

MAYBRIDGE
COMMUNITY CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK

POLICY & GUIDELINES



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

KEY CONTACTS

If you think a child is in immediate danger,
call the police on 999

SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Piero Regnante

Designated Safeguarding Lead
01903 700522
safeguarding@maybridge.org.uk

Chris Gray

Deputy Safeguarding Lead
01903 700522
safeguarding@maybridge.org.uk

Ruth Stanley

Children and Families Worker, Children's Safeguarding Lead
07914 956531 / 01903 700522
ruth.stanley@maybridge.org.uk

Youth Worker
Youth Safeguarding Officer
01903 700522

Francis Hodges

Safeguarding Trustee
safeguardingtrustee@maybridge.org.uk

ORGANISATIONS

IFD (Formerly MASH)

The Integrated Front Door (IFD) for West Sussex Children Services receives safeguarding enquiries and referrals for children's social care and early help services, including those with disabilities.



www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/request-support-or-raise-a-concern-about-a-child

thirtyone:eight

Independent Safeguarding Specialist for Churches

thirtyoneeight.org

0303 003 1111



NSPCC

Information and advice for keeping children safe

nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC

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These guidelines have been prepared considering the **Sussex Child Protection** Procedures and guidance from **Thirtyone:eight**.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means protecting all children and youth in our care from abuse and maltreatment (including those over 18 who are still a part of our youth provision) and creating a safe and caring environment for children and youth through:

- Treating young people fairly and equally.
- Building trust and good communication.
- Being aware of individual needs (health, allergies, disabilities etc.)
- Setting appropriate discipline and boundaries.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, not just leaders or people on the children and youth teams. Where abuse is discovered or suspected it must be reported. Our policy statement is annually presented to the church and made available on our website.

WHO OVERSEES IT?

The Safeguarding Team is made up of a lead, deputies and staff on the Children's and Youth Teams. The team meets every quarter to oversee safeguarding at Maybridge Community Church.

- Ultimate responsibility lies with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who oversees all safeguarding concerns arising within church life.
- Volunteers are overseen by staff members in their relevant roles.
- Volunteers and staff working with vulnerable people are required to have a DBS and attend training provided by Maybridge Community Church.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

If you have any questions, please contact the Safeguarding Lead.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN & ADULTS

POLICY STATEMENT

Maybridge Community Church seeks to be a safe and caring environment for everyone. This means:

- We are committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent harm or abuse to children and adults with care and support needs in all their recognised forms.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and children and will ensure all our policies and procedures will reflect this.
- We believe all people should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of this place of worship.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe every child and adult should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that all those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are experiencing significant harm.

We are committed to:

- Following statutory denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults and will ensure that as a place of worship/organisation all workers will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of all relevant legislation including, but not limited to; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Equality Act 2010 and referring concerns about adults with care and support needs to the local authority under the Care Act 2014.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship.
- Supporting all in this place of worship affected by abuse.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The Trustees and Safeguarding Team review this statement and policy annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult, then speak to the appropriate member of our Safeguarding Team (safeguarding@maybridge.org.uk), who have been approved as the Safeguarding Leads for this place of worship.

Piero Regnante

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

01903 700522 | safeguarding@maybridge.org.uk

If the DSL is not available, contact a member of the **Safeguarding Team**. If your concern is about the Designated Safeguarding Lead, please contact the Safeguarding Trustee:

Frances Hodges

Safeguarding Trustee

safeguardingtrustee@maybridge.org.uk.

You can also contact:

Thirtyone:eight (Independent Christian Safeguarding Helpline)

0303 003 1111 (Option 2)

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

WHAT IS ABUSE?

The definition of abuse and neglect includes the maltreatment of a child or young person: inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. This can be inflicted in a family, institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Signs of this abuse include injuries that:

- Are inconsistent with explanation.
- Are in abnormal locations.
- Have not been treated.

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment. It may also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another child (e.g. when a child or young person witnesses domestic violence). This can also involve bullying (including cyberbullying). Signs of this abuse include:

- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Aggression
- Attention-seeking
- Nervousness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away, stealing, lying and self-harm.

Neglect is the consistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. Neglect may include the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical treatment, supervision, or response to emotional needs.

Signs of neglect include:

- Children out late or being left home alone for extended periods.
- Health and other needs not being taken care of.

Sexual abuse includes forcing or enticing a child or young person(s) to take part in any sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening or have given their consent (including viewing pornography and sexting).

Signs of abuse include:

- Allegations made by the child or young person
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters
- Detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Severe sleep disturbances.
- Self-harm.

Spiritual abuse, linked with emotional abuse, could be defined as an abuse of power in a faith context. It involves manipulation or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without the right to choose for themselves.

Abuse of trust is where those in a position of trust engage in any behaviour that might allow a relationship to develop, including any physical or sexual relationship even if the young person has consented.

Self harm, self abuse and self neglect includes all activities where the child or young person intentionally hurts or damages their body and/or harms their own wellbeing and developmental opportunities. As well as cutting, biting, suicidal indicators and neglect of self.

Grooming is preparing a child or young person so they do not protest to a future abusive act. Signs may include someone identifying vulnerable children, befriending the family, building 'special' relationships, keeping secrets and/or developing online contact.

REMEMBER

The signs of abuse aren't always obvious, and a child or young person might not tell anyone what's happening, due to fear the abuser might find out, fear they won't be believed or because they don't realise it's abuse. If you have any concerns about a child or young person, speak to the Safeguarding Team. If you have any concerns, speak without delay to the Safeguarding Team (see details on page 2).

HANDLING AN ALLEGATION

WHEN YOU HEAR IT

- Keep calm and be aware of your facial expression (try not to display shock)
- Take the child/young person to a place out of earshot, but **NOT** out of sight
- Look at them directly and show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely you think it sounds)
- **DON'T** communicate blame (even if the child or young person has broken rules) or question them. It's not your job to investigate, just to report
- Be aware they may have been bribed/threatened to stay quiet
- **DO NOT** promise confidentiality; say you will need to let someone know.

AFTER YOU HEAR IT

1. Make notes ASAP. Write:

- Exactly what they said
- The time, date and place the allegation was made
- What was happening at the time
- Anyone else who was present.

2. Inform the Safeguarding Team ASAP and within 24 hours.

See page 2 for contact details. Please provide them with your notes for safe storage. A pro-forma is available as a guide for your notes – see maybridge.org.uk/policies for a copy of the 'Raising a Safeguarding Concern Form.'

3. If the allegation or concern is about the Safeguarding Team, church leaders or church staff, inform the Safeguarding Trustee

(Frances Hodges at safeguardingtrustee@maybridge.org.uk).

IF YOU THINK A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL THE POLICE ON 999.

If the parents/carers are the source of the danger, **DO NOT** inform or return the child to them.

DO NOT address the issue yourself, contact emergency services and advise the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

APPOINTING TEAM MEMBERS

All those over the age of 14 regularly working with children and young people – whether paid or unpaid – must complete our six stage recruitment and selection process:

1. Applicant fills in and signs Church Application Form
2. Church obtains references
3. Applicant completes online DBS Form (over 18s only)
4. Applicant provides ID documents (over 18s only)
5. Applicant/Church signs up for DBS update service
6. Applicant attends next safeguarding session and renews every two years

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Regularly attended church for more than six months.
- No history of violence or sexual offences.
- No concerns raised about suitability to work with children or young people.
- Deemed suitable for the team by the Safeguarding Team. This decision is final as the welfare of children and young people is of utmost importance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

TEAM MEMBERS MUST ALWAYS:

- Abide by and follow our safeguarding policy and guidelines outlined in this Handbook..
- Listen to, respect and value our children and young people at all times.
- Treat all children and young people fairly, without prejudice or favouritism.
- Challenge any unacceptable child behaviour in an appropriate way.
- Use appropriate language that is not offensive or discriminatory.
- Behave in a way that is appropriate, can't be easily misunderstood, and that avoids inappropriate relationships developing with any of the children and young people.

HANDLING CONCERNS ABOUT OTHER TEAM MEMBERS

If you have any concerns about the actions or behaviour of other Children and Youth team members, you need to report these as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Team (see page 2 for contact details).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will investigate the concerns raised, and take appropriate action where required.

If you do not feel your concerns are responded to appropriately or in a timely way, please contact the Safeguarding Trustee at **safeguardingtrustee@maybridge.org.uk**

SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

CHILD TO ADULT RATIOS FOR GROUPS

0-18 MONTHS	1 ADULT TO 3 CHILDREN
1 & 1/2 TO 4 YEARS	1 ADULT TO 4 CHILDREN
4 - 8 YEARS	1 ADULT TO 6 CHILDREN
8-11 YEARS	1 ADULT TO 8 CHILDREN
11-18 YEARS	1 ADULT TO 10 YOUNG PEOPLE

THINGS TO NOTE

- These ratios from the NSPCC are guidelines only. In certain situations and depending on the needs of children or young people, it may be appropriate to have a higher or lower number of adults than recommended above. Our Children & Families worker and Youth Ministry Lead are able to make decisions on variations to the ratios and appropriate actions to mitigate any risks.
- There must always be two or more adults for each group activity, and (where possible) should include both men and women where appropriate and where the group is of mixed gender.
- Youth helpers (those who are under 18) should not be left alone with the children – they do not have responsibility for the care of any child. Youth helpers **DO NOT** count in adults:child ratios.
- Where possible young adult helpers (19+) that are part of the Youth Team should serve on Elevate teams, leaving a 5 year age gap with the young people they are leading, where possible.
- The nature of church work with children and young people means that numbers will be unknown and vary week to week. Leaders plan for what they can, but may have to respond pragmatically. This may include seeking other helpers to operate under supervision or alerting other adults in the vicinity.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Our goal is to encourage children and young people to develop respect, self control, self-confidence and sensitivity in their social interactions during their sessions.

- 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.
- 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.
- Resist letting the demanding individuals take all your time. Take care to give the quieter and/or well behaved attention.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said, to avoid manipulation.
- Bored children and young people 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.
- Do not compare a child or young person with another in the group; rather encourage and affirm and, if possible, give them responsibility for appropriate tasks.
- Every person is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore, that each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.
- Avoid physical restraint unless absolutely necessary to prevent harm to others or themselves. Physical restraint must only be used rarely, at a level proportionate to the situation, and must be fully recorded and reported to the Safeguarding Team without delay.

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 out of the room (under supervision), or be excluded from attending the group for a period of time.

REGISTERS

Kids Club & Children's Groups

Parents/carers must register children for Kids' Clubs, including providing mobile contact details, and information on dietary, medical or special needs requirements. Registers are taken every session and handover arrangements are operated at the end.

Youth Groups & Activities

Registers are taken every session and any new or visiting young people should give contact details for a parent/carer if they cannot fill in an annual consent form (see below).

CONSENT FORMS

Consent forms are required for all regular events and activities for children and young people. Parents and carers complete the form yearly, and it is kept securely but accessibly on file. For overnight youth events or activities where there might be specific risks, individual consent forms are required.

FIRST AID

When organising events or activities, you must consider how to respond if a child or young person becomes ill or injured. You must also ensure there are suitable first aid supplies, and – where possible – at least one member of the group should be a qualified first aider. Seek medical assistance as soon as it is required, and contact the child or young person's parent/carer.

ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS

Whether for mentoring or general support, one-to-one meetings between a leader and a young person must be arranged in advance with the Youth Leader and with the parent/carer's consent. Meetings must occur in a public place where the leader and young person are not alone. These should not take place in a leader's home, nor after a church activity where the adult would be alone on site with the young person(s). The 1:1 feedback form should be completed for each meeting and sent to the Youth Ministry Lead for accountability, awareness and secure storage.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical touch should always relate to the child/young person's needs and not the adult's. Therefore, it must always be initiated by the child, age-appropriate and in public. Hugs should not be prolonged, and hand-holding or sitting on an adult's lap is only appropriate for infants and toddlers. Tickling and piggy-back rides are not permitted. Avoid any physical touch that could be misconstrued or misunderstood.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Prayer with a child or young person should never be alone or in an unsupervised situation, but always in a public setting. The child or young person should always be asked (not pressured) if they would like to be prayed with.

Prayer should be with someone of the same gender where possible, particularly when prayer with laying on of hands is offered. Again, this must be done with permission of the child or young person, and only with a light touch on the arm or shoulder.

TOILETING

Parents and carers should be asked to ensure their children have been to the toilet or in a clean nappy before bringing them to the group. The team does not change nappies.

While the group is running, young children should be taken to the toilet but the adult team member should not invade the child's privacy, taking the lead from the child and only providing help as requested. It may be that the parent or carer should be asked to assist their own children with toileting.

If the child is independent at toileting, an adult team member can take them to the toilet but wait outside and supervise their return to the group.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessments must be carried out for all necessary events - and steps taken to mitigate any risks identified – by the person organising the event.

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

From time to time, official photos and videos may be taken for the church's communications and publicity. This will be arranged in advance with the group leader, and parents/carers will be asked to give permission for photos of their child to be used in this way. No other photos of children or young people should be taken.

SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL AND MESSAGING

Social media is a key part of young people's lives, and so any adults interacting with young people via these means must be safe and appropriate. As a general rule, we do not recommend adults have children as friends/followers/contacts. However, if you are a youth leader, it is necessary for communication and so we have the following guidelines:

- Ensure all content on your profile or page – whether generated by you or others – is appropriate.
- Do not communicate with young people between the hours of 10pm and 8am.
- Do not post or tag any photos of children or young people from the group.
- Do not communicate with children under the age of 13 (as this is the minimum required age to use social media with parental permission).
- Keep as much conversation as possible within the public domain.
- Do not engage in any communication where no record can be kept (e.g. Snapchat).
- Only use communication outside the public domain (emails, texts, chat messaging etc.) for the arrangement of activities or events and include another adult or leader in the communications. Do not use this form of communication for prolonged personal or pastoral conversations. Instead, arrange a one-to-one as per the guidelines above.
- As a general principle, ask yourself if the parent or carer would be able to read the message and understand it and find it appropriate. If in doubt, don't send it.

Find our WhatsApp Guidelines and Social Media Policy on the church website at ***[maybridge.org.uk/policies](https://www.maybridge.org.uk/policies)***.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

A QUICK GUIDE

YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

SUCH AS...

- Physical Harm
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional Abuse
- Self Harm
- Sexting
- Disclosure
- Uneasiness about an adult's behaviour/Grooming
- Mental Health

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

DO NOT break or promise confidentiality

DO NOT return the child to the source of the danger

DO NOT investigate or address the issue yourself

ARE THEY IN IMMEDIATE DANGER?

YES

E.g.

- Head injury
- Abduction Risk
- Serious Injury

NO

CALL 999

REPORTING & RAISING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Takes notes ASAP	Speak to the Safeguarding Team ASAP	Pass along your notes
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SAFEGUARDING TEAM

- Checks procedure
- Consults external agencies if appropriate
- Makes a decision
- Keeps records secure



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