

SAFEGUARDING AT MAYBRIDGE

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Name: Safeguarding Policy		Version: 2.00
Author: thirtyone:eight		22 nd December 2025
Date: 19 th January 2026	Approved By: The Trustees	Next Review Date: January 2027

INTRODUCTION

At its heart, safeguarding simply means protecting people from harm and is primarily the proactive measures and policies put in place to protect everyone, particularly vulnerable children and adults, from harm, abuse, or neglect.

At Maybridge Community Church, we want all our activities, ministries, groups and services to be spaces where everyone feels secure, valued, and included. The potential for harm is taken seriously and we recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We operate safeguarding policies and procedures that cover children, young people and adults and seek to ensure that the principles of safeguarding vulnerable people are upheld.

This policy articulates the key principles, people and procedures that help ensure Maybridge Community Church provides a safe and caring environment for everyone.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by *Thirtyone:eight* – thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards

Our Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Handbooks that provide practical detail and guidance on conduct and further information on safeguarding for volunteers, staff and leadership teams at Maybridge.

1. OUR COMMITMENT

The Leadership of Maybridge Community Church (MCC) recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. MCC acknowledges that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

Maybridge Community Church accepts 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”.

MCC 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.”

The leadership of MCC have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. MCC is committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

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 those at MCC 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. Our safeguarding statement can be found in **APPENDIX 1**.

2. GOVERNANCE

MCC's board of Trustees is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility. This includes having a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of the organisation.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the organisation or "the way we do things around here". Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways. "The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object" (IICSA The Governance Institute, 2017).

MCC's board of trustees will have overarching responsibility for safeguarding within the organisation, including referring to the Charity Commission.

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims, to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our organisation but to also build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- there are accountability structures
- with codes of conduct
- the values of the organisation are embedded in its day-to-day actions and behaviours of its people
- and there is open communication

3. PREVENTION

UNDERSTANDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults with care and support needs 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 adult.

For the purposes of this policy, a child will be referred to as:
Someone under 18 years old.

An adult at risk of harm will be defined in this policy as the following:

Any person aged 18 or older who, due to disability, illness, age, or mental impairment, is or may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against significant harm, abuse, or exploitation.

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:

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

This policy is in line with HM Government legislation.

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

POSITIONS OF TRUST

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. This also includes anyone who has spiritual oversight or a position of leadership (paid or voluntary) at Maybridge. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022, it is illegal in England and Wales and Northern Ireland for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old under their care or supervision.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The MCC 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
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A self-declaration form from Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has been completed where necessary (MCC will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme and induction is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

The MCC 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.

MCC will provide or facilitate all staff/volunteers undertaking basic safeguarding training which will be renewed every two years.

MCC will provide or facilitate the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other Safeguarding Team Leads undertaking advance safeguarding training which will be renewed every two years. Where possible, the Leadership will provide or facilitate additional training for the requirements of the role.

MCC will provide or facilitate specialist safeguarding training for the board of Trustees which will be renewed every three years. They 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.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, 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 potential harm or abuse and false or unfounded accusations.

We have specific good practice guidelines which can be found in **APPENDIX 6**.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

MCC are committed to supporting all workers and volunteers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers and volunteers have been issued with a code of conduct for supporting children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their role and outside of their role. They will also receive further training as necessary.

The code of conduct can be found in **APPENDIX 6**.

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

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

Therefore, MCC have clear guidelines with 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. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets our safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults with care and support needs and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

5. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

Please refer to **Appendix 2 & 3** for definitions of abuse together with signs and indicators for children and adults.

RECOGNISING AND RAISING A CONCERN

Follow procedures as below:

- The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:
- The person in receipt of disclosures, allegation or concern of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Piero Regnante

Tel: 01903 700522

Email: safeguarding@maybridge.org.uk

The DSL is nominated by The Trustees to act on their behalf in dealing with the disclosure, allegation or concern, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the DSL or, if the concerns in any way involve the DSL, then the report should be made to:

The Safeguarding Team

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Chris Gray

Safeguarding Lead for Children: Ruth Stanley

Safeguarding Lead for Young People: Youth Ministry Lead

Tel: 01903 700522

Email: safeguarding@maybridge.org.uk

If the concerns implicate both the DSL and/or the Safeguarding Team then the report should be made in the first instance to:

The Safeguarding Trustee

Frances Hodges

Email: safeguardingtrustee@maybridge.org.uk

The worker or volunteer can also contact *Thirtyone:eight* to get further advice if required:

Thirtyone:eight Helpline

Tel: 0303 003 1111. Option 2

If someone is in immediate danger call 999.

RECORDING A DISCLOSURE, CONCERN OR ALLEGATION

The worker or volunteer should record the disclosure, allegation or concern using the safeguarding form and share this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Safeguarding Team / Safeguarding Trustee as soon as possible. See **appendix 8**.

The Safeguarding Lead may first ring the *Thirtyone:eight* helpline for advice. Based on the concern, they may then contact the relevant statutory services.

The Safeguarding may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, such as:

- Chair of Trustees or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or The Charity Commission for England and Wales to report a serious incident/raise a concern.
- Local Authority Designated Officer – LADO (England and Wales) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.

Concerns 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 are kept securely.

Whilst disclosures, allegations or concerns of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead (DSL) the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead should not delay referral to the statutory services, the police, or taking advice from *Thirtyone:eight*.

The MCC leadership will support the Safeguarding Lead and Team 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:eight*, although the MCC leadership hope that members of the organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Team as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency directly.

We hope by making this statement that MCC leadership demonstrate their commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead will:
- If the child requires immediate medical attention, contact the relevant medical services, informing the Doctor of any concerns.
- Contact Children's Social Care (or *Thirtyone:eight*) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- If the disclosure, allegation or concern is directly about the parents, then do not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Care. For lower-level concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of 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 Care directly for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by *Thirtyone:eight* (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether to refer a case to Children's Social Care.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE:

In the event of allegations or concerns of sexual abuse, the DSL lead will:

- Contact the Children's Social Care for children and families and police on 101.

- Depending on the circumstances, they will need to consider whether it is appropriate to speak to the parents of the child. If they are not sure about this, then they will contact Thirtyone:eight.
- Seek and follow the advice given by *Thirtyone:eight* if for any reason they are unsure whether to contact Children's Social Care and police. *Thirtyone:eight* will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

ALLEGATIONS OF FINANCIAL ABUSE:

In the event of allegations or concerns of financial abuse, the DSL will:

- Contact Children's Social Care and report the concerns and the police.

DETAILED PROCEDURES WHERE THERE IS A CONCERN ABOUT AN ADULT AT RISK

CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR HARM INCLUDING; PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, ORGANISATIONAL, FINANCIAL, DISCRIMINATORY, NEGLECT, SELF-NEGLECT, FORCED MARRIAGE, MODERN SLAVERY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE.

If there is concern about any of the above, the DSL will:

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services on 999, informing them of any suspicions.
- Contact Adult Social Care who will be able to advise whether this reaches the safeguarding threshold and actions required. Alternatively, *Thirtyone:eight* can be contacted for advice.

IF THERE IS A CONCERN REGARDING SPIRITUAL ABUSE, SAFEGUARDING LEAD WILL:

- Identify support services for the Survivor i.e., counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact *Thirtyone:eight* and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE:

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the DSL will:

- Make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer -LADO(England and Wales), whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS (England and Wales) for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the Local Authority Designated Officer (England and Wales), if they are involved.
- Share information about the concern with the police.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH ADULTS WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS:

The DSL will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Care to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- Make a referral to the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service DBS (England and Wales) following the advice of Adult Social Services.
- Share information about the concern with the police.

The legislation across all of the UK places the duty upon Adult Social Care to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing

the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Social Care to decide not the organisation.

ALLEGATIONS OF NON-RECENT SEXUAL ABUSE FROM AN ADULT:

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from a child, the procedure in relation to sexual abuse will be followed (please see above).

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from an adult, the DSL will:

- Give the adult the option to report this to the Police. If the adult does not wish to report this to the police, then the DSL can pass on the information relating to the alleged Perpetrator, however, must not share details of the Survivor.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role working or volunteering with children or young people, make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer -LADO (England and Wales) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role working with adults with care and support needs, liaise with Adult Social Care to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role within your organisation, contact *Thirtyone:eight* and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

6. PASTORAL CARE AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

SUPPORTING THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

The MCC 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.

The Elders are responsible for pastoral care and can be contacted by emailing: elders@maybridge.org.uk. You can also find out more about pastoral care at maybridge.org.uk/pastoral-care and request help from, or refer church partners to the pastoral care team, using the care form.

WORKING WITH THOSE WHO MAY POSE A RISK

When someone attending the organisation is known to pose a potential risk to children, or adults with care and support needs; the MCC leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer wellbeing support/pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on a risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate external parties.

APPENDIX 1:

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**.

APPENDIX 2

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE TOGETHER WITH SIGNS AND INDICATORS CHILDREN

Child abuse includes physical, emotional, and sexual harm, neglect, and exploitation, which can be identified by injuries, behavioural changes, developmental issues, and knowledge of adult matters. Signs can include unexplained physical marks, constant fear or withdrawal, inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, social isolation, consistent absence from school, and signs of neglect like poor hygiene.

Physical Abuse

Definition:

Physical abuse involves the infliction of physical harm, such as burns, cuts, bruises, or broken bones.

Signs:

- Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, or bites.
- Injuries that don't match the explanation given for their cause.
- Bruises on soft parts of the body like the cheeks, abdomen, or buttocks, where accidental injuries are less likely.

Emotional Abuse

Definition: Persistent emotional maltreatment that causes severe adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Signs:

- Being made to feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate.
- Frequent fear or feeling unsafe.
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being placed on the child.
- Witnessing or hearing the ill-treatment of others.

Sexual Abuse

Definition: Can include sexual acts involving children, manipulation, or the exploitation of a child.

Signs:

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour.
- Bizarre or sophisticated sexual behaviour.
- Nightmares, sleep disturbances, or unexplained pain when going to the toilet.
- Changes in the genital or anal area, such as redness or swelling.

Neglect

Definition: Failing to meet a child's basic needs, which can include physical needs (food, shelter) and emotional needs.

Signs:

- Poor hygiene or wearing dirty or ill-fitting clothes.
- Frequent hunger.
- Consistent absence from school.
- Stunted development or not reaching developmental milestones without a medical reason.

Abuse of trust

Definition: In 2022 changes to the law to extend the definition of Abuse of Trust in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were made to include faith group leaders and sports coaches in addition to teachers, care workers, youth justice workers, social workers, doctors.

Anyone who has spiritual oversight or a position of leadership (paid or voluntary), particularly all those who care for children and vulnerable adults, are in a position of trust. This is where those use their position to coerce, groom or engage in any behaviour that might allow a relationship to develop, including any physical or sexual relationship even if the young person has consented.

Abuse of trust is linked to grooming, this is where an adult preparing a child or young person so they do not protest to a future abusive act.

Signs:

- Staff or volunteer giving a child or young person extra special attention or preferential treatment, or acting as their confidante.

- Frequent time spent on their own with a child or young person, particularly in private or isolated areas.
- Child or young person receiving gifts, money, toys, cards or letters from a volunteer or staff member.
- Texts, telephone calls, emails or social networking sites communication with a child or young person.
- Staff or volunteer being overly affectionate with a child or young person, flirting with or making suggestive remarks or sexual comments.

Spiritual abuse

Definition: Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power or trust in a faith context. It involves manipulation or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without the right to choose for themselves. It also encompasses any harm or child abuse that arises from religious beliefs including mutilation, concepts of witchcraft, spiritual possession or ritualistic abuse.

Signs:

- Low self-esteem
- The child or young person may describe themselves as 'bad' or 'evil'.

Self harm, self abuse and self neglect

Definition: This includes all activities where the child or young person intentionally hurts or damages their body and/or harms their own wellbeing and developmental opportunities.

Signs:

- Cutting, biting or burn marks, loss of hair in clumps.
- Suicidal indicators.
- Neglect of self – change in food or hygiene habits.

BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL INDICATORS

Behavioural Changes:

Becoming withdrawn, aggressive, anxious, or exhibiting challenging behaviour.

Social Changes:

Lack of social skills, having few friends, or a poor bond with a parent.

Mental Health: Signs of anxiety, depression, or self-harm.

Other Behaviours:

Running away, going missing, or showing strong efforts to avoid specific people.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Context:

Signs of abuse must be interpreted in light of the child's age, developmental stage, and medical history.

Multiple Indicators:

A single indicator may not be a sign of abuse, but a pattern of multiple signs or unusual indicators should be taken seriously.

Adult Behaviour:

Pay attention to the behaviour and attitude of caregivers, as this can also indicate potential harm.

APPENDIX 3

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE TOGETHER WITH SIGNS AND INDICATORS

ADULTS

Abuse against adults encompasses various forms, including physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and neglect, characterized by actions that harm a vulnerable person's well-being, dignity, or independence. Signs can include unexplained injuries, sudden changes in mood or behaviour, social isolation, poor hygiene, restricted access to finances or care, and a general fear or deference toward a specific person.

Physical Abuse:

Involves direct physical harm, such as hitting, punching, kicking, or burning. Signs of this abuse include injuries that are inconsistent with explanation, in abnormal locations or have not been treated.

Sexual Abuse:

Any sexual act or behaviour without consent, including rape, indecent exposure, inappropriate touching, or pressure to look at pornography.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse:

Repeatedly intimidating, humiliating, or controlling an adult through verbal abuse, threats, or manipulation.

Financial Abuse:

Exploiting an adult's money or property, such as unauthorized use of accounts, theft, or coercion related to wills.

Neglect:

The failure to provide basic needs, including food, drink, medication, or adequate care, leading to poor health or hygiene.

Domestic Abuse:

A pattern of controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour within a relationship, which can be physical, sexual, psychological, or financial. By Law Domestic abuse must be reported if children are in a household where where domestic abuse is suspected or known to be happening.

Discriminatory Abuse:

Mistreatment based on a person's age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or other characteristic.

Organisational Abuse:

This occurs when an organisation's systems and processes, or management of these, fails to safeguard a number of adults and leaves them at risk of or causes them harm. It includes neglect and poor care practice, or when the systems override the needs of those they are there to support. It can be a one-off or ongoing, and can be through neglect as well as poor professional practice. Signs of Abuse include: Controlling relationships, poor care, lack of adequate procedures, poor communication, lack of respect.

Abuse of trust:

Anyone who has spiritual oversight or a position of leadership (paid or voluntary), particularly all those who care for children and vulnerable adults, are in a position of trust. This is where those use the power of their position to coerce, control or engage in any behaviour that might cause abuse or harm. From 2022, it is illegal for individuals such as teachers, care workers and youth justice staff, sports coaches and faith leaders to engage in sexual activity with anyone under 18 years of age under their care and supervision.

Spiritual Abuse:

Linked with Psychological or Emotional Abuse, Spiritual Abuse could be defined as an abuse of power or trust in a faith context. It involves manipulation or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without the right to choose for themselves. It also encompasses any harm or abuse that arises from religious beliefs including mutilation, concepts of witchcraft, spiritual possession or ritualistic abuse.

Modern slavery:

Where someone is forced to work illegally against their will, in sectors such as the sex industry, forced labour, domestic servitude, forced criminal activity, cannabis farms, nail bars and agriculture. Signs of abuse are often hidden, but may include: Looking malnourished or unkempt, appearing withdrawn, frightened or mistrustful, being rarely allowed to travel alone, living in poor physical environments, not having a form of ID, transport provided for work very early or late at night.

SIGNS AND INDICATORS

Behavioural and Emotional Signs:

- Anxiety, withdrawal, or defensiveness, especially in the presence of a specific person.
- Low self-esteem or feelings that the abuse is their fault.
- Untypical passivity, resignation, or submissiveness.
- Changes in appetite, sleep patterns, or sudden weight loss.

Physical Signs:

- Unexplained injuries like bruises, cuts, burns, or hair loss.
- Poor hygiene, soiled clothing, or malnutrition.
- Deteriorating physical or mental health.

Social and Environmental Signs:

- Isolation from friends, family, or services.
- Restricted access to money, communication aids, or even basic amenities like glasses or dentures.
- Changes in a person's living environment, such as poor housing conditions or inadequate heating.

WORKING WITH ALLEGED OR KNOWN OFFENDERS

When someone attending MCC is known or alleged to have offended against a child or adult, or to pose a potential risk to others, the church leadership will ensure both pastoral support and robust safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Principles

- The protection of children and adults at risk is the overriding priority.
- The individual will be treated with dignity and offered pastoral support, but clear boundaries will be enforced.
- Decisions will be based on a formal risk assessment, in consultation with statutory agencies and *Thirtyone:eight*.

Procedure

1. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will immediately contact *Thirtyone:eight* for advice and consult with statutory agencies as appropriate.
2. The MCC Leadership Team, with advice from the DSL, will agree a Safeguarding Contract with the individual, which may include:
 - o Agreed supervision and accountability arrangements.
 - o Restrictions on attendance at certain services or events.
 - o No unsupervised contact with children or adults with care and support needs.
 - o Requirement to attend church meetings with a designated support person.
3. Breaches of the contract will result in further review and may lead to exclusion from certain activities or referral to the authorities.
4. The DSL will maintain confidential records of all discussions, decisions, and agreements.



WE WANT EVERYONE TO BE SAFE & CARED FOR

If you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child or adult or if someone tells you something that concerns you, please contact the Safeguarding Team:

SAFEGUARDING@MAYBRIDGE.ORG.UK
01903 700522

SAFEGUARDING TEAM



Piero Regnante
Designated
Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
& Discipleship Lead



Chris Gray
Deputy Safeguarding
Lead



Ruth Stanley
Children & Families
Worker & Children's
Safeguarding Lead

If you have concerns about the DSL and/or the Safeguarding Team please contact the Safeguarding Trustee:

Frances Hodges
safeguardingtrustee@maybridge.org.uk

IF SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 999

You can find out more and view our safeguarding policy at
MAYBRIDGE.ORG.UK/SAFEGUARDING

With safeguarding support from:



For independent advice call thirtyone:eight
Safeguarding Helpline: 0303 003 11 11

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES – INCLUDING CODE OF CONDUCT

All those working or volunteering with children, young people or adults at risk at MCC must follow these principles of safe practice:

General Conduct

- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Do not develop relationships that could be seen as favouritism or secrecy.
- Always act within the law and the values of MCC.

Physical Contact

- Only touch someone if necessary and appropriate to their needs (e.g., comfort, reassurance, medical attention).
- Always seek consent where possible.
- Avoid any behaviour that could be misinterpreted.

Communication

- Communicate respectfully and transparently.
- Use church-approved communication channels.
- Never engage in secret or one-to-one online or text conversations with children or young people.

Lone Working

- Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult.
- If one-to-one contact is unavoidable, ensure it is:
 - In a visible, open space.
 - Known to another team member.
 - Recorded appropriately (date, time, reason).
- See The MCC Lone Working Policy for more information

Transport

- Do not give lifts alone to a child or adult at risk unless previously agreed with a parent/carer and your team leader.
- Ensure another adult is present if possible.

Code of Conduct Summary

1. Put safety and wellbeing first.
2. Never use your role to gain personal advantage or favour.
3. Do not share confidential information inappropriately.
4. Report all concerns immediately.
5. Uphold the reputation of MCC in all settings.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A CHILD OR ADULT WISHING TO DISCLOSE



If someone tells you they are being abused or that they know someone who is:

Do:

- Stay calm and listen carefully — take them seriously.
- Reassure them they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Explain you must share this information with those who can help keep them safe.
- Record exactly what they said as soon as possible.
- Report it to the DSL immediately.

Do NOT:

- Promise confidentiality.
- Ask leading questions or push for details.
- Express shock, anger, or disbelief.
- Investigate or confront anyone yourself.

Use these prompts for your notes:

- Who made the disclosure and when?
- What exactly was said (use their own words)?
- What was your response?
- Who did you report it to and when?

SAFEGUARDING CONCERN / REPORTING FORM

RECORD OF CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD/ADULT'S SAFETY & WELFARE

For use by any staff/volunteers. Please record the following information factually, and include as much detail as possible. Remember: the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated – add additional sheets if necessary. This form can be filled in electronically or handwritten (but please ensure the form is legible). Guidance for filling in the form can be found at the end of this document.

Please pass this form to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator without delay.

Child/Adult's name (subject of concern):	Date of birth/age:
Address:	Other members of household:
Date and time of incident:	
Nature of concern (e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc.):	
How did the concern come to light?	
What is the child/adult saying about what has happened?	
Any other relevant information (previous concerns etc.):	
Your name (print):	Your signature:
Date and time of writing:	Your role/job title:
Date and time of discussion with Safeguarding Team Lead:	
Name of Safeguarding Coordinator:	Safeguarding Coordinator signature:

- Why do we need to fill in these forms?

As a registered body, the church is required to ensure that its duty of care towards its beneficiaries is carried out in line with the principles enshrined within the 'Working together to safeguard children and young people, 2018' and the 'Care Act, 2014'.

- How should I gather and record this information?

There are some essential principles to follow when recording the information you have received/observed/been disclosed:

- *Remember: do not investigate or ask any leading questions*
- *Make notes within the first hour of receiving the disclosure or observing the incident*
- *Be clear and factual in your recording of the incident or disclosure*
- *Avoid giving your feelings or opinions on the matter*
- *Aim to record using the 4Ws and 1H: When, where, what, why and how*
- *Do not share this information with anyone else except your Safeguarding Coordinator in the first instance, and they will advise on who else will need to be informed, as well as how and when.*
- *Make use of the additional information section to add any other relevant information regarding the child/adult/family that you may be aware of. This can include any historic concerns or observations.*

- What constitutes a safeguarding concern?

Any incident that has caused or is likely to cause significant harm can be classed as a safeguarding concern. With regards to children, there are eight different categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, spiritual abuse, abuse of trust, self-harm/abuse/neglect and grooming. For adults, these are the same with five additional categories: financial abuse, domestic abuse, modern slavery, organisational abuse and discriminatory abuse (please refer to the church's safeguarding policies for further details on these categorisations). Whilst it's helpful to record a specific category in the above form, it may not always be possible or clear-cut. In this case, seek advice from the Safeguarding Team or thirtyone:eight.

- Why do you need information about 'other household members'?

It has been demonstrated as important to include information about significant adults in the household, especially when concerns relate to children, as this has been a recurrent risk factor in several serious case reviews.

- Why is the view of the child/adult significant?

It is important to give whatever detail is available of the child/adult's explanation (or verbatim) of the matter to help ascertain if it is plausible, and to help offer a context to the concern identified.

- Why do I need to pass this on to the Safeguarding Team?

Your Designated Safeguarding Lead holds ultimate responsibility in responding to any safeguarding concerns within the church, and therefore it is important that they have oversight of the actions being taken and make relevant and appropriate contact with statutory agencies if required. They will remain the most appropriate link between the church and external agencies.

APPENDIX 9: BODY MAP AND GUIDANCE



BODY MAP

A body map should be used **only** to record visible injuries, bruises or marks that raise safeguarding concerns. Remember, your role is not to investigate or use this form to try to elicit further information.

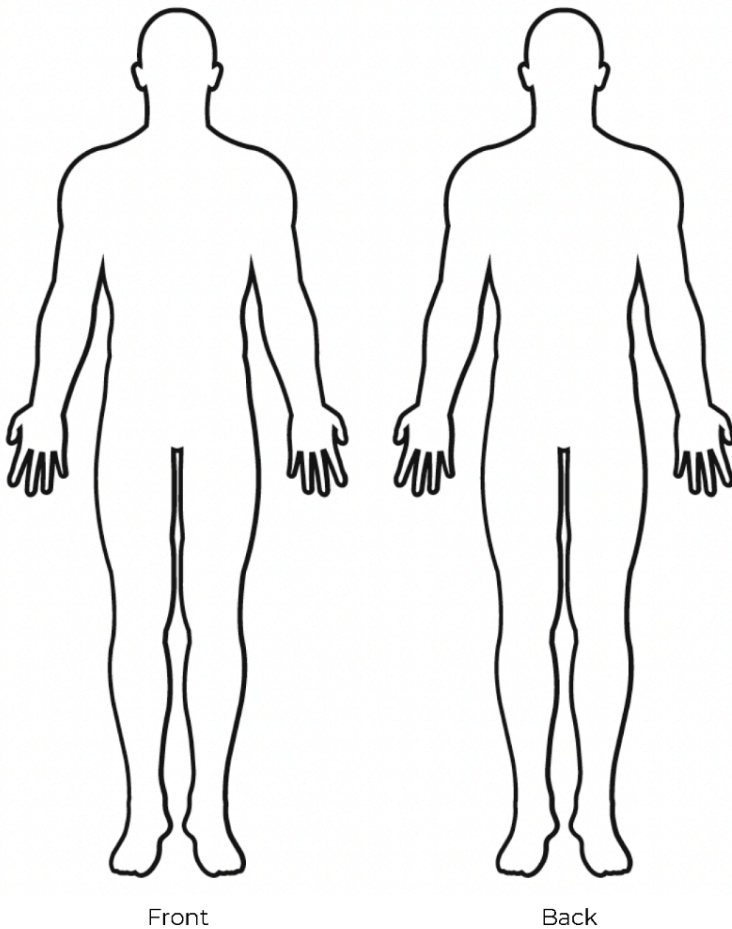
Guidance:

Use a blank body outline diagram (front and back) to mark any injuries clearly with an "X" and label with a short description (e.g., "2cm bruise – left upper arm"). Record only what you see.

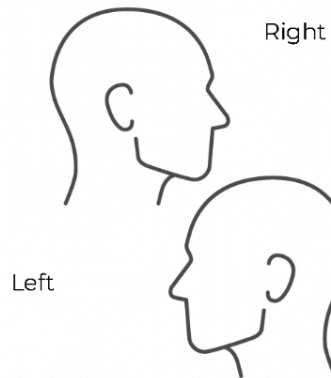
Do not take photographs. Do not ask the person to remove clothing.

Attach the body map to the Safeguarding Concern Form and give it to the DSL securely.

BODY



HEAD



HANDS (Back)

Left Right



FEET (Soles)

Right Left



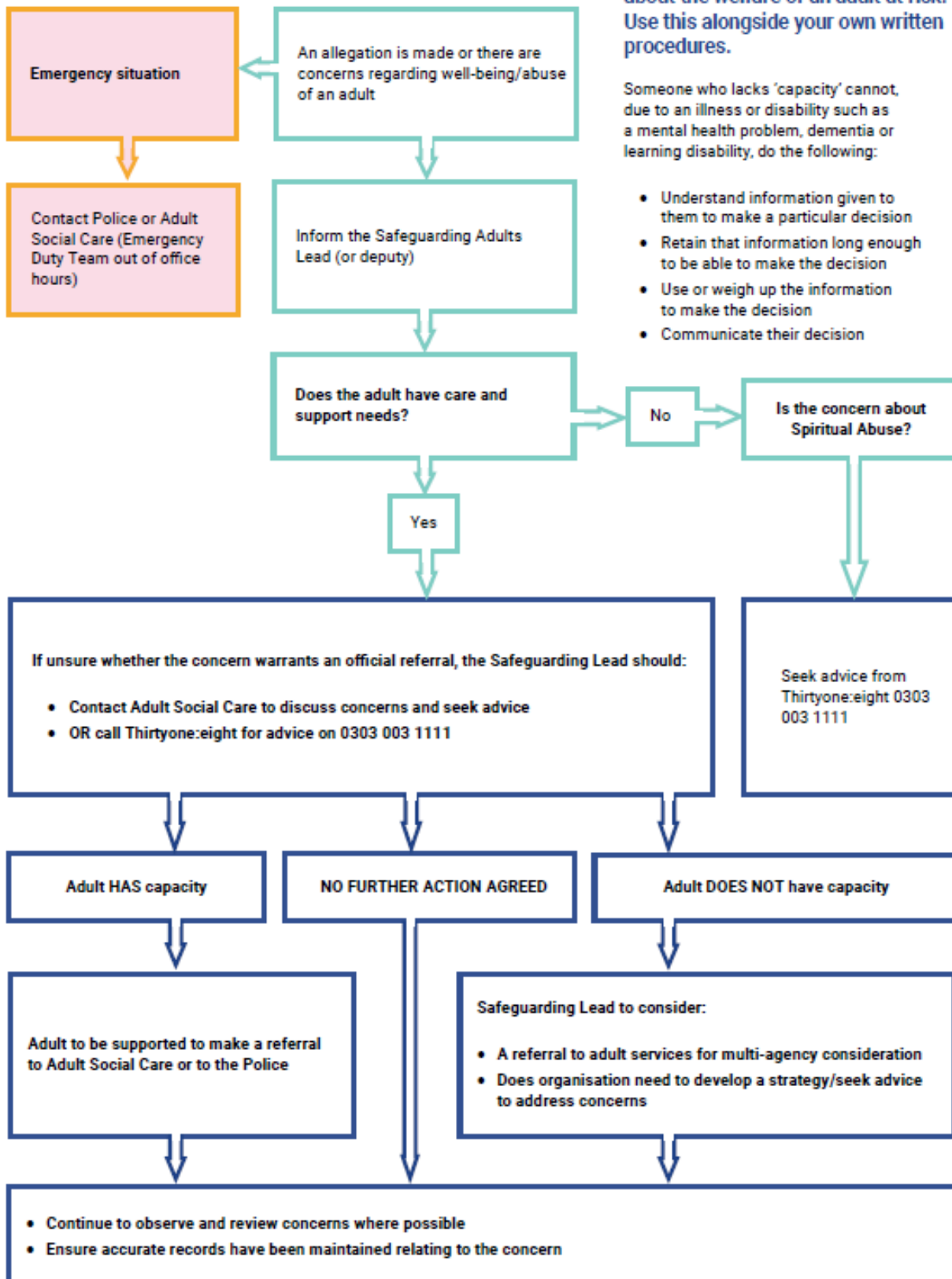
Child/Adult's name (subject of concern):	Ethnicity (optional):
Child/Adult's Gender:	Communication Difficulty (optional):
Date completed:	Completed by (name):
Brief description of observations (incase separated from Safeguarding Concern Form):	

APPENDIX 10:
ABUSE DEFINITIONS – SUMMARY TABLE

Type of Abuse	Examples	Possible Indicators
Physical	Hitting, shaking, burning	Unexplained bruises, fear of physical contact
Emotional	Rejection, humiliation, controlling	Low self-esteem, withdrawal
Sexual	Assault, exposure, exploitation	Age-inappropriate sexual behaviour
Neglect	Failure to meet basic needs	Poor hygiene, hunger
Financial	Theft, misuse of funds	Missing money, unpaid bills
Spiritual	Misuse of spiritual authority	Fear, confusion, control through faith
Discriminatory	Unequal treatment due to characteristics	Isolation, exclusion
Organisational	Poor care due to system failures	Neglect in group settings

APPENDIX 11: FLOWCHART FOR ACTION – ADULTS

Action for Adults at risk flowchart



This flowchart gives an overview of action to be taken when concerned about the welfare of an adult at risk. Use this alongside your own written procedures.

Someone who lacks 'capacity' cannot, due to an illness or disability such as a mental health problem, dementia or learning disability, do the following:

- Understand information given to them to make a particular decision
- Retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision
- Use or weigh up the information to make the decision
- Communicate their decision

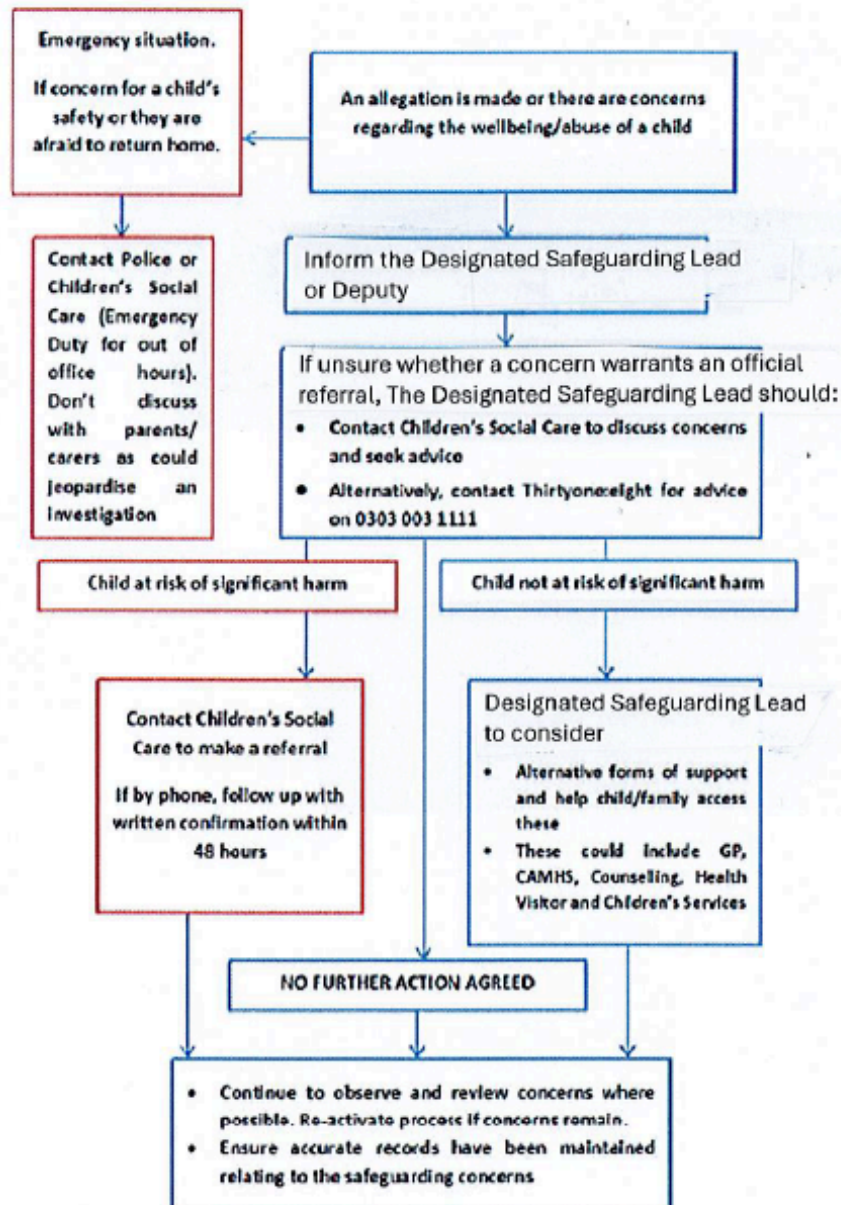
APPENDIX 12:

FLOWCHART FOR ACTION – CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Flowchart for Action Children and Young People



This flow chart provides an overview of action to be taken when concerned about the welfare of a child. It is to be used in conjunction with written procedures.

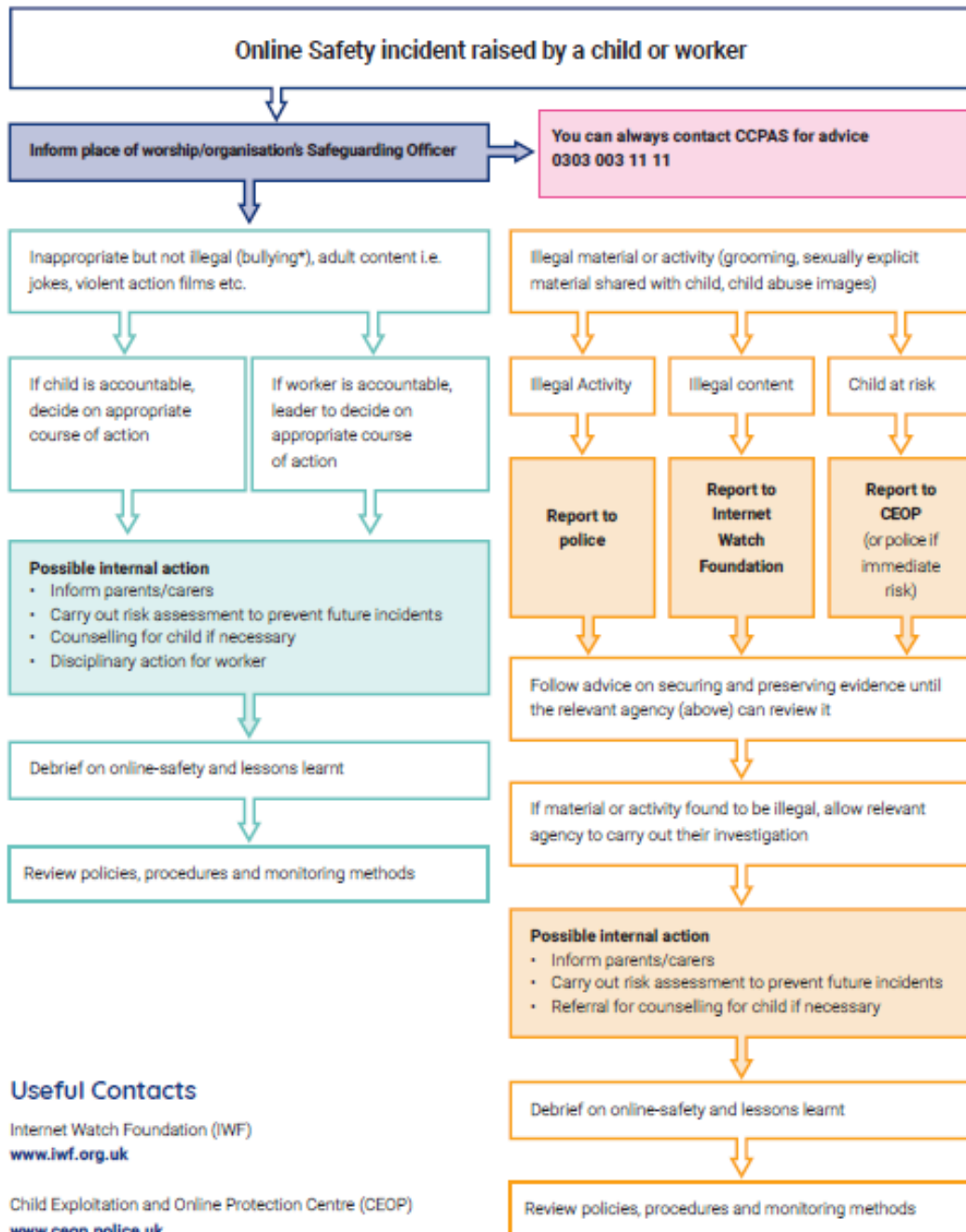


Working Together to Safeguard Children defines significant harm as:

"... any Physical, Sexual, or Emotional Abuse, Neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect progress and enjoyment of life. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development."

APPENDIX 13: ONLINE SAFETY FLOWCHART

Online Safety Flowchart



Useful Contacts

Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)
www.iwf.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
www.ceop.police.uk

(*) Some forms of bullying or content may be illegal – see Malicious Communications Act 1988, Obscene Publications Act. For extreme pornography – Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, etc.