



**STANLEY PARK EVANGELICAL
FREE CHURCH
SAFEGUARDING POLICY**



Vulnerable People Policy, Procedures and Good Working Practices

This document provides the policy, procedures and good working practices for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults during organised activities undertaken by Stanley Park Evangelical Free Church. This document forms part of the Policy Information Pack which should be present at all Church Activities.

POLICY

"Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."
Colossians 3:17

This imperative requires every action to be undertaken in such a manner that is in keeping with the very person of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that He is glorified.

In the activities of Stanley Park Free Evangelical Church (SPC), this fundamental purpose is essential in the safe care and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. To this end, the Word of God directs us that:

- Mankind is created in the image of God therefore all life is precious and to be treated accordingly. [Genesis 9:6]
- We are required to honour and care for all those in our care, under our authority and protection. In all our relationships, either as equals, those in responsibility or dependents, we are to obey the Lord and honour Him and each other.

Specifically, as those in positions of responsibility we are to:

Love, pray for and bless, to instruct, counsel, guide, to protect and to provide all things good and necessary for the body and soul of those in our care.

We are not to sin against them by neglecting our duties towards them or cause them to do anything which is unlawful or evil, or to expose them to wrong-doing, temptation or danger by our unjust, indiscreet, over-zealous or remiss behaviour.

The Sixth Commandment, "You shall not kill", in a similar vein, requires us to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions and avoiding all practices which take or endanger life or fail to defend the life of others. The Seventh Commandment requires us to exercise purity in all our relationships in thought, word and deed.

We are to show love, compassion, meekness, gentleness and kindness, to be peaceable, mild and courteous in our speech and behaviour. We are to comfort, help and support the distressed as well as

protecting and defending the innocent. Jesus charges us to welcome children [Luke 9: 48], protect children [Matthew 18: 6] and allow them free access to Him [Mark 10: 13-16].

As well as submitting to God's authority and requirements we are to submit to all rulers and authorities. [Titus 3: 1-2].

Under The Children Act 1989 a child is defined as a person under 18 years of age. Children are valued yet vulnerable members of the community who need special care.

The primary concern of SPC is always the safety of the children entrusted to our care.

For these reasons the aims of SPC's Child Protection Policy are to:

1. Provide a safe and caring environment for all children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church's care and during any Church activity.
2. Provide a framework of procedures and practices that promote and safeguard the well-being of all children, young people, vulnerable adults and those adult leaders working with them within the Church and during any Church activities.

PROCEDURES

Personnel (Safe Recruitment)

The Child Protection Coordinator is to be a Church Officer approved for the task by Church Members and appointed by a vote at a Church Meeting. The Deputy must be a church member and may be either male or female. The appointment procedure is the same as that for the Coordinator. They must both be DBS checked and be over 21 years old.

The main functions of the Coordinator are:

- To act as an advocate;
- To act independently in reporting concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities; and
- To oversee the preparation, implementation and regular review of the Child Protection Policy.

All those wishing to be involved in activities involving children or young people's work in the Church must complete a Self-declaration form and successfully apply for a DBS Disclosure. These forms will be reviewed prior to any workers involvement in Church activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults. An individual's DBS will require renewal every three years or as appropriate. It is recommended that workers sign up for the DBS update service.

Character references must also be provided by two referees and a 'self-declaration' form must be completed and signed. All those involved in helping in the young people's work must be over 18 years of age.

All those involved in this work will normally be Members of SPC, but in exceptional circumstances, and at the Deacons' discretion, an Approved Person may be appointed.

Approved Person

An Approved Person must be a member of a like-minded Church, in agreement with the Doctrinal Basis of SPC and have formally agreed to place themselves under the authority of the SPC deacons' government at all times of involvement in SPC activities.

They must be DBS checked and have provided a character reference from 2 referees. They must also be over 18 years old.

For all Child Protection Coordinator(s)/Deputies, Workers, and Approved Person, SPC will endeavour to provide both initial and on-going training in matters relating to this policy.

Anyone who has a current warning/conviction or previous warning/conviction of a sexual nature, or related in any way to current or previous abuse of children, young adults or vulnerable people, will be ineligible to be a Safeguarding Coordinator, Worker or Approved Person.

GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

- Parents/carers/guardians will be required to fill in a consent form prior to their children/young people taking part in any church youth activity. This could be in advance or on the day.
- If a child arrives at an activity without written consent or a responsible adult every effort should be made to contact their parent/carer by phone. Should this not be possible, the child will not be able to attend the Church Activity. A record of this will be entered into the Log Book.
- Excessive physical contact between leaders and young people is unnecessary and unwise under any circumstance.
- Any incidents, accidents or concerns during an activity must be recorded in the Log Book as soon as possible and the relevant forms completed at the first opportunity (ideally within 24 hours). The Safeguarding Coordinator be informed as soon as practically possible.
- The Policy Information Pack (this document and supporting information) should be present at Church youth activities.
- An attendance register must be completed for all activities to include the names of all adults present as well as the children/young people.
- Any personal information held by the church which relates to the children/young people/vulnerable adults is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

- There should be at least one trained first-aider present at all activities and a properly equipped First Aid Kit should be available. Any first aid given must be recorded in the Log Book and the appropriate form completed. Parents / carers must also be informed. If a visit to hospital is necessary, the child must be accompanied by an adult and the parent/carer must be informed. It is preferable to dial for an ambulance.
- Leaders must avoid being alone one-to-one with a child as far as possible. If a private conversation is necessary, this should take place in as public a context as possible (e.g. in a room with the door open) and always inform another leader of the situation.
- All workers / volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with the Church's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines and exercise good working practices.
- All workers/volunteers are expected to be aware of the different types of abuse: 'Physical', 'Emotional', 'Neglect', 'Sexual', and be aware of their symptoms (see Annex E and F).

REPORTING A COMPLAINT OR INCIDENT

- If you become aware of a situation or behaviour of leaders or children with which you are uncomfortable for any reason you should:
 1. Record your concern(s) and any action(s) taken in the Log Book as soon as possible;
 2. Inform the Safeguarding Coordinator at the earliest opportunity.
- The Coordinator will inform the Deacons and together they will decide on an appropriate course of action. This may or may not involve outside agencies.
- In either eventuality a written record will be made and kept by the Deacons.
- The Coordinator and the Deacons will endeavour to their utmost to respect the rights and feelings of all parties involved in an alleged incident and will maintain full confidentiality, discussing the issues with properly authorised persons only.
- All records kept will be destroyed after 5 years.
- Further guidance on how to react to a child that wishes to talk to you about abuse can be located in Annex D.

ANNUAL REVIEW

Our procedures will be reviewed annually by the Child Protection Coordinators, with a report being brought to Church Members at the next quarterly church meeting. Change Control is documented in Annex G.

Date: 13th December 2023

Signed by the Coordinators, on behalf of Stanley Park Free Evangelical Church



Travis

Signed by the Church Deacons, on behalf of Stanley Park Free Evangelical Church



Annex A - Safeguarding Officer(s) Details

The SPC Safeguarding Coordinator is:

Name: Mr Ryan Thiessen (Pastor)

Address: 18 Kenny Drive, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 4PH

Email ryanjthiessen@gmail.com

The SPC Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator is:

Name: Miss Helen Laws (DBS Lead Recruiter)

Address: 19 Heron Way, Wallington, Surrey SM6 9DX

Email helenmarylaws@hotmail.com

Annex B – Emergency Contact Numbers

Local Children Services: Tel: 020 8770 5000 (London Borough of Sutton)

Public Protection Unit (Local Police): Tel: 101

CCPAS Helpline: 0845 120 45 50

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

For immediate emergency response dial: 999

Annex C Good Working Practice Guidelines

- Treat all children / young people and vulnerable adults with dignity and respect.
- Respect personal privacy.
- Be available, but also be ready to refer a situation or problem to someone more experienced to deal with it.
- Be sensitive to needs, likes and dislikes.
- Avoid questionable activity e.g. rough / sexually provocative games and inappropriate language.
- Follow accepted guidelines relating to physical contact.
- Keep everything *PUBLIC*. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child (not the worker). Avoid contact with a child in private.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- Report all allegations/ suspicions of abuse (see Annex D)
- Supervision for organised Church activities should include both male and female approved personnel at suitable and appropriate ratios to the number of children and type of activity.
- Avoid being alone with a child wherever possible. If it is not avoidable, take all necessary precautions to safeguard the child and yourself.
- Transport: avoid being alone with a child in a vehicle. Have an escort or drop the last 2 children off together (if safe).
- The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age and development of the child.

- Do not invite a child / young person to your home for any Church activity without the prior knowledge of others and permission from a child's parent/guardian.
- Always exercise wisdom in your relationships with children / young people and vulnerable adults.
- Avoid placing yourself in vulnerable positions wherever possible.
- Avoid discussing personal relationships / sexual activity with a child / young person.
- Undertake Church activities in line with the Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) prepared for the activity.
- Ensure no children are photographed without the child's parent/guardian's consent

"Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." Colossians 3:17

Annex D

How to React When a Child Wants to Talk About Abuse When Approached

- Listen to what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound).
- Keep calm.
- Look at the child directly.
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else.
- Don't promise confidentiality.
- Be aware the child may have been threatened.
- Never push for information or put words in a child's mouth.
- Reassure the child they were right to tell you.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next (i.e. inform Coordinator who is able to help).

After an Allegation is Made

1. Do not act alone or start to investigate.
2. Immediately refer to the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if they are implicated, to the Deputy Coordinator. You should not discuss your suspicions or the allegation with anyone else.
3. Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of the interview) writing down the actual words that the child used, when he / she said them and what was happening immediately beforehand. Record dates and times of events and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes even if these have been typed up later.

Annex E Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

What is abuse and neglect?

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

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's

developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

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

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

Annex F - Signs of Abuse

When considering whether there is evidence to suggest a child or young person has been abused there are a number of possible indicators, as provided below. However, there may be other explanations, so it is important not to jump to conclusions but rather seek advice from Children's Services, Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit or CCPAS (see Annex B for contact numbers).

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, including under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games.
- 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.

Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- 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.

Signs suggesting emotional abuse.

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy. Also, depression / aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsession 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.

*These signs indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning or self-poisoning.

Annex G - Change Control

Approved by SPC Church Members on 12 September 2023