

Safeguarding Policy

For Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

Freeschool Court Church

10.01.23

SECTION 1

Place of worship and activities

Freeschool Court Church

Freeschool Court (Off Nolton Street)

Bridgend

CF31 3AG

Tel No: 01656 647294

Email address: www.freeschoolcourt.org.uk

Membership of Denomination/Organisation

Associating Evangelical Churches of Wales

Insurance Company: Public Liability Insurance with Aviva

CIO 1191312

Pastor: James Sibley 07485654655

Safeguarding Trustee: Ieuan Davies 07396519442

Safeguarding Lead: Delyth Judd 07989776987

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Alys Baldrige 07792904048

The following is a brief description of our place of worship and the type of activities we undertake with children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

This is the agreed policy statement for the care and protection of children, including young people, and adults at risk.

In this document 'worker' refers to those appointed by the church to work with children, young people or adults at risk.

Church Activities

The main children's activities at the church are:

- Searchers meeting primarily for children aged 5 to 11 on Fridays during term time from 6-7pm at the church.
- Young People's Fellowship primarily for children aged 11 to 18 on Fridays during term time from 7.30-9pm usually at the church, with occasional outings to the beach, playing fields etc.

The Young People's Fellowship has a Facebook group which abides by the online safety policy as enclosed (Appendix 4)

At Christmas and Easter, we have welcomed classes from local junior schools with their teachers to learn more about biblical teaching in 'Christmas Unwrapped' and 'Easter Cracked'

Occasionally we run Holiday Bible Clubs for children aged 5 to 11 during school holidays

There is a staffed creche for children of 5 and under during the morning service where parents and children are welcome.

Parents and Toddlers meet on Thursday mornings

Titus 2 group for parents and young children meets on a Tuesday morning

We welcome adults at risk to be part of our congregation, worshipping with us at the Sunday services and at the midweek meetings which may be held in the church or at various members' homes.

Some church members regularly visit members of the church or adherents who may be adults at risk

Other activities may be added to this list in the future.

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people, and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people, and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and neglect. As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance as in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 and are committed to the principles which protect the rights of the child. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight. Thirtyone:eight is an independent Christian charity which helps churches and faith groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse. It is our 'umbrella organisation' offering advice and support on safeguarding issues. This safeguarding policy also follows guidance from the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

This policy needs to be read in accordance with other church policies including those regarding Food Hygiene, Health and Safety and risk assessments for Covid.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- Endorse and follow national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action, they may need to take to protect children and adults at risk.

SECTION 2

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

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 at risk of abuse and neglect 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.

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

Definitions of abuse

Abuse may take the form of physical injury, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.

See Appendix 1

How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse

See Appendix 2 'How to React When a Child Wants to Talk About Abuse.'

Safeguarding awareness

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, promoting 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, with the use of materials from Thirtyone:eight, local experts and in-house refresher training.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults at risk 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.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse but should follow procedures as below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Coordinator who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities. In the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Coordinator, then the report should be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator
- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel. no. **0303 003 11 11** or email info@thirtyoneeight.com
- The Safeguarding Coordinators will usually take advice from Thirtyone:eight and Bridgend Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in dealing with allegations and concerns,
 - Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Coordinator should contact MASH on **01656642320** or email mashcentra@bridgend.gov.uk (Out of hours **01443 743665**)
 - Where the concern is regarding an adult, contact Safeguarding Adults Team on **01656 642477** (out of hours **01443 743665**) or email **adultsafeguardingMASH@bridgend.gov.uk**
- The Safeguarding Coordinator **may** need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern (for example the Safeguarding Trustee) to log that a safeguarding concern is being dealt with, the insurance company to log that there is a possibility of a serious incident concerning

safeguarding or the duty social worker in Children's Social Services if allegations have been made about a person who has a role with under 18's

- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made on the FSC Incident reporting form and forwarded to the Safeguarding lead or Deputy. This form will be kept in the locked safeguarding safe in the church.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to MASH or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy 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 the right of any individual to make a direct referral to MASH or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight. Usually however church members will direct concerns through the safeguarding coordinators. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of everyone, children, and adults at risk.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies that 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 Co-ordinator/Deputy will, in accordance with Wales Safeguarding Procedures:

- Contact MASH 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.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g., poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant 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 MASH direct 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 MASH.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact MASH directly. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or the person who is the focus of the allegations.

Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if, for any reason they are unsure whether to contact MASH. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact adult safeguarding MASH to discuss concerns and seek advice. Alternatively contact Thirtyone:eight for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services or police, informing them of any suspicions.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

Workers, who are in a position of trust, must maintain appropriate behaviour with children and young people, including those aged 16 and 17.

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Coordinator, will need to liaise with MASH and Thirtyone:eight regarding the suspension of the worker and to seek advice in handling allegations against adults who work with children and young people. In so doing the Safeguarding Coordinators will follow local guidelines overseen by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board .

In addition to this, consideration should be given to whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or adults. This decision will be made in discussion with Social Services and Thirtyone:eight. This will also apply if the nature of concern results in ending the employment of the volunteer or if they have left voluntarily before their employment ended.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places the duty upon Adult Services 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 capacity. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

SECTION 3

Prevention

Safer recruitment

The 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 and a self-declaration form. They will declare any convictions, charges, or cautions to any criminal offence on this form.
- Those short listed have been interviewed with respect to attitude and experience by the safeguarding trustee and one of the leaders in the work for which they are applying.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- References have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified.
- All appointments will be notified to the Managing Trustees for approval prior to appointment.
- All information given in the appointment process will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with GDPR guidelines, the Data Protection Act 2018, and Insurer's recommendations.
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has read and agreed to implement the church's safeguarding policy, a copy of which is available on the church website.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers seek to uphold the code of conduct outlined below:

- All children to be treated with respect and dignity, not only by workers but also by other children within the group.
- Workers should avoid being alone with a child in a place where they cannot be seen.
- Primary school age children will not be allowed to make their own way home. Where children are in secondary school the worker will need to assess the level of supervision needed
- If a primary school child is not collected by a parent/ guardian, a worker should be accompanied by another worker or responsible adult, in returning the child to their parent/ guardian. In exceptional circumstance a worker may need to take the child to their home in the back of a car ideally with other children. The worker should make every effort to inform the parent/ guardian of the situation.
- Secondary school age children may be assessed by the worker as needing a similar level of supervision as a primary school age child.
- For residential activities, workers should ideally sleep in a different room from the children or are only present with the children with another worker and other children in the room.
- If children are invited to a worker's home another adult needs to be present
- Mixed sex groups should where possible have male and female workers.
- There should be a suitable number of workers for each group- See Appendix 3
- Remember to be a good example by avoiding sexual talk, excessive touching, and immodest behaviour.
- Activities away from the usual venue should be discussed with and approved by the children's work leader(s)

Transporting children should be done safely, abiding by the laws about seatbelts, appropriate seats etc

SECTION 4

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The 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 Freeschool Court Church.

Working with offenders

When someone attending Freeschool Court Church is known to pose a risk to children or adults because of previous offences the Leadership will assess the risk to the congregation, supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. In its safeguarding commitment to the protection of everyone who may be at risk of harm, the Leadership will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. These will usually comprise:

- Acting in accordance with advice from police, probation, and Multiagency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).
- Agreeing a behavioural contract with strict boundaries as appropriate eg no involvement in any children's work, with families with children or with adults at risk
- Never placing the individual in a position of trust eg as part of the welcome team, leading in prayer etc
- Regular review by a named church officer to ensure support and accountability.
- Informing the leaders responsible for children or adults at risk of the boundaries the individual is to follow.

SECTION 5

Practice Guidelines

As a church working with children, young people., and adults at risk we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely with a risk assessment of those activities, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

Working in Partnership

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

We therefore have clear guidelines regarding 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 and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of a letting agreement will have their own policy that meets Thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

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

Thirtyone:eight's helpline number, emergency number for safeguarding concerns, and safeguarding coordinators contact details are displayed in the foyer.

Signed by: _____

Date: _____

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership,

Secretary Iwan Rhys Jones

and Managing Trustees of Freeschool Court Church,

recognise the importance of its ministry /work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the leadership on: _____

Freeschool Court Church is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial abuse and neglect of adults at risk, highlighting where these may be discriminatory and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the church unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults at risk.

We are committed to:

- Following the Wales Safeguarding Procedures in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation regarding people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding coordinators in their work and in any action, they may need to take in order to protect children / adults.
- Promoting these recommendations and the guidelines established by Freeschool Court Church.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting, and safeguarding of children and young people.
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring, and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the church affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by Thirtyone:eight.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services 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 at risk.
- 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.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult at risk, then speak to the safeguarding co-ordinators for this church.

A copy of the policy and procedures is available in the church lounge.

Signed by leadership.

Signed _____

Date _____