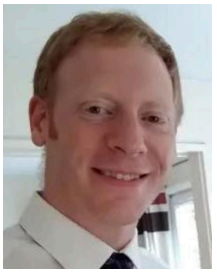
MAGDALEN ROAD CHURCH

Safe and Sound

Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines

November 2025

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Contents

The following document outlines the church's work with children and vulnerable people. Voluntary Organisations have been required to fulfil this as statutory duty since 1993 with the original publication of "Safe from Harm", a Home Office Code of Practice.

Safeguarding team p1
Safeguarding statement p2
Safeguarding roles p3
- The role of elders p3
- The role of the Safeguarding team p3
- The role of the staff team p3
- The role of children's and youth ministry leaders p4
- The role of leaders of other ministry areas p4
- The role of volunteers p4
- The role of the whole church family p5

Safeguarding in children's and youth ministry p6
- Co-ordinating and running sessions p6
  - What about 1:1s? p6
- Safety p7
  - a. Accident prevention p7
  - b. Starts at ends of sessions p7
  - c. First Aid p7
  - d. Building safety p8
  - e. Hygiene p8
  - f. Communication and media p8
  - g. Toileting p8
  - h. Food p8

Guidelines for leaders p9
- Discipline policy p10

Safeguarding in wider church life p12
- What is a safeguarding issue and what isn't? p12
- Loving teenagers well p13

Dealing with abuse p14
1. Definitions of abuse p14
2. Signs of possible abuse p15
3. Responding to disclosures or concerns of abuse p16
4. How the safeguarding team responds to disclosures p17

Signature of compliance p18

Safeguarding statement
The elders of Magdalen Road Church take seriously the church's responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare and safety of all people in its care, and especially children and young people. We consider it essential that all those involved in this work are fully committed to upholding this policy. It is vital that safeguarding is given paramount importance, for the sake of the children, their families, their leaders, and for the whole church, that they may be well looked after and be able to flourish and grow in faith.

Safeguarding roles

The role of the elders

- The elders of the church hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding.
- One elder will be particularly responsible for overseeing safeguarding, and if possible, should receive safeguarding training directly from thirtyone-eight, our safeguarding advisors, as they commence their role (https://thirtyoneeight.org/training).
- The elders will make time in their meetings to discuss and respond to matters of safeguarding concern as raised by the Safeguarding team.
- One or more elders will be named as responsible for overseeing ministries which involve children and/or vulnerable people – either directly overseeing or working closely with the person/people overseeing these ministry areas.

The role of the Safeguarding team

- The elders will designate two or more church members to form a Safeguarding team.
- This team will be led by the Safeguarding co-ordinator, with one or more deputies/assistants in support. At least one member of this team should not be an elder, staff member, or the relative of an elder or staff member.
- The Safeguarding team will be responsible for reviewing and updating the policy annually, in conjunction with national policy updates and updates from thirty-one eight. They will ensure input is sought from elders, staff, volunteers and church members.
- They will make sure that the policy and any updates are communicated to the church as and when necessary (but not less than once a year) through updates in Sunday services and in church meetings, and through written communications.
- They will ensure that an up-to-date version of the policy and their contact details are displayed on the church website, and that their contact details are displayed at the entrance of the Old Schoolhouse.
- The Safeguarding team will be responsible for ensuring that annual training (as relevant to their roles) is given to those who work with children and/or vulnerable people, and that more extensive training is given every 3 years.
- The co-ordinator and deputy co-ordinator should attend a specific child protection module 'Safeguarding for Co-ordinators and Designated Leads' delivered by thirtyone-eight training at least once, and renew annually every 3 years as a minimum.
- They will also be responsible for handling and responding to safeguarding concerns. They will keep written records of any safeguarding concerns, storing them securely (with passwords where documents are electronic). They will liaise with other members of the team, the elders/staff/other members of the congregation, and any outside organisations as appropriate.

The role of the staff team

- All prospective staff who will work with children and/or vulnerable people will be recruited via the 'Safer Recruitment' process. They will complete an application form, give details of two referees, and be interviewed by two or more members of staff/elders.
- All staff (and elders) who will work with children and/or vulnerable people must have a clear DBS check completed before they begin their role.
- The church administrator, in conjunction with the Safeguarding co-ordinator, will oversee the completion of DBS checks for all eligible staff, elders and volunteers. They will organise the undertaking of new DBS checks, maintain records of current DBS checks, and regularly check that all current DBS checks remain up-to-date (they will do this for the beginning of each new term - September, January and April).

The role of children and youth ministry leaders

- The leaders of the children's and youth teams will ensure that the teams meet at least 3 times a year to discuss issues relating to their programmes, and to give space for volunteers to raise safeguarding and other concerns, and for training and updates.
- The leader will ensure that the church administrator knows which leaders are currently serving on the team, and particularly any new leaders for whom DBS checks will need to be undertaken.
- The leader will ensure that, before commencing their role, new leaders receive an induction, in which they will receive safeguarding training. This policy will be explained to and shared with them, and they will confirm their willingness to abide by it.
- The leader will check how new leaders are settling into their roles once they have been serving for 3 months.

The role of leaders of other ministry areas

- It is the responsibility of all ministry leaders to consider whether the ministries they lead involve children (not supervised by their parents) and/or vulnerable people.
- Where they do, the ministry leader must ensure that they are following the guidance in this policy (even if the ministry is not part of the Junior Church or Youth programmes).
- This includes ministries where children are supervised by other volunteers (eg. women's Bible study), ministries open to young people attending them on their own (eg. table tennis club, Reel Life film club, Sunday evening gatherings), and ministries in which young people serve (eg. Sunday morning host / refreshments / PA / music teams etc).
- Where there are concerns or questions, a member of this ministry team should liaise directly with the Safeguarding team.
- Where children are being cared for by volunteers, there must always be at least two DBS checked volunteers who are not related to each other present. Where children are attending a session without their parents, parental consent must always be sought and attendance records kept. Where children are serving, they should always be serving alongside adults, and where there will be isolated 1:1 work, those adults should be DBS checked.

The role of volunteers

- All prospective volunteer leaders who will work with children and/or vulnerable people will be recruited via the 'Safer Recruitment' process.
- Prospective leaders who are new to the church will be encouraged to be part of the church family for 6 months–1 year before beginning to volunteer. It is preferable that only church members are recruited as leaders.
- Where a prospective leader is new to the church, the Safeguarding team will contact their previous church to check there are no safeguarding concerns related to them.
- All prospective leaders over the age of 18 will need to undertake a DBS check before serving. They should not be left on their own with groups of children, and ideally should not begin to serve at all, until a clear DBS check has been received by the church.
- We request that leaders register for the update service on receipt of their DBS check.
- Leaders must inform the church if there is a change to their DBS status.
- While under 18s can be recruited as 'helpers', they cannot be included within ratios of leaders: children and should not be left alone with children.
- All volunteers are to be vigilant as to safeguarding issues. They are to watch out for signs of potential abuse, and report any concerns to a member of the safeguarding team, either by speaking to one of them, or by e-mail.

The role of the whole church family

- The whole church family is to consider carefully how they interact with children and/or vulnerable people in the church, ensuring that their conduct is open and beyond reproach.
- The whole church is to be vigilant to safeguarding concerns, responding to and following advice and policy shared in services and meetings and via written communication.
- The whole church family is to report any concerns they have to a member of the safeguarding team, either by speaking to one of them, by e-mailing or by phoning them.

Safeguarding in children's and youth ministry

Co-ordinating and running sessions

- For all sessions (in person or online), at least two unrelated adults with valid DBS checks need to be present. Ideally, there would be one of each sex (especially for groups with teenagers). Where two leaders cannot be present, groups will need to be combined (if more than one group is running simultaneously) or sessions cancelled.
- Sessions should be clearly advertised to parents/carers in advance, with locations, timings and names of at least one leader who will be present shared.
- As good practice guidelines (based on NSPCC but not legal requirements), the ratio of adults to children is as follows:

Ages 0-2 years	1 adult: 3 children
Ages 2-3 years	1 adult: 4 children
Ages 4-8 years	1 adult: 6 children
Ages 9-12 years	1 adult: 8 children
Ages 13-18 years	1 adult: 10 children

- For our current Junior Church and youth groups this means that we require:

	2 leaders	3 leaders	4 leaders
Creche (under 3s)	6 or fewer	7-9	10-12
Climbers (3-6s)	11 or fewer	12-16	17-22
Trailblazers (6-11s)	14 or fewer	15-21	
Explore (11-14s)	16 or fewer	17-27	
Friday night youth (11-18s)	18 or fewer	19-	

- These ratios should be considered as the minimum, and additional leaders should be required where there is a higher level of need within groups.
- No child shall be allowed to attend sessions without written or electronic consent from their parents/carers. Parental consent must be collected in written form at least annually if online booking is not being used.
- Emergency contact and medical information (including that given through online bookings) will be filed and kept on church premises.
- Registers are to be kept of all children and workers attending activities with under 18s, either on paper or electronically. Paper records should be returned to the church office at the conclusion of each academic year/event.
- The discipline policy and 'guidelines for leaders' should be followed at all times to ensure children are kept as safe as possible.

What about 1:1s?

1:1 meetings between youth leaders and teenagers can be a great way to provide teaching and pastoral support with young people who are keen and mature.

1:1 meetings shouldn't be conducted with children who are under 11. They should only be conducted with children who are 11 and over where the young person is willing and keen, and not under pressure from their parents, peers or leaders.

1:2 or 1:3 meetings may also occur, where a lone leader meets several young people without another leader present. The principles outlined below should be followed for these meetings. If there are more than 3 young people involved, a second leader is required.

Principles for 1:1s

- times, locations and the people involved in meetings should be communicated to parents in advance

- meetings should be conducted in the young person's home (if a parent is in) or in public (eg. cafes, walks in populated areas)
- meetings should occur outside of school hours and should finish by 10pm at the latest
- written consent for attendance is required from parents
- records of attendance should be kept
- with parental permission, email and WhatsApp can be used to communicate about the group with 16-17 year olds (these communications should be conducted in a group setting – ie. with another leader/parent in the WhatsApp group or cced into the email, and should primarily be about the meetings themselves (eg. running late, confirming location if needed))
- if a young person will be travelling to/from a session independently, and/or to a location other than their home, this information should be shared with leaders by the beginning of the session
- any concerns from the leader, the young people, the parents, or anyone else who is aware of / observes the meeting should be passed on to the safeguarding team

Safety

a) Accident prevention:

- General risk assessments must have been completed for all activities with children and must have been shared with leaders and parents/carers prior to the activity.
- Leaders should be aware of potential hazards as they plan specific activities, and should consider how to mitigate them. They are encouraged to speak to co-leaders, and may want to complete a written risk assessment to help them.
- All accidents are to be recorded in the accident log book (kept in the kitchen) and a discussion should be had about whether/what action could be taken to avoid the accident being repeated.
- Children should not be allowed unsupervised access to outside areas, the kitchen or upstairs in the church building.

b) Starts and ends of sessions:

- Children are the responsibility of their parents/carers at all times before and after sessions.
- Leaders will be physically present to receive children from their parents/carers at the start of a session and return them at the end of the session, and will be available should parents have any concerns or questions.
- Primary school aged children must be dropped off and picked up by their parent or another adult for sessions occurring outside of a Sunday service. If another adult is collecting their child, the parents/carers should inform the leaders in advance.
- Leaders will seek to be timely in starting and finishing sessions, and request that parents/carers are timely in dropping off and collecting their children.
- If secondary school aged children are travelling home from a session independently, with a sibling, or with another child's parent/carer, this information should be shared with leaders by the beginning of the session (ideally in writing, preferably through the consent form).
- Ideally, leaders should avoid giving lifts to children. Where this is necessary, it must not be one leader with one child in a car. More than one child, or ideally more than one leader, should always be present, and the parents/carers should give permission in advance (written/verbal) except in the case of emergency.

c) First Aid:

- A first aid kit is kept in the kitchen and leaders will be made aware of its location.
- The person leading children's work will review accidents logged in the accident book and be responsible for ensuring activities are risk assessed and conducted safely.
- Where possible, a first aid trained leader will be present when children's groups meet (particularly those with children under 7).
- Where a first aid trained leader is not present, leaders would not offer first aid, but would contact the parents/carers/emergency contacts and ring 999 if life-threatening.

- Where possible, a first aid trained leader will be present for any activities taking place off-site. If this is not possible, leaders would not offer first aid, but would contact a parent/carer/emergency contact, or ring 999 if life-threatening.

d) Building safety:
- The elders, the Old Schoolhouse Manager, and any deacon for buildings will ensure the maintenance of the church building, fixtures and fittings, fire escapes and fire-fighting equipment meets adequate standards.
- All products that could be potentially harmful to children are to be kept in a secure location out of the reach of children.

e) Hygiene:
- The elders, Old Schoolhouse Manager, and any deacon for buildings shall ensure that kitchens and toilet facilities are maintained in a clean and hygienic state.
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly and/or use hand sanitiser.
- We will abide by any government guidance for infection control or food safety.

f) Communication and media:
- Sessions should be advertised to parents/carers and consent for attendance sought from parents/carers for all under 18s.
- Leaders should not swap phone numbers with children under 16. They can swap numbers with children over 16 only with parental consent.
- Leaders should not send private messages to children or engage with them via social media.
- Email can be used to communicate with over 16s, but one of their parents/carers should be copied into the conversation (even if the youth has replied privately).
- Leaders will not take photographs or videos of children on their personal phones/devices.
- Leaders will only take photographs or videos of children if it has been arranged in advance for a suitable purpose, and if permission has been sought from parents/carers (eg. to share in a church meeting update, or for the church website).
- Parents/carers are discouraged from photographing or recording their own/other children during or at the starts/ends of sessions.
- Young people are discouraged from taking photos with other young people in during sessions.
- If leaders are using devices in sessions, they need to make sure that they are password-protected and are not left unattended.
- Young people are discouraged from bringing devices to and using them within sessions.

g) Toileting:
- Changing nappies remains the responsibility of parents/carers. A creche leader will get a parent/carer if a nappy needs changing.
- Children aged 3 and above are expected to go to the toilet by themselves. Leaders will escort children to the toilet block, as needed, but won't enter the cubicle with them. If help is needed by the child, a parent/carer will be called to assist.
- Children under 3 who are toilet trained will, by prior arrangement with their parent/carer, be encouraged to use a potty in a designated corner of the creche or escorted to the toilet block by a leader (although the leader won't enter the cubicle with them).

h) Food
- Snacks are served in sessions on a regular basis.
- Parents/carers must alert leaders via booking/consent form if their children have allergies.
- Leaders will seek consent from parents/carers if more substantial/unusual food is likely to be shared in a session.
- Leaders will ensure that any food is prepared and served in a hygienic environment.

Guidelines for leaders

Personal conduct: Leaders should not use alcohol or drugs before or during sessions, and must not smoke during sessions. Leaders should keep to a minimum use of phones/devices when supervising children.

Boundaries: Make every effort to get to know the young people well, but remember to maintain appropriate boundaries and not be too pally or inappropriately intimate. Be careful what you share about yourself and your life. Be careful how you talk with co-leaders in children's presence.

Verbal communication: Consider your language and tone of voice, as well as the subjects you talk about. Consider what is appropriate for the age you are working with.

Physical communication: Think about your body language and posture. Take care with physical contact. It should always be based on the child's needs rather than the adult's, and should be initiated by the child. (Even if a child is upset, it is important that physical contact is on the child's terms and not the adult's – they should be asked and have the opportunity to say "no".) Avoid any physical contact that could be misconstrued as sexual (including but not limited to hugs, touch on the arms/shoulders/back/legs). In the creche (for children under 3 years old), physical contact is a normal and necessary part of care. Appropriate care for children under 3 includes playing, cuddling, holding, sitting on an adult's knee and lifting/carrying as appropriate. For the younger children (the under 7s) the leaders may offer physical contact to a child when thought to benefit them in the group, eg. when child is upset/isn't engaging to say "would you like to sit on my knee?" or similar. This is for within the setting of the group time.

Other forms of communication: Leaders should not swap phone numbers with children under 16 or interact with them via social media. Phone numbers should only be exchanged with 16-17 year olds with parental consent (see above).

Relating to children in groups: Treat all the children equally and show no favouritism. Aim to get to know every member of the group as well as you can. Be wary of showing greater attention to more "responsive" or "warm" children, or those you know from outside the group.

Relating to children individually: Be sensitive, caring and gentle. Be careful about expectations and responsibility you may, or they may perceive you as having. Be careful not to make assumptions. Remember there may be things going on or in their past that you aren't aware of.

Relating to children as part of families: Relate to children as part of family units, seeking to get to know and support their parents/carers and positioning yourself as supportive of (rather than undermining) parents/carers. Aim for an open, communicative relationship with parents/ carers. Consider how you can best support and encourage them as they bring up their children.

Being alone with children: Avoid being alone with a child. If you find yourself alone with a child, move into a public space/find another leader or child.

Emotional needs: Be aware of your own emotional needs and wellbeing, and be careful not to look to ministry to fulfil your own needs. Don't exert emotional pressure, and be wary of overly "close" relationships with individual children or the formation of emotional dependency and 'hero worship'. Be aware of the risk of crushes forming. If you feel an unhealthy relationship/dependency may be developing, speak to the Safeguarding co-ordinator and perhaps consider distancing yourself a little from the individual for a season.

Discipline Policy

This policy seeks to preserve a happy, safe and positive environment for all children and adults. The church seeks to be a loving and grace-filled community who worship God together, and it is vital that all children and adults attending the church have the opportunity to experience this environment. We have a discipline policy in order to protect each other and to enable the groups to function well.

We expect good standards of behaviour at all times which are governed by the following principles:

- Respect: for each other (children and adults), for property, for activities
- Kindness: to each other (children and adults)

Rules and expectations

- Rules and expectations for the session will be established clearly by leaders in advance.
- Positive reinforcement will be used in the first instance (eg. reminders of rules, thanking and praising children who are following instructions).

Sanctions

- Verbal and non-verbal cues will be used where children are not responding to other methods of management (eg. a hand gesture, saying a child's name in a firm tone of voice, a leader moving their own position or moving the position of furniture).
- Continued poor behaviour will lead to a verbal warning, then a consequence (eg. a shared resource being taken away from a child), and then the child being asked to sit apart for part of an activity, and then the child being taken aside by a leader (to another part of the room).
- If the child will not move to where the leader has asked them to, they will not be moved by force, but a parent/carer will be brought to the session.
- If behaviour still doesn't improve after these interventions, a leader will go and get a parent/carer (if this is possible and they haven't already), or the child will be asked to sit out for the remainder of the session (with a leader) if a parent/carer is not present in the building.
- There will be a discussion with the parent/carer if a child is asked to sit out for the remainder of or leave a session, about how to help the child better engage and make the setting more appropriate for them.

Advice for leaders:

- Call on more experienced / other leaders if you are struggling to manage a child's behaviour.
- Be aware of contextual issues in the child's life that you might know (eg. difficult things happening at home).
- Be aware of cultural expectations and differences between you and the child.
- Be aware of your own emotions as you seek to manage behaviour. Don't lose your temper or personalise a child's response to you.
- Look for a cause behind unwanted behaviour (Is the child tired/bored/confused? Is the activity too difficult or easy for them? Are they trying to get attention? Are they showing off? Are they having social difficulties with others in the group?)
- Make eye contact and use children's names.
- Set high expectations, but expect children to test and push the boundaries.
- Be firm, but not too teacher-esque.
- Nip poor behaviour in the bud - try not to slip into tolerating it. But also pick your battles – don't challenge everything.

- Do not act physically to make a child do something (eg. pull them, pick them up and move them, physically block them).
- Physical intervention is an absolute last resort if the child is putting themselves or others in serious danger.
- Empower children to take responsibility for their own behaviour and actions (eg. give them a choice, give them a way out with dignity, look to defuse the situation).

Safeguarding in wider church life

What is a safeguarding issue and what isn't?

It can be tricky to know which elements of church life should fall under this policy. Our desire as a church is to ensure that children and vulnerable people are kept safe in *every area* of church life, but we must balance this with the fact that following stringent guidelines and boundaries in every area of church life would be tiresome, restrictive and inappropriate.

These questions will hopefully give you at least some initial guidance:

1. Is this a **private arrangement** between individuals (eg. a teenager babysitting for a family, a parent of a teenager taking a group of teens to a park, a parent giving another teenager a lift to a church group/meeting, or someone helping a family with informal childcare)?
   If so □ please be sensible and wise, but this policy doesn't apply.

2. Is there a **power dynamic** at play? Ie. Could the young person feel expected to participate, or feel a level of pressure from their parents/other adults to participate in this activity, or feel worried that adults would be disappointed if they didn't participate? (eg. a church event that has been put on with young people in mind, a request for young people to serve in a ministry, a home group social to which parents have been encouraged to bring their children, a special church event or service, or an invitation for a meal in someone from church's house)?
   If so □ if it is a formal church activity (eg. service, event, formal advertised church gathering), then please follow this policy.
   If it is a less formal activity, please seek advice.

3. Is this a **'ministry' activity**, or could it appear to be one (eg. someone in a home group meeting up 1:1 to mentor the teenage child of another home group member, a member of church taking a young person for a walk to see how they're doing, a member of church meeting up with a few older teens to get to know and support them)?
   If so □ please follow this policy unless there is a long-term, pre-existing relationship between the people involved prior to the church connection.

4. Are the adults and young people involved **related formally through ministry**, even if this isn't part of that formal ministry (eg. a home group member who is also a youth leader taking the children of a home group family to the cinema, a family friend within the church who is also a youth leader saving a teenager's number on their phone)?
   If so □ please seek advice.

Of course, there will be many circumstances that fall outside of these parameters. If you are unsure about a situation you are involved in or have concerns about a situation you observe, please seek advice.

Loving teenagers well

It is a great blessing to have teenagers as part of our church family. Legally and in terms of safeguarding, those aged under 18 are still children. We have safeguarding responsibilities towards them however mature they may be or appear to be. Here are a few principles to guide our interactions.

Church family life

Please do chat to and get to know the teenagers in our church. This is vitally important for them to feel valued and a part of the church! But please remember that they may be younger than they look/seem/want to be treated. Please relate to them as part of their families; if you want to get to know a young person, get to know their parents too! Avoid 1:1 private conversations with young people.

Communication

As a general principle, adults in church shouldn't have the personal contact details of under 18s to whom they are not related (e.g,. phone numbers, email addresses) and shouldn't interact with under 18s via these means or via social media. There may be occasions where it would be appropriate for adults to have an under 18s' contact details, but please consider carefully why this is necessary and whether you need to keep the person's contact details indefinitely. If you are unsure or have concerns, please seek advice.

Service

It is wonderful to have our teenagers serving in church life. It is a blessing to them as they use their gifts, learn the blessing of serving others, and realise that being part of a church involves serving and being served. It is a blessing to the church as they use their gifts and make serving easier for the adults they are supporting and replacing. However, we must be careful of the level of expectation and responsibility we place upon them, and the amount of reliability, common sense and leadership we require of them.

Here are a few principles for those who serve alongside under 18s:

In all situations

- an under 18 should not be expected to lead a ministry area on their own / with other teens
- under 16s' service should be co-ordinated through their parents rather than directly with them (eg. their parents' email address should be used, rotas should be shared with their parents, last minute changes / needs should be communicated to their parents)
- 16-17 year olds can be communicated with directly, but their parents should be copied into all communications

For teenagers serving with children's groups

- helpers under 18 attached to children's groups will need to be in addition to 2 leaders who are over 18 (they cannot replace 1 or both of them)
- under 18s should not be left to supervise groups of children on their own at any point in the session
- under 18s should not accompany children to the toilet block

For teenagers serving in other ministries (eg. PA / kitchen / host team / band)

- a 16-17 year old could replace an adult on a team (e.g., a PA team which would normally consist of two adults could be made up of an adult and one 16-17 year old)
- an under 16 should only replace an adult on a rota if there will be an adult present with them to take responsibility and to assist as necessary (e.g., a PA team which would normally consist of two adults could be made up of an adult and one under 16, but the adult is taking responsibility)

Dealing with abuse

This policy draws heavily upon guidance produced by thirtyone:eight to help those working with children and vulnerable people to understand what child abuse is and what the possible signs of it are, as well as knowing how to respond appropriately and safely to concerns and allegations.

1. Definitions of Abuse

(The following definitions of child abuse are as stated in the joint government departments' document, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018.)

a) 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.

b) Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, anal or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

c) 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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care/treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

d) 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 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, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

2. Signs of possible abuse

Signs suggesting physical abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc that do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse
- Changes in routine

Signs suggesting emotional abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, eg. a child withdrawing or becoming clingy.
- Also, 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

Indicators of possible sexual abuse / sexual exploitation

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- 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
- Bed wetting and soiling

Indicators of possible neglect

- Signs of undernourishment (eg. constant hunger, visibly underweight)
- A failure to grow, very short for age
- Stealing or gorging food
- Illnesses and injuries that have been left untreated
- Signs of inadequate care (eg. unwashed/clothing clearly unwashed, body odour, excessively dirty teeth / fingernails)
- Unkempt appearance (eg. hair not brushed, clothes tattered / too old)

3. Responding to disclosures or concerns of abuse

How to respond to a disclosure

a) If a child tells you of abuse, ensure that you allow the child to tell his or her story unaided. Do not classify behaviour or question their story. Do not 'put words into their mouth'.
b) Try to ensure that you react calmly to any allegation of abuse.
c) Tell the child you will need to let someone else (the Safeguarding co-ordinator) know so that we can help them – don't promise confidentiality.
d) Make notes of any allegation of abuse as soon as possible using the exact words used and the date and time.
e) Inform the Safeguarding co-ordinator or deputy immediately of any allegations of abuse, passing on any appropriate written record (including any allegations against the pastor(s)/elder(s)).
f) If the allegation is against the Safeguarding co-ordinator or deputy or they are unavailable, report concerns to the assistant coordinator. If the whole Safeguarding team are involved or unavailable, report concerns to the pastor (Andrew Sweasey). If the pastor is also unavailable, or the allegation is against the Safeguarding team and pastor, report concerns to the chair of elders (Charlie Currie). If none of the above are available or all are involved, report your concerns directly to the Local Authority (0345 050 7666).
g) Ensure that any information told to you by a child is kept confidential and only communicated to the Safeguarding co-ordinator.
h) Where applicable, the Oxfordshire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) team will refer your disclosure to the school the child or young person attends.

What to do if you suspect abuse

a) If a child behaves in a manner that leads you to suspect he or she is the victim of abuse, allow the child to explain their behaviour unaided, if possible.
b) Try to react calmly to any inappropriate behaviour or any witnessed abuse.
c) Make notes of any inappropriate behaviour or witnessed abuse as soon as possible.
d) If you suspect, based upon inappropriate behaviour, that a child is a victim of abuse, or are worried or concerned that this is a possibility, inform the Safeguarding co-ordinator or deputy as soon as possible, passing on any written record.

After any allegations of abuse, witnessed abuse or suspected abuse the Safeguarding co-ordinator will keep a written record which will be stored in the safeguarding cabinet in the church office. If appropriate, the Local Authority (MASH) will be contacted. Advice will also be sought from thirtyone:eight.

If you believe that a child is in immediate danger inform the Safeguarding co-ordinator or deputy immediately, passing on any written record. If it is not possible to speak to them that day please contact the police directly.

For more advice, contact Thirtyone:eight (https://thirtyoneeight.org/, info@thirtyoneeight.org, 0303 003 1111)

4. How the safeguarding team responds to disclosures

If a disclosure is made to a member of the safeguarding team, the below procedure will be followed:

The person to whom the disclosure is made will…
a. thank the person reporting the concern for passing the information on to them and commit to considering and dealing appropriately with it
b. make a written record of the concern (including who the concern was raised by, who it was raised to, the circumstances in which it was raised – including date and time, the child(ren) / adult(s) involved, and the nature of the concern) in as much detail as possible
c. share the concern with at least one other member of the safeguarding team
d. share the concern with others if and only as needed (eg. others present when the concern occurred, others who know the individuals involved, elders, pastors)
e. contact the thirtyone:eight safeguarding helpline for advice, if necessary
f. contact any other external organisations for advice / support / to pass on information and concerns as appropriate (eg. the MASH, the police)
g. decide upon a course of action and take it
h. inform the person raising the concern that action has been taken, and where necessary / appropriate let them know what action has been taken
i. review the results of the action that was taken, reporting back to the person who reported the concern / elders / other key individuals as appropriate
j. plan and take any further actions that are needed
k. update this policy and issue additional guidance as needed

Signature of compliance

It is important that all those working with children and vulnerable people in Magdalen Road Church have read this policy and take personal responsibility for seeing it implemented in the church.

Please sign this form and return it to the Safeguarding co-ordinator.

I confirm that I have read and understood this Safeguarding policy, and agree to abide by it, doing my best to see it implemented within church.

Signed…….

Date.…….

Change log

a) Replaced ‘using the safeguarding form’ with ‘e-mail’ (4)
b) Removed ‘or by using the safeguarding form’ (5)
c) Changed ‘Old Schoolhouse administrator’ to ‘Old Schoolhouse Manager’ (8, twice)
d) Changed the policy on under 16s serving on rotas to reflect current practice (13)
e) Replaced ‘Dan Steel’ with ‘Andrew Sweasey’ (16)

Commentary

Changes c and e are just housekeeping or for clarification.

Changes a and b update the reporting protocol to reflect our actual practice, whereby the Safeguarding Team take responsibility for completing the safeguarding form after a report is received.

Change d updates the approach to teenagers serving on rotas to reflect our actual practice. The intention is to provide more flexibility for younger teenagers serving on rotas (other than children’s groups), whilst at the same time clarifying that this can only happen in a situation where an adult is taking overall responsibility and is able to assist the teenager as needed.