

Safeguarding Policy

—

Children (aged 0-11)

Safeguarding Policy Aims

As a church, we desire to bring glory to God by knowing Jesus and making him known.

To that end, the aims of our Safeguarding Policy are:

- To uphold the honour of God's name
- To keep the gospel from disrepute

We do this by:

- Protecting the children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our care
- Protecting the caregivers who serve in this ministry

Safeguarding is an important part of our service in the gospel and one which we take seriously, aiming for a standard of excellence as we implement this policy.

The Directors of the St Nicholas Cole Abbey Centre for Workplace Ministry Ltd ('SNCA') have adopted the London Diocese 'Safeguarding in the Diocese of London' (2015) policy document. It can be accessed in full from the website below:

<https://www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding/safeguarding-policy/>

The SNCA Safeguarding Policy applies the Diocesan policy to the particular situation of the SNCA and its various ministries.

The SNCA Safeguarding Policy has been separated into three separate policies, for those working with children (0-10), young people (10-18), and vulnerable adults.

Key Safeguarding Roles

(1) The Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

The CSO is the individual given responsibility for Safeguarding within the SNCA and all its various ministries.

The CSO will assist and advise if a Safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed.

The CSO will also be included in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children where their DBS check is blemished or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme.

Edward Crossley is the CSO for St Nicholas Cole Abbey.

(2) The Ministry Leaders

The Ministry Leaders are responsible for Safeguarding within their ministry area. This includes:

- Ensuring all caregivers within their area are recruited in accordance with this Safeguarding Policy
- Acting as Safeguarding Officer for any disclosures of abuse within their ministry area.

Chris Fishlock is the Ministry Leader for all St Nick's Church ministries involving children.

(3) Caregivers

A caregiver is anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

All caregivers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the person as Christ loves them
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- Praying for those in their care and pointing them to God's Word

Every applicant who wishes to serve in any ministry area involving children or young people must complete a screening process prior to serving.

IMPORTANT:

- All caregivers must read **Section A** of this policy
- They must then read any additional information from **Section B** that is relevant to the area of ministry they are serving in
- A list of key **Contact Details** can be found on the last two pages of this policy

If an existing caregiver moves to serve in a different ministry area they must read the relevant information for the new area before commencing their role.

All caregivers are encouraged to complete the online Diocesan safeguarding training. We are working towards implementing regular safeguarding training more widely.

SECTION A

Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Child Abuse

Child abuse is serious. All caregivers need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

1. Definitions

Who is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

What is abuse?

*Working Together to Safeguard Children*¹ states that ‘somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or 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.’ It recognises four areas of potential abuse for children: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Abuse can be described under any one of these four categories or a combination of categories, and can be carried out by an adult or another child.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: children harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting.

Sexual abuse: involvement of children or adolescents, in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect: a failure to meet basic essential needs of a child, or if a child is left unsupervised at a young age.

Although not a formal category of abuse, it is important to be mindful of the danger of spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to ‘force’ religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God’s name.

¹ Published by HM Government, 2013, quoted in *Policy for safeguarding in the Diocese of London*, 2015.

2. Recognising signs of abuse

Warning signs: these are not necessarily proof of abuse, but they should signal a warning.

Physical abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Bruises, black eyes, broken bones Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly untreated or inadequately treated injuries Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks Cigarette burns, human bites Scalds and burns	Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed Having trouble sleeping Behaving aggressively or being disruptive Showing fear of certain adults Showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem Using drugs or alcohol

Emotional abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Speech disorders Delayed physical development Substance abuse Ulcers, severe allergies	Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting) antisocial, disruptive Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play) Passive and aggressive – behavioural extremes Delinquent behaviour (especially adolescents) Developmentally delayed

Sexual abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas Genital discharge or urinary tract infections Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting Sexually transmitted infections	A marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically A young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so their school work is affected They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person

Neglect

Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Abandonment	Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep during activities
Unattended medical needs	Steals food, begs from classmates
Consistent lack of supervision	Reports that there is no carer at home
Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene	Frequently absent or late
Lice, distended stomach, emaciated	Self-destructive
Inadequate nutrition	School dropout (adolescents)
	Extreme loneliness and need for affection

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of abuse.

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be seriously considered. They should make us stop and think - not jump to conclusions inappropriately.

3. Guidelines for when a child tells us they have been abused

It is not easy to give precise guidance but the following may be of help:

General points

- Above all else, listen, listen, and listen!
- Keep calm, and show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems
- 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. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen
- Avoid leading the child and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said - you might put something into their mind that was not there. If the case were to end up in court, the case could be thrown out if it is thought that the child had been led

Helpful things you might say or convey

- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

Concluding

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that you believe them
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (you might have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent the child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse)
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what the child said and when they said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times, including when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto the relevant Ministry Area Leader.

4. Responding to Concerns of Abuse

- Where emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctors of any suspicions you may have.
- You must contact the Ministry Area Leader or Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO) immediately (for contact numbers see the back of this document). If the allegation is against your Ministry Area Leader, contact the CSO.
- At all stages in the reporting process, you retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact the CSO (for contact numbers see the back of this document).
- Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate concerns of abuse themselves. Our responsibility is (in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team) to refer concerns to statutory authorities who will do the investigating required.
- Apart from telling your Ministry Area Leader/CSO, this information must be treated as confidential. Do not inform/confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances.
- You should also consider your own feelings and ask your Ministry Area Leader for pastoral support if needed.

Even if you may feel the child's story is unlikely, this must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that they have been abused by a younger person. In reality, the perpetrator could be a parent or a close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

5. Procedures for Responding to Abuse – Outcomes

When a safeguarding concern is reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer by a Ministry Area Leader/Church Safeguarding Officer:

- If the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer advises further action, the Ministry Area Leader/Church Safeguarding Officer must act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given.
- If the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer advises no further action required, this is not the end of the process. The Church Safeguarding Officer or the relevant Ministry Area Leader must arrange a further meeting in the parish to discuss whether alternative action should be taken or whether to accept that no further action is required.
- This meeting should include the Church Safeguarding Officer and the Ministry Leader, and they can involve others as necessary, including Church Wardens, the Church Manager, and other relevant Ministry Area Leaders.

Guidelines for Responding to a Disclosure of Historic Abuse

In the course of their work ministers and those offering pastoral support may hear disclosure from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.

The Church is required to take advice from the Diocese and may need to report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the Police.

When someone tells you they have been abused, or have committed abuse, whether recently or many years ago:

General points:

- Above all else, listen
- Keep calm, and show understanding/acceptance of what is said, however unlikely it seems. Reassure the individual that they were right to tell you
- Never push for information. Avoid leading questions and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- Let the individual know what you are going to do next and that you will keep them informed. Let them know that you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality

Action you must then take:

- You must contact your Ministry Area Leader and tell them what you know (you do not need to disclose any names at this stage unless told otherwise). If the allegation is against your Ministry Area Leader, contact the Church Safeguarding Officer (CSO)
- You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact either your Ministry Area Leader or the CSO
- Apart from telling your Ministry Area Leader/CSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with co-leaders, SLOB leaders or other church members
- Under no circumstances should you investigate concerns of abuse yourself
- The contact details for your Ministry Area Leader and the CSO can be found on the back page of this document
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto your Ministry Area Leader
- Consider your own feelings and ask your Ministry Area Leader for pastoral support if needed, and consider with your Ministry Area Leader what pastoral support is needed for the individual involved.

SECTION B

Supplementary Information

(1) Sunday Crèche & Sunday

(a) **Safeguarding children as they arrive and depart**

Transition of children from parents/guardians to caregivers

The SNCA Safeguarding Policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of the leaders of the advertised activity. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children before they are taken to their groups and once they have been collected from their groups or returned to them by caregivers.

Registering

All children and caregivers present in each group must be registered. Completed registers will be filed and kept secure for an indefinite period. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come then the church can immediately find who was present on any given date.

A Child Registration Form should be filed for each child in Crèche/Sunday School. These forms should be filled out by a parent/guardian and available in registration folders for the leaders to consult. Leaders should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their specific group.

(b) Safeguarding children whilst they are in our care

Caregiver Ratios

Two caregiver rule: Two caregivers must be present in each room at all times.

It is not necessary for the two caregivers to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, children should not be left unattended in a room. At other times with some planning this scenario need not occur.

In addition to always having two caregivers present, we endorse the OfSTED **minimum** requirements which are:

Age of children	Number of Adults	Number of Children
0-2 Years old	1	3
2-3	1	4
3-8	1	8
8+	1 +1	For the first 8 children For every further 12

Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested but the individual group may have fewer adults.

If not enough caregivers turn up on the day, the caregivers must either:

- (i) Recruit another DBS-screened individual to help
- (ii) Meet in the same venue as other screened caregivers, in full view of those caregivers

Discipline

All caregivers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating them from the group for a brief time (particularly if the behaviour is endangering or upsetting other children).

Caregivers should never spank or hit a child. If behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents/guardians will be contacted. Caregivers should never yell at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

Appropriate contact and conversation

Caregivers need to be above reproach in all that they do and wisdom is often required to know what that looks like in different situations. Two good questions to ask in any situation are ‘What is the worst that could happen?’ and ‘What is the worst way this could be perceived?’ Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should feel free to help each other by pointing out anything that could be misconstrued. Concerns about abuse should always be reported. Conversations should be appropriate for the age of the child.

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and young people as part of their coming to understand human relationships. However there are reports of some people who have decided to avoid having anything to do with children and who avoid all occasion of touching or encouraging children. This is an understandable but regrettable response. It also conveys unhelpful messages to children. Caregivers should follow the following guidelines:

Can I have a child sit on my lap when we’re all sitting on the floor?

Yes you may - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. For younger children this may be the best way of keeping them from running amok. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

Can I play rough and tumble games with children?

Yes you may – as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Bear in mind that the chummier you are with children in this way, the less likely you are to have any authority in their eyes. Remember too that they are not as strong as you.

Can I hold hands with a child?

Yes you may if there is a clear reason to do so - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Reason could include walking a child across a road, or to the bathroom, playing a game requiring hands held. For younger children this might happen frequently. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

Can I ever hug a child?

Yes you may if a child is clearly distressed - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. There may be other occasions when this might be appropriate, like congratulating them. Bear in mind your normal character – if you rarely hug anyone you should probably not ever hug a child in your care. If hugging is one way you interact with all kinds of people you might need to rein yourself in a bit but not necessarily completely. Touch should be related to the child’s needs, not the worker’s, and should be age-appropriate and

generally initiated by the child rather than the worker. Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child

Can I ever tickle a child?

It is difficult to see why a child would need to be tickled by a caregiver. It is best avoided when acting as a caregiver. This is not to say that a child should not be tickled but there is a time and a place.

Can I ever physically restrain a child?

Yes. If a child is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should be required rarely.

Toileting

A caregiver may change the nappy for any baby if required.

If a preschool or school-aged child requires assistance in going to the toilet, it is best for assistance to be given by a caregiver of the same gender where possible. The caregiver should wait outside the closed cubicle door unless the child requires assistance. The cubicle door must not be closed with the caregiver and child inside. The child and caregiver must wash their hands with soap before returning to the class group. School-aged children should be able to take themselves to the toilet without assistance.

Food

The only foods caregivers can give to children are:

- Pastries or biscuits provided by the church
- Food provided by a parent/guardian for a specific child

No other food is given. Food for a specific child must not be shared with any other child.

Some children in our care may have severe allergies to certain foods and giving them the wrong food could be serious.

Risk management / Illness / Accidents

Caregivers should consider the health and safety of all children and caregivers when organising activities or planning games.

Children with infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the children's groups. If a young person appears ill whilst in the church's care, caregivers will use their discretion to determine whether the young person should be isolated from other young people by a caregiver, (who will remain with them) and whether parents/guardians should be contacted to collect their child.

A basic first aid kit must be readily available at all times. All caregivers should be familiar with its location. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called first and the parents will be located and informed immediately. Caregivers will report all injuries, whether major or minor to Mikey Williams (mikey@stnickschurch.org.uk)

Caregivers should be familiar with evacuation procedures, including where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound.

Specific guidelines for different groups

(i) Crèche

Crèche is located in the central room on the first floor of St Nicholas Cole Abbey. Parents/guardians should take their crèche-aged children there before the service. This marks the official start of the caregiver's responsibilities.

At the end of the service, a parent/guardian should pick up their child from crèche. If the parent/guardian is unknown to the caregiver then another known adult (preferably a DBS screened leader) must vouch for them being the parent/guardian of the child. This marks the official end to the caregivers' responsibility for the child.

(ii) Sunday School

Sunday School takes place in the 'Armchair room' on the first floor of St Nicholas Cole Abbey. Parents, if unaware, should be told when and where the group happens. The children start in the service but gather with their caregivers during the first song and are taken upstairs. This marks the official start of the caregiver's responsibilities.

At the end of the service, a parent/guardian should pick up their child from Sunday school. If this is not done by 12.20pm the caregivers will take all remaining children downstairs and hand them over to a parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian is unknown to the caregiver then another known adult (preferably a DBS screened leader) must vouch for them being the parent/guardian of the child. This marks the official end to the caregivers' responsibility for the child.

(2) Weekends Away

If any weekend away advertises childcare, or if provision is made for volunteers to help in addition to parents or designated guardians, then the childcare for that weekend comes under our Safeguarding Policy and must be run accordingly, following the same procedures as Sunday Crèche & Sunday School (read **pages 10-13**). All caregivers must be screened as outlined in the main policy, and the same regulations concerning ratios, registration, discipline, toileting, food and accidents must be followed as in Sunday Crèche/Sunday School, with the following alterations/additions:

Registering

Children are registered for the weekend when initially signed up so no further registration is needed when their specific groups meet. However, parents must drop off and collect their children at the beginning and end of the advertised children's programme slots. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

Night patrol (if offered)

Parents/guardians are responsible for putting their children to bed. Once children are in bed, their parents/guardians may leave them at their own discretion.

During night patrol parents/guardians are still responsible for their children.

Between the advertised times pairs of volunteers will patrol the corridors of sleeping areas listening for any children who are disturbed. If volunteers hear of a child who is disturbed they will contact a parent/guardian immediately to ask them to return to their child.

Volunteer pairs must always stick together. Volunteers must not at any time enter a child's bedroom. Volunteers are merely providing a listening service to be the first point of contact if a child needs their parent/guardian. Volunteers do not need to be DBS screened as volunteers should not come into direct contact with children.

All night patrol volunteers and parents must be informed of this guidance before night patrol can begin.

(3) Women in the Word on Fridays (WWF)

WWF meets most Fridays in homes throughout London. Women are free to bring their own children to a local group, yet they remain responsible for their own children throughout the time the group meets.

Women in a local group are free to join together amongst themselves and co-ordinate childcare for their own children whilst the group meets. This may include using an au pair or nanny, or arranging for additional volunteers to cover childcare.

This is a private arrangement happening in a home and is akin to babysitting. The women in the group must take responsibility for assessing the suitability of any volunteer. WWF is not covered by the SNCA Safeguarding Policy, and as such it is not guaranteed that a volunteer from the congregation is DBS-checked (although they may be).

(4) Other Events/Activities

From time to time there may be extra events where children may be present.

(i) Midweek Small Groups

Crèche-aged children are welcome to the small group evenings at the discretion of the small group evening leader, but remain in the care of their parents/guardians throughout.

(ii) Occasional Courses/Seminars/Training days

(For example Christianity Explored, Evangelism Training, Marriage/Parenting Days)

Childcare may be provided if required. All caregivers must be screened in accordance with the SNCA Safeguarding Policy. Caregiver ratios must be maintained.

A parent/guardian must drop off and collect their children at the pre-arranged venue. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

(iii) Babysitting

Babysitting is an area in which we are unable to provide formal provision. Families can make informal arrangements within the congregation and must take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of the volunteer.

(iv) External Events

Some children may attend City Summer School, whose children's programme is run and covered by St Helen Bishopsgate Church and their Safeguarding policy.

Contact Names and Details

Church Safeguarding Committee

Church Safeguarding Officer (Chair)
Edward Crossley
E.Crossley@4stonebuildings.com

Operations Manager
Joel Lane-Smith
joel@stnickschurch.org.uk

Children's Champion & Safeguarding Evidence Checker
Mikey Williams
mikey@stnickschurch.org.uk

Ministry Leaders

Chris Fishlock
chris@stnickschurch.org.uk

Tom Wright
tom@stnickschurch.org.uk

Diocesan Contacts

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

Annette Gordon
annette.gordon@london.anglican.org
0207 932 1224

Associate Archdeacon of London

Rosemary Lain-Priestley
associate.archdeacon@london.anglican.org
020 3837 5205

London Diocesan House

36 Causton Street
London
SW1P 4AU
020 7932 1100

National Contacts

CCPAS (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service)

0845 120 4550 (24 Hour Helpline) for any query
www.ccpas.co.uk

City of London Corporation Children and Families Team

020 7332 3621 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)
020 8356 2710 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

City of London Social Care Services

020 7332 1224 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)
020 8356 2300 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

Child Line

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR
Tel. 0800 1111

(full number is just these 8 digits)

Family Lives (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222

Domestic Violence Helpline (for females) 0808 2000 247

Mankind (for males) 01823 334244

NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline,
0808 800 5000

Further Resources

- Protecting all God's children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England, 2010
- Policy for Safeguarding in the Diocese of London, 2015
- The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016 (Chapter 14)
- London Multi Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures 2015

www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding