development compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child. e.g. severity of ill treatment, degree and extent of physical harm, duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, premeditation. Department of Health guidance suggests that 'significant' means 'considerable, noteworthy or important.'

**Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (formerly known as Munchausen’s Syndrome By Proxy)**   
This is a form of child abuse in which the parents or carers give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children. The government guidance on this is found in 'Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced' (2002).

**Spiritual abuse**

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting an their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

**Domestic Violence**  
The shared Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and government definition of domestic violence is: ‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.’ (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)

In 2004 the Government’s definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called ‘honour crimes’, which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence.

**Investigating complex (organised or multiple) abuse**  
This abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Complex abuse occurs both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools. Such abuse is profoundly traumatic for the children who become involved. Its investigation is time-consuming and demanding work, requiring specialist skills from both police and social work staff. Some investigations become extremely complex because of the number of places and people involved, and the timescale over which abuse is alleged to have occurred. The complexity is heightened where, as in historical cases, the alleged victims are no longer living in the setting where the incidents occurred or where the alleged perpetrators are also no longer linked to the setting or employment role.

**Child Prostitution**  
Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006) Section 6.2 stated:   
Children involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation should be treated primarily as the victims of abuse, and their needs require careful assessment.

**Sexually exploited children and young people**  
The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a number of new offences to deal with those who sexually exploit children and young people. The offences protect children up to the age of 18 and can attract tough penalties. They include:

* paying for the sexual services of a child;
* causing or inciting child prostitution;
* arranging or facilitating child prostitution; and
* controlling a child prostitute.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**  
Working Together (2010) states:

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other nontherapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between four and thirteen, but in some cases FGM is performed on new born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy. A number of girls die as a direct result of the procedure from blood loss or infection, either following the procedure or subsequently in childbirth.

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 was passed. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act and made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

**Signs of Possible Abuse (children & young people)**

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

**Physical**

* Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
* Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
* Injuries that have not received medical attention
* Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
* Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
* Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation\*
* Cuts/scratches/substance abuse\*

**Sexual**

* Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
* Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
* Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
* Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
* Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
* Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
* Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia\*

**Emotional**

* Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
* Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
* Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
* Obsessions or phobias
* Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
* Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
* Attention-seeking behaviour
* Persistent tiredness
* Running away/stealing/lying

**Neglect**

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

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

**How to respond to a child wanting to talk about abuse**

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or vulnerable adult to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.

* It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
* Above everything else listen without interrupting
* Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
* Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
* Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
* Be honest and don’t make promises you can’t keep regarding confidentiality
* If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.
* Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

**Helpful responses**

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

**Don't say**

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

## ****Definitions of Abuse (Adults)****

The following information relates to the Safeguarding of Adults as defined in the Care Act 2014, Chapter 14. Safeguarding, this replaces the previous guidelines produced in ‘No Secrets’ (Department of Health 2000)

The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who

* has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
* is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
* as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

**Physical abuse**– including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

**Domestic violence**– including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence.

**Sexual abuse**– including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Psychological abuse**– including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

**Financial or material abuse**– including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

**Modern slavery**– encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

**Discriminatory abuse**– including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

**Organisational abuse**– including neglect and poor care practice within an Institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one’s own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

**Neglect and acts of omission**– including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

**Self-neglect**– this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more.

**Responding to allegations of abuse**

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

* The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to **Larni Grant** (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator") tel no: 07460151210 who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
* In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to **Jon Rouse** (hereafter the "Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator ") tel no: 07710 813490. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (THIRTYONE:8) PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 03030031111. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.
* Where the concern is about a child, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children’s Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection, contact Adult Social Services or take advice from THIRTYONE:8 as above.

To contact the Children’s Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);

Daytime hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)   020 3045 5440.

Out of hours (6pm to 8am Monday to Friday and weekends) 020 8303 7777 or 020 8303 7171.

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (office hours) is 0208 303 7777

The out of hours emergency number is 0208 303 7777.

* Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
* Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from THIRTYONE:8.
* The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
* It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from THIRTYONE:8, although the Leadership hope that members of the organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.
* If deemed appropriate the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will then discuss any relevant concerns with the insurance company: Ansvar Insurance

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

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

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

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

* Contact Children’s Social Services (or THIRTYONE:8) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
* Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children’s Social Services.
* Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
* For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
* Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children’s Social Services direct for advice.
* Seek and follow advice given by THIRTYONE:8 (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children’s Social Services.

**Allegations of sexual abuse**

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

* Contact the Children’s Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
* Seek and follow the advice given by THIRTYONE:8 if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children’s Social Services/Police. THIRTYONE:8 will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

**The following procedure will be followed where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:**

**Suspicions or allegations of physical or sexual abuse**

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

* Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.
* If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.
* For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under The Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively THIRTYONE:8 can be contacted for advice.

**Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children**

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

**SAFE RECRUITMENT**

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

* There is a written job description / person specification for the post
* Those applying have completed an application form and a self -declaration form
* Safeguarding has been discussed before appointment
* At least 2 written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
* A criminal records disclosure has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
* A suitable training programme will be provided for the applicant depending on the age group they are working with.
* The applicant has completed a 3 month probationary period
* The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation’s safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
* All DBS checks will be updated every 3 years.
* All workers from abroad will obtain police check from their country and will not be left in an unsupervised role with children or young people.

**Safeguarding training**

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

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

**Recruitment for mission teams**

When teams are organised for mission trips, the Leadership will ensure that all team members will:

* Complete an application form
* Have written references which will be followed up where appropriate
* Have a current DBS certificate with New Generation Church or Lark in the Park
* Discuss safeguarding issues before the trip

**Management of workers – codes of conduct**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the ‘Abuse Of Trust ‘guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

**Whistleblowing**

As an organisation, we will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Therefore we expect that all employees (paid or Voluntary) will report improper actions and omissions. Whilst all malpractice and acts of discrimination will be investigated, it is especially important that suspicions of abuse are immediately reported to the safeguarding coordinator.

**Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the organisation.

**Working with offenders**

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. The leadership will use the guidelines recommended by THIRTYONE:8.

**KEEPING RECORDS**

Keeping accurate records is an essential part of our safeguarding and child protection work. Not least because well-structured files make it easier to share information when necessary and to identify patterns and trends that could help us see when things are getting worse.

According to Data Protection principals, records containing personal information should be:

* adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose(s) for which they are held;
* accurate and up to date; and
* only kept for as long as is necessary (Information Commissioner’s Office, 2017(a) and 2017(b)).

**The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018 does not change the way child protection records should be stored and retained.**

**Any** concerns should be recorded by the staff member or volunteer on a Cause for Concern form and discussed with the Safeguarding Officer.

This must be an accurate record of:

* the date and time of the incident/disclosure;
* the date and time of the report;
* the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details;
* the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details;
* the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event;
* what was said or done and by whom;
* any action taken to look into the matter;
* any further action taken (such as a referral being made); and
* the reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).

Make sure the report is factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly recorded as such. The record should always be signed by the person making the report.

A logbook should be maintained for all activities where workers can write down unusual events or conversations that they witnessed. This may be very helpful if, for example, leaders have to deal with a difficult member who subsequently makes an accusation of assault or a young person repeatedly makes sexual comments about workers that may, at a later date, result in an allegation of abuse. In this situation, written records would enable any allegations to be seen in context.

Patterns of behaviour or concerns might also emerge from log records that might not otherwise be so obvious - for example, bruising noted on a regular basis or a number of young people making similar comments about one worker that raises concerns. Other information might include records of incidents such as fights and the action taken. Logbooks safeguard both children and workers.

Every child, young person, vulnerable adult, parent or carer should be able to view what is recorded about them in the logbook. This information will be kept in a way that does not breach the confidentiality of an individual. Whilst it is important to observe data protection requirements, remember safeguarding is always the priority. Information about the prevention and detection of crime is exempt from data Protection requirements. It may, therefore, be inappropriate to release information to a parent,that has been disclosed by a young person, without first consulting the statutory agencies.

Information about child protection concerns and referrals should be kept in a separate child protection file for each child, rather than in one ‘concern log’. The child protection file should be started as soon as you become aware of any concerns.

**Cause for Concern forms will then be collated and will form part of the Child Protection File.**

**Further guidance on the child protection file, retention and storage of records can be found in the appendix.**

**PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

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

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

**Duty of care and position of trust**

The duty of care is in part exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships but also by workers taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of those they have responsibility for, particularly in relation to sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Before individuals start working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent to their role.

Workers should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted. Any kind of sexual relationship between an adult worker and a child is never acceptable and if concerns arise in this area, this should be recorded and reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

**Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism**

Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Adults need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be seen as a gesture to bribe or groom a young person.

There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to workers, for example, on special occasions or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

**Risk Assessments**

Risk Assessments will be carried out for all children and youth activities and venues on an annual basis. Before any new activity is undertaken (eg. Weekends Away) a checklist for the activity will be drawn up and a risk assessment will be undertaken by the team leader.

**Safety of Buildings and Equipment**

New Generation Centre - All electrical sockets are guarded and all electrical equipment PAT tested. The kitchen area is to remain gated while children are in the building. A checklist for the safety of buildings and equipment will be followed for all children’s clubs and activities.

The following will be operated if we return to the cinema for our main gathering.

In the under 5’s group, children to be kept in the open space at the front of the cinema screen with a gate across. Storage cages at the Cinema should be closed moved to an area in the cinema away from the children.

**Food and Drink Safety and Hygiene**

Any food that is made and/or consumed on the premises should meet food safety regulations and the person responsible for the food should possess a basic food hygiene certificate or equivalent and be knowledgeable in areas such as food preparation, handling, storage, disposal of waste etc. Systems are in place to ensure that children, young people or vulnerable adults do not have access to food/drinks to which they are allergic. Typically this can be peanuts, nuts, milk, eggs, fish, shell fish and gluten - found in wheat, barley, oats.

Hot drinks should not be carried through an activity area and not placed within the reach of young children.

For Camps/Residential Activities – The above will also apply.

**First Aid**

An appropriately qualified first aider will be available at all activities together with an adequate first aid kit.

**Safeguarding Principles for Group or Activity**

* To ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.
* Consideration for the number of workers needed to run the group and whether they should be male, female or both.
* The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) required appropriate to the needs of the individual.
* Clear guidelines on personal privacy e.g. when working with children avoiding questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments. ( THIRTYONE:8 guidance on “Taking care of touching” to be given to each worker)
* Not allowing anyone under 16 years of age to be left in charge of children of any age or those attending the group being left unsupervised.
* Only workers assigned to the group being allowed to participate in the activity. Other adults should not be allowed free access.
* Making a note of other people in the building during the activity and any other events taking place at the same time.
* When the activities are at the cinema, to make sure no member of the public is allowed in to the screen until all the children have returned to their parents.

**Adult to Child Ratios**

In order to supervise children’s activities safely it is necessary to have sufficient adult leaders and helpers.

Children aged 0 -2 at least one member of staff for every 3 children.

Children aged 2 -3 at least one member of staff for every 4 children

Children aged 3 - 8 one member of staff for every 8 children.

Children ages 8 + one member of staff for every 13 children

These ratios may need to be assessed for activities outside of the Cinema or Church building and depending on the needs of the children.

**Data Protection, Human Rights and Safeguarding**

The leadership will comply with the rules on processing data as required in the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. Where disclosing information might place a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk, then safeguarding considerations take precedence over data protection. In certain circumstances the Data Protection Act allows for disclosure of information without the consent of the person involved, including for the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders. The European Convention of Human Rights also makes provision for the disclosure of information in connection with 'the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others and for the prevention of disorder or crime. Disclosure should be appropriate for the purpose and only to the extent necessary to achieve that purpose.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to be protected from harm. For example, information relating to concerns that a child is at risk of significant harm should therefore not be withheld on the basis that it might be unlawful.

Information about allegations or concerns of abuse should not be shown to a parent or carer. Advice should always be sought from Children’s Social Services, Adult Services, or the police

**Registration**

When a child/young person becomes involved in Sparkles, RisingStars, Allstars or Free60, a general information and consent form should be completed and returned giving contact details of parents/carers who have parental responsibility. Medical and other details such as allergies or special dietary requirements should also be noted. This form should be renewed annually.

A register of those attending a club or activity should also be maintained, together with a register of workers. This should include a record of arrival and departure times, particularly if the participant does not attend the whole session. It is also good practice to keep parents/carers informed of the nature of activities.

**Accidents**

All accidents, however minor, should be recorded in an accident book. In the event of an accident, the parent/carer of a child or young person should be asked to read and sign the accident book. Whether a vulnerable adult can sign the book will depend on the nature and extent of their disability.

If the child, young person or vulnerable adult is not collected at the end of a session, a letter should be sent to the parent or carer explaining what has happened in much the same way a school would respond.

All near misses/hazards should also be recorded in the accident book and a copy given to the office manager and team leader, who can then communicate to their teams and take appropriate action.

**Peer-group Activities (children and young people)**

All peer-group activities should be overseen by named adults who have been selected in accordance with agreed recruitment procedures and have the backing of the leadership of the organisation.

Before setting up a peer-led activity the following should be taken into consideration:

* The appropriateness of the venue for the activity
* Any medical issues, dietary needs and allergies will be appropriately managed.
* Emergency contact numbers are to hand for all members under the age of 18 years.
* If the provision of food is part of the activity, leaders must ensure that food is prepared in accordance with Basic Food Hygiene standards.

For groups of age 16+ being led and run by their peers, adult leaders should always be in the vicinity and should contribute to any programme reviews and planning. Peer-group leaders must be trained and supported by at least one adult worker.

The following should also be followed:

* If there are children/young people under 16yrs at an activity, adults workers should be present or within earshot.
* No person under the age of 16 should be left with the sole responsibility of caring for or supervising other children or vulnerable adults.
* Young people (over 16) who assist with caring for other children/young people should be subjected to the same recruitment process as adults and have undertaken safeguarding training.
* Peer-group leaders should be aware of safeguarding procedures, including reporting concerns (e.g. abuse, bullying) to their supervising adult and that sensitive information should not be shared openly in the group.

Parents/carers must always be kept informed about what peer-group activities are for, who the leaders are, how they are run, where they meet and what parents can do to support them.

**Home Visits**

Workers and leaders may need to make home visits from time to time. In these circumstances the organisation should issue formal identification to the person doing the visit.

Guidelines for visiting:

* Inform the Group leader or another worker of the proposed visit.
* In the case of children and young people never go into a home if a parent or carer is absent unless the child would be at risk of significant harm if you do not do so.
* Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
  + Purpose
  + Time you arrived and left
  + Who was present
  + What was discussed
* If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them.
* An invitation to a worker's home should only be extended with the knowledge of the leadership and the permission of the parent/ carer.

**Parents/Carers Staying With Children's Groups**

There may be occasions where parents ask if they can stay to watch the children's group's activity. It is important not to appear guarded but there may be concerns, particularly where the expectation is that all adults who work with children in any capacity should undertake Criminal Records Bureau and other checks. In most cases the parents will not be allowed to stay for the activity but The Leadership will consider the following:

* For some children with special needs, it may be appropriate for their parent/carer to stay with them for an extended period. This should be considered on an individual basis to help the child become fully integrated into the group/activity. The parent is there to observe and not be involved with other children. If a parent/carer wishes to continue to stay, consideration could be given to them becoming a helper/worker but they would be required to undertake the same recruitment and selection procedure as with any other worker.
* If a child is new to the group and is upset about staying on their own, the parent will be allowed to stay but only to observe and not take part in any activities.
* Organising an open evening from time to time as part of the on-going children's programme to build relationships and encourage parents to take an active role in supporting the group.

**Suggestions and complaints by parents / carers**

Where a parent or carer wishes to make a complaint or make a suggestion about any activity or group the organisation is providing, it should be taken seriously. They should speak to the group leader first who should endeavour to resolve the matter. This should be followed up by a written response to the issue that has been raised and should be recorded and stored appropriately.

If a complaint is not resolved to the satisfaction of the parent or carer then the matter should be taken to the Leadership.

The above refers to complaints of a general nature. In the case of safeguarding concerns, these should follow the procedures in the safeguarding policy.

**Baby-sitting**

Although babysitting may be done on a voluntary basis, we will adopt the same care in the selection process as when appointing a worker. Even babies are sexually abused and studies show that abuse can begin when children are under five years of age. All applicants for a babysitting circle should complete an application form and supply details of referees. They should also be interviewed and undertake a criminal records disclosure check.

Before any babysitting arrangement is agreed, the parent/carer and the babysitter should meet to exchange details about themselves and discuss:

* The child's needs/routine
* Expectations about bedtime
* An emergency contact number
* The anticipated time of the parent/carer's return.

In ensuring that the ground rules are established, the parent/carer can repeat the rules about bedtime etc. in front of the child. This minimises the possibility of any manipulation of the babysitter by the child.

If a child does not like a particular babysitter, then they should be changed without the need for further explanation or justification.

If a parent or carer is unhappy that a babysitter has not followed the ground rules, they should discuss the matter direct with the babysitter.

If a child expresses concerns about an aspect of the babysitting arrangements, the parent should talk to the babysitter to clarify the situation.

Should a child share anything that suggests he/she might have been abused, or the child has an unexplained injury, the parent should report this to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and appropriate action should be taken e.g. contacting Children’s Social Services or police.

If any safeguarding concerns arise about an individual on the babysitting rota, they should be asked to stand down immediately until an investigation has been completed. All parents should be notified not to use this person until further notice.

If the babysitter has a concern that a child for whom they are babysitting is being abused, they should inform the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who should take appropriate action e.g. contact Children’s Social Services.

**Working with disruptive children and young people**

Sometimes children and young people become angry, upset or disruptive. Occasionally their behaviour may endanger themselves or others. The Government has developed national standards in relation to early years and day care and the following guidelines can be adopted by the leadership of Free 60.

If someone is being disruptive:

* Ask them to stop.
* Speak to them to establish the cause(s) of the upset.
* Inform them they will be asked to leave if the behaviour continues. Warn them if they continue to be disruptive, this might result in longer-term exclusion from the group.

If they are harming themselves, another person or property then others in the group should be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring. At the same time, and with a second worker present, request them to STOP. If your request is ignored, you might need to warn the individual that you will consider calling the Police. As a last resort, in the event of them harming themselves, other people or property, physical restraint may be needed until the Police to arrive.

The workers involved should always record what happened in writing as soon as possible after the incident. This should include:

* What activity was taking place.
* What might have caused the disruptive behaviour.
* The person’s behaviour.
* What was said and how the worker and others responded.
* A list of others present who witnessed the incident.

A copy should be given to the leader, a copy retained by the worker and a copy kept with the logbook. Parents should be informed if their child has been restrained.

**More guidelines for discipline are to be found in Appendix**

**Bullying**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Children can bully each other, be bullied by adults and can sometimes bully adults. Any form of bullying results in pain and distress to the victim and is unacceptable behaviour within this organisation. Some common forms of bullying can be:

* Verbal -name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing including via emails or test messaging
* Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, graffiti, gestures, racial taunts
* Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
* Sexual - sexually abusive comments or gestures
* Racial - any of the above because of, or focusing on the issue of racial differences
* Homophobic - any of the above because of, or focusing on the issue of sexual orientation
* Unofficial activities such as initiation ceremonies and practical jokes which may cause children physical or emotional harm even though this may not be intended

There will be a known zero tolerance to bullying, so if it does occur, children and leaders will be able to report the matter and it can be dealt with promptly and effectively. There will be an expectation that anyone who knows that bullying is happening will report it.

Whilst the child being bullied needs protection, the person/people doing it need to address the reasons for their behaviour and be encouraged to relate to others in more positive ways. .

Copies of the organisation’s Anti Bullying Policy to be available to all workers.

**Tobacco and Alcohol**

A no-smoking policy will be enforced within all of the venues used by the organisation. Smoking will not be allowed on the forecourt of the New Generation Centre, or in the garden at the rear of the building. All those attending the activity will be made aware of this policy and agree to abide by it.

Workers do not have the right to confiscate alcohol found in a young person's possession but they can enforce a no-alcohol policy.

There may be occasions where it is felt necessary to inform parents /carers that a child/young person has been drinking, particularly if they are under the influence of alcohol at the group or there are concerns for their health or safety. Obviously this may affect working relationships and there is a moral question that will need to be considered before any action is taken.

**Solvents and Illegal Substances.**

Workers should be alert to possession and use of illegal substances. If a worker becomes aware a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be abusing solvents they should be encouraged to seek professional help from their doctor or a counsellor specialising in this area.

It is a criminal offence to allow anyone attending an activity run by an organisation to supply illegal drugs or use them on the premises. The Leadership will adopt zero tolerance on all illegal substances and will contact the Police should any such situations arise. All those attending the activity should be made aware of this protocol which should be clearly displayed.

For the individual involved:

* Ask them to stop, warning them of the consequences if they do not e.g. suspension or ban from the group.
* Inform parents/carers if the young person is under 16 years.
* Inform the parents/carers if the young person is over 16 years (with their permission).
* Discuss with the young person the proposed course of action, particularly if they re-offend (e.g. informing the police).
* Write down the content of any discussion with the young person, including the action taken and keep this in a secure place.
* Liaise with the police to devise a strategy for dealing with the use of illegal substances.

**Gangs and Gang Crime**

If there is reason to believe children and young people are involved in criminal gang activity, they need to be told if they carry a gun or a knife they could be arrested; also that a court appearance and a criminal record could jeopardise their chances of employment, going to university or college, or even travelling abroad.

The best way workers can help prevent children getting involved in a gang is to talk openly about it, finding out what they think about gangs and warning them of the dangers of becoming involved

Workers in Free60 to be given a copy of **InFocus:** Gangs – signs of involvement and how to respond

**Special Needs and Disabilities**

Workers should be aware that any child, young person or vulnerable adult attending an activity who has a special need or disability may need extra help in areas such as communication and mobility (e.g. use of sign language and assistance in going to the toilet). They may behave in a non-age appropriate way.  Appropriate boundaries will be set that take their needs into account, but also protect workers from false accusation.

The organisation will:

* Ask the child, young person or vulnerable adult attending the activity, and parents or carers how their needs can be met, ensuring all workers involved with them are aware of their expectations. This includes the number of workers needed to assist for a specific activity to prevent injury.
* Endeavour to listen, and give feedback to the person, family or carer as to what can or can't be achieved and the reasons why.
* Ideally ensure that a worker of the same gender assists if they need help with toileting, but again discuss with the person, their family or carer, their preference and your ability to provide this.
* Make buildings accessible (e.g. ramps, toilets for the disabled and hearing loop system) and encourage integration within the group.
* Train the workers in appropriate disability awareness including the use of different forms of communication (e.g. sign language) and language etiquette.

**Intimate care**.

Workers involved with intimate care need to be sensitive to the individual needs of each person and that some care tasks could be open to misinterpretation.

Sparkles Creche workers will obtain permission from the parents with regard to changing nappies. If the parent wishes to change their child’s nappy, then they will be contacted in the adult venue and asked to come to the crèche.

**Drop-in Centre**

When Free60 (youth group) operate a ‘drop in’ at New Generation Centre, the leadership will:

* Conduct regular fire drills to ensure that the building is evacuated completely and within a set time scale.
* Ensure all the users of the drop in centre only have access to specific areas of the building.
* Have sufficient workers to supervise those who visit the centre.

**Outings**

When Free60 or Allstars arrange day trips or visits for children and young people under 18, parents or carers should complete and sign a consent form for the activity. A risk assessment of the activity will be carried out, to ensure all eventualities are covered and all adults in the team know what to do in the event of an accident or emergency.

On the day it is important to remember to take a fully charged mobile phone, all essential records and equipment and allocate named children to named pairs of adults.

**Transportation**

The Leadership will adopt the following advice for transporting children, young people or vulnerable adults:

* Driving should be restricted to those who have gone through the organisation’s recruitment procedures for workers.
* All drivers must have read the safeguarding policy of the organisation and agree to abide by it.
* Parents / carers should be asked to sign a Transportation Consent Form
* The driver should hold a full driving licence, the vehicle must be adequately insured and the vehicle road worthy.
* As a general rule, 2 leaders should be in each vehicle. Consideration should be given to dropping off the least vulnerable last and plan routes accordingly.
* Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in the vehicle with someone they are transporting. If, for example, a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk there and then, but arrange to meet them at a location where there are other adults around with the knowledge of the group leader. (Remember they may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
* When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist those being transported stay in the same groups on the out-going and return journey. This will avoid anyone, at worst, being left behind.
* At collection or dropping off points no child or young person should be on their own and the driver should make sure they are collected by an appropriate adult. This may also apply to a vulnerable adult, depending on the nature of their vulnerability and/or disability.
* It is advisable to be aware of instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular individual e.g. where there has been a disagreement or they have romantic feelings for a driver.
* If parents or carers do some transporting, ensure they are made aware that such arrangements are their own responsibility and not the organisation’s.

**Free60 Swimming Trips**

Prior to the trip the swimming ability of a young person should be established. A swimming consent form for each young person should be taken by the group leader on the trip. A copy should also be retained by the Church office.

The young people youth workers should follow the rules of the pool. Group leaders should supervise behaviour at all times. Whilst the pool’s lifeguard will be on duty to supervise swimmers this does not reduce the duty of care of leaders and workers, including being able to account for the whereabouts of all those participating in the event.

If other swimming activities are arranged in open water, a risk assessment must be completed before organising such an activity. Prior to organising a visit to open waters, group leaders can look on local websites or contact the local tourist information to make sure the area is safe. Leaders must ascertain the level of the young people's swimming ability and ensure adequate, increased supervision ratios for the particular group.

**Filming and taking photographs**

Permission must be obtained of both children and adults before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded. However, it is perfectly acceptable to ask parents/carers to let the organisation know if they do NOT want their child photographed or filmed. The worker should write to parents or carers to explain what is happening and leave the onus on the parent/ carer to contact them if they have any objections. In addition to this:

* It must be made clear why the image(s) or film is being used, what it will be used for and who might want to look at the pictures.
* When using photographs of children and young people, use group pictures and never identify them by name or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, telephone numbers.
* Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website.

Image use consent to be part of a registration form.

**Staff/volunteer use of social media**

All team members must use social media with discretion and wisdom. Photos of children, young people or vulnerable adults (where their faces are recognisable) **MUST NOT** be posted on social media by team members. Only photos which are anonymous and do not show recognisable individuals can be posted on social media and used for publicity. Children and young people should never be named or “tagged” in team members’ posts on social media.

**Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets THIRTYONE:8’ safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

**Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date March 2021**

**Review Date: March 2022**

**APPENDIX**

**CHILD PROTECTION FILE**

The file should follow the five part filing system.

**1. Admin Section**  
This section includes the name, date of birth, address, parents names, GP details, social worker contacts, foster carers, etc. This sheet must be kept up to date.  
  
The chronology is kept in this first section too, so that it is easy to find and an overview can quickly be seen. Each document elsewhere in the file should have a corresponding line in the chronology (some people number these lines and identify each document with that reference number).   
  
**2. Internal Information**   
This section contains concern forms, meeting notes, conversations with parents etc.  
  
**3. External Information**  
Anything that comes in from outside the church, including phone calls, printouts of emails, referral forms.    
  
**4. Multi-Agency Meetings**  
Minutes of meetings, notes and formal documents are kept in this section.   
  
**5. Legal Papers**  
Keep this section clear of material that could be kept elsewhere in the file. Only include here legal documentation like the child protection plan.   
  
**Note:** Each section should be kept in chronological order, with the most recent document at the top.   
  
All the papers in the file should be secured together, so that if it dropped papers don't go flying everywhere putting both chronology and confidentiality at risk.

**RETENTION AND STORAGE**

The Church must:

* know the reason why they are keeping records about children and/or adults (for example, because they relate to child protection concerns);
* assess how long you need to keep the records for; and
* have a plan for how and when the records will be destroyed.
* To keep personal information secure, you should:
* compile and label files carefully;
* keep files containing sensitive or confidential data secure and allow access on a ‘need to know’ basis;
* keep a log so you can see who has accessed the confidential files, when, and the titles of the files they have used.

If you are creating records about the children and/or adults, you need to make sure they understand what records you hold, why you need to hold them and who you might share their information with (for example as part of a multi-agency child protection team) (Information Commissioner’s Office, 2017(a) and 2017(b)). If you are keeping records for child protection reasons, you don’t necessarily need to get consent from the adults and/or children concerned.

**Retention periods: child protection records**

If you decide not to share your concerns about a child’s welfare with the police or social services, you should still keep a record of the issues that were raised.

**Records relating to child protection will be kept for 7 years after your church’s last contact with the child and their family.**

In some cases, records can be kept for longer periods – see the ‘Exceptions’ section below for more information.

**Recording concerns about adult behaviour**

Sometimes concerns might be raised about an adult who works or volunteers with children. This could be because they’ve:

* behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
* committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
* behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with young people.

You must keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including;

* what the allegations were;
* how the allegations were followed up;
* how things were resolved;
* any action taken; and
* decisions reached about the person’s suitability to work with children.

Keeping these records will enable you to give accurate information if you are ever asked for it. For example:

* in response to future requests for a reference;
* if a future employer asks for clarification about information disclosed as part of a vetting and barring check; or
* if allegations resurface after a period of time

**Storing records relating to adults**

Records relating to concerns about an adult’s behaviour should be kept in the person’s confidential personnel file (not in a central ‘concerns log’) and a copy should be given to the individual.

**Retention periods: concerns about adults**

If concerns have been raised about an adult’s behaviour around children, you should keep the records in their personnel file either until they reach normal retirement age or for 10 years - whichever is longer (IRMS, 2016).

You should keep records for the same amount of time regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. However, if you find that allegations are malicious you should destroy the record immediately.

Information should be kept for this length of time even if the person stops working or volunteering for the organisation.

**Exceptions**

In some cases, records can be kept for longer periods of time. For example, if:

* the records provide information about a child’s personal history, which they might want to access at a later date;
* the records have been maintained for the purposes of research;
* the information in the records is relevant to legal action that has been started but not finished; or
* the records have been archived for historical purposes (for example if the records are relevant to legal proceedings involving the organisation).

Where there are legal proceedings it is best to seek legal advice about how long to retain your records.

Some records are subject to statutory requirements and have a specific retention period. This includes records relating to:

* children who have been ‘looked after’ by the local authority;
* adopted children;
* registered foster carers;

You should also check whether your insurance company, local safeguarding children board (LSCB) or regulating body make any stipulations about retention periods.

When records are being kept for longer than the recommended period, files must be clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

Any records that could be needed by an official inquiry (for example the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA, 2017). Inquiries will issue directions for records to be retained and these must be followed.

**Disclosure and barring checks**

NGC will not keep any copies of disclosure and barring check certificates unless there is a dispute about the results of the check. Instead, a confidential record will be kept of:

* the date the check was completed;
* the level and type of check (standard/enhanced/barred list check and the relevant workforce);
* the reference number of the certificate; and
* the decision made about whether the person was employed (with reasons). If there is a dispute about the results of a check, church may keep a copy of the certificate but not longer than 6 months.

**Destruction of child protection records**

When the retention period finishes, confidential records should be incinerated or shredded in the presence of a member of the organisation or entrusted to a firm specialising in the destruction of confidential material. At the same time any electronic versions of the record must be purged.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE**

* Do not compare a child, young person or adult with another in the group; rather encourage and affirm and, if possible, give them responsibility for appropriate tasks.
* Build healthy relationships and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect others to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
* Take care to give the quieter and/or well behaved attention and resist allowing the demanding individuals to take all your time and energy.
* Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
* If children and young people in particular are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly.
* NEVER smack or hit anyone and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary.
* Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely.
* Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure everyone understands what action will be taken if not adhered to.
* Every person is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.

For those who are continuously disruptive:

* Have them sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
* Encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
* Challenge them to change their behaviour whilst encouraging their strengths.
* Warn them you may speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour, they may be sent outside the room (under supervision), or be excluded from attending the group for a period of time.

**GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR INCLUDING RESTRAINING**

Staff should not use any form of degrading or humiliating treatment towards anyone. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards people is completely unacceptable. Where a person displays difficult or challenging behaviour, staff should follow the following procedure, taking extreme care to avoid any practice that could be viewed as unlawful and a breach of the person’s human rights.

This means that staff should:

* not use force as a form of controlling the situation.
* try to defuse situations before they escalate e.g. by distraction
* behave as a role model
* avoid shouting at children other than as a warning in an emergency/safety situation

The law and guidance for schools states that adults may reasonably intervene to prevent a child from:

* committing a criminal offence
* injuring themselves or others
* causing damage to property
* engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline.

In all cases where physical intervention has taken place, it would be good practice to record the incident and subsequent actions and report these to the safeguarding officer and the child or young person’s parents.

**Positive Handling** refers to the whole range of de-escalation and management strategies, including where necessary, physical intervention. De-escalation strategies, including diversion, distraction, defusion and negotiation are used to prevent violence and reduce the risk of injury.

**Physical intervention** refers to any action by which one or more people restrict the actions of another, e.g. blocking the path of a child or guiding him or her away from a harmful situation. It includes physical restraint. Physical intervention must not be used as a method of enforcing discipline or compliance when there is no serious risk to individuals or significant risk to property. Most escalating conflicts can be resolved without the need for physical intervention.

**Physical restraint** is the positive application of force with the intent of overpowering to prevent harm.

If all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent a person exhibiting violent behaviour and the situation continues then the person must be warned that if they do not desist physical restraint may be used. If a violent incident seems imminent, then wherever possible another member of staff must be summoned. This should not be seen as failure as the presence of a second adult could prove helpful in ensuring safety, objectivity and calm control, as well as providing a witness to what takes place.

Restraint must at all times be “reasonable” and judgement of what constitutes “reasonable” rests with the member of staff at that point in time. “Reasonable” is the minimum intervention a responsible adult would exercise to prevent physical injury or damage, always bearing in mind danger to those concerned. .

**Physical Intervention must never:**

a) Interfere with breathing, blood supply or genital areas;

b) Involve holding the throat, wrists, joints or fingers.

Restraint should be applied at just above the level of force of resistance and then relaxed and released as soon as possible to allow the person to regain composure. The person should be told what will happen next to avoid unnecessary anxiety.

Where a person has a sensory or physical disability, or a learning difficulty, particular care will be required to ensure that they understand what is happening and to ensure that a member of staff’s actions are not discriminatory.

The use of any form of physical intervention carries the risk of allegations of abuse against staff. However, staff are equally open to accusation of a failure of ‘Duty of Care’ if a child / young person suffers as a result of a refusal to intervene physically where it probably would have kept them safe.

**Physical intervention or physical restraint can only be justified if all other intervention strategies and non-physical methods have proved ineffective and / or there is an immediate danger of physical harm to individuals or the risk of significant damage to property. No member of staff is obliged to undertake physical intervention where doing so would place that member of staff in immediate danger of physical harm.**

**In no other circumstances can physical intervention or restraint against a person be justified.**

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**TAKING CARE OF TOUCHING**

* Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
* Touch should be related to the child, young person or vulnerable adults needs, not the worker's.
* Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, rather than the worker.
* Avoid any physical activity that may be sexually stimulating.
* All children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to personal privacy and the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in circumstances such as a medical emergency .
* When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc), encourage the child, young person or vulnerable adult to do what they can themselves but, in their best interests giving appropriate help where necessary.
* Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
* Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

**PRAYING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**1. Introduction**   
Some of the main ingredients that underpin any effective ministry to children and young people, including prayer, are:

* acceptance
* respect
* non-judgemental listening,
* sensitivity,
* discernment,
* patience.

In applying these values in the area of prayer, not only will you build trust and respect, but you will also be providing a good ‘prayer’ model so that children and young people can learn how to pray for others in a sensitive and responsible way.

Although it may seem obvious, it is important parents/carers are aware that prayer is an integral part of church life (particularly if they don’t attend church themselves), and that on occasions you may pray with their child either corporately or individually at the child’s request.

You can reassure any concerned parent/carer with the principles contained in these guidelines, or if a child is part of a club or Sunday school within the church this could be mentioned, for example, on the information leaflet given to parents/carers when the child joins the group.

In the unlikely event of a parent/carer requesting that their child does not participate in individual prayer, this must always be respected.

**2. Praying**   
Prior to praying, always make sure you have the child’s permission and always pray in an open area where other leaders and/or children are around. If there is a general invitation to come forward for prayer in or after a family service then it will be helpful to have children’s workers available to pray with the children/young people rather than relying on other leaders who may be used to dealing with adults. Only those authorised by the church leadership should be involved in this ministry.

The child should be asked if there is anything specific they are requesting prayer for and listen to their reply. Speak quietly and calmly, never shout or raise your voice. Don’t laugh at or dismiss out of hand if they want to pray for something you consider trite or irrelevant (e.g. my cat’s poorly). If they do not have specific needs or requests then simply ask God to bless them.

Those praying with children and young people should always be alert to child protection issues and other concerns such as bullying. In these circumstances do not forget about or delay taking appropriate action because you are caught up with praying!

If you have prayed about a specific issue it may be helpful to write it down afterwards and give it to the child so that, if they want, they can let their parents/carers know and remember it themselves.

If a child/young person becomes distressed, stop praying. Stay calm and gently ask them if they would like to say what has caused their distress. Depending on the child’s response you could consider whether there are any gender issues or whether they would feel more comfortable with someone else

If unsure or the child/young person remains distressed do not continue praying but stay with them until they are calm, offering them reassurance and complete acceptance. Then talk to the child’s parents/carers, assuming you have no child protection concerns.

**3. Practicalities**  
When it comes to praying, consider your body language, particularly in relation to things like your height and the height of the child/young person. Try to ensure you are on their level rather than towering over them perhaps by both of you sitting down; but do avoid crowding.

Refrain from placing your hands on a child/young person’s head as they may find this frightening or threatening. If you think they may appreciate something like an arm round a shoulder or their hand being held always ask them if this is what they would like before doing it.

Sometimes substances such as oil on the forehead is used when praying for healing. Bear in mind that a child/young person may be uncomfortable with the use of anointing oil so it is important to only go ahead with the child and parents’ agreement.

Remember also that a child/young person may not, for example, understand things like ‘speaking in tongues’ and it is important therefore not to do anything that may cause confusion or distress.

**4. Language**  
Use clear uncomplicated language. Reflect back what the child has said to you, to show you have understood their prayer request. If a child says they are feeling tired, you could reply “let us pray for you as you are feeling tired” not “I think you are depressed, let’s pray about that”. Keep the prayers simple and short so you can then be confident your prayers have been understood by the child.

**5. Giving Advice**  
Avoid giving specific advice about problems involving decisions. A child or young person could be very susceptible to suggestion, particularly if they are distressed. Even if you believe you have heard from God about their situation, it would be far wiser to pray this through on your own or with another leader. Never advise a child/young person to stop taking medication or cease seeing professionals involved in their care or welfare.

**6. Confidentiality**  
Never promise total confidentiality. Should a child/young person wish to disclose to you a situation such as abuse within a prayer ministry context, you have a duty to pass this on to your church’s child safeguarding coordinator and possibly Children’s Social Services or the police. You may need to gently give clear boundaries but reassure the child that if you share anything about their situation with someone else it will be on a ‘need to know’ basis only and you will make sure they are supported and cared for.

**7. Deliverance / Exorcism**  
Any religious, traditional or cultural practice that causes significant harm to a child is a criminal offence and cannot be justified. One example of this is when children have been subjected to horrific abuse following accusations they are witches or possessed by evil spirits. When practices such as these come to light, the statutory authorities may investigate and take appropriate action to protect the children involved.

Some places of worship believe that a child can have an evil spirit or is possessed when they display behavioural problems or are different in some way. The child may have learning difficulties, mental health issues, copied or unconventional behaviours, or be experiencing some kind of trauma such as culture shock at coming to live in a different country.

Children are easily frightened and very susceptible to suggestion. They may also be upset by shouting and will easily believe they are bad, wicked etc. A child should never be told they are demonised, possessed or oppressed by the devil or evil spirits.

Prayer for children should therefore always be carried out using the guidelines above.

**Please print the following page, sign and return to Larni Grant (safeguarding coordinator)**

I have read and understood New Generation Church's safeguarding policy.

Signed ------------------------------------------------ print name --------------------------------------------

Date ------------------------------------