

Round Chapel Old School Rooms /Clapton Park URC safeguarding policy for our organisation *(based on URC policy 5)*



Children and Adult Safeguarding Policy

Please note that although part of Clapton Park URC / Round Chapel Old School Rooms, our early years Nursery provision has its own distinct Safeguarding Policy. This policy is legally compliant with both Ofsted and Hackney Education requirements.

This policy is closely based on the URC model local church safeguarding policy document. Like the URC's model local church safeguarding policy, this document is supported by the following seven appendices that are attached to it:

- A1 – Safeguarding policy statement
- A2 – The role of a Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- A3 – Code of conduct for working with children or young people
- A4 – Code of conduct for working with adults at risk – *not yet released by the URC*
- A5 – Safeguarding incident recording form
- A6 – Signs and symptoms of abuse

The URC's Appendix U is also interrelated with their model policy containing useful contacts of organisations and services that can provide information, advice and support. This appendix U will be tailored with other organisations and services in our local area and added to the section of key contacts in our local Clapton Park policy.

This is not a 'catch-all' policy. It covers the broad basics of good safeguarding practice in our local church, but it will be supplemented by procedural documents adapted to the individual circumstances of our church, its projects and the day to day usage of our premises.

We would note that it is also important to remember that a safeguarding policy alone is worthless without proper implementation and a church-wide commitment to keeping people safe.

Our Commitment to Safeguarding

We believe that all children and adults have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.

Although reporting concerns can be uncomfortable for staff, and be unpleasant for families, as a setting, we recognize that it is better to help children, young people and their families early, before issues escalate and become damaging.

Because safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, all staff are committed to recognizing and reporting all concerns related to child safety, issues concerning vulnerable adults, wellbeing and in particular are vigilant to spot signs of abuse and maltreatment. The whole community – staff, parents, trustees, volunteers, congregation and visitors have a legal and moral duty to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults are protected from harm and abuse. In doing so, we will seek to play a role in the wider community in line with our safeguarding mission to fulfill this objective.

Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy (based closely on the URC's Model Policy 5) is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults, or those who attend our activities and events.

Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Elders / Trustees and applies to:

- all paid staff (both internal and external, such as consultants)
- volunteers
- all organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the safeguarding policy.
- members of our church
- our trustees and elders
- members of the congregation

Our policy reflects the duty of care we have towards all children and vulnerable adults that use our building. While our staff and volunteers who are directly working with children will adhere to this policy, it is a requirement of all organisations and individuals working with children who hire our spaces to sign up to our policy when working in the building.

The values and safeguarding principles within the United Reformed Church are described in **Appendix A1**. The policy and procedures should be interpreted in accordance with these principles and the most recent URC good practice guidance. Children, parents/carers, adults at risk and those responsible for safeguarding them will be informed of this policy and our procedures.

Who is responsible for safeguarding?

No single professional can have a full picture of a child or adult's needs and circumstances.

This policy applies to all staff, including paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, congregation members, agency staff, organisations contracted to deliver services within setting, one-off visitors, students or anyone working on behalf of **Clapton Park URC / Round Chapel Old School Rooms**.

Definitions

The term '**children**' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

The term '**adult at risk**' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all who access our services and activities in the building, whether adults, children or young people. We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

Preventing abuse

Senior staff are appointed as Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator(s) for safeguarding children and adults. A job/role description is attached as **Appendix A2**.

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC's safeguarding policy and guidance to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. For each event, risk assessments will be carried out, appropriate and accessible consent forms will be used (for children's activities or activities for people with special needs), appropriate records will be kept, and adequate insurance will be in place.

We are committed to safer recruitment and selection of all paid staff and volunteers with emphasis on those in regulated activities. We will treat applicants who have a criminal record fairly and do not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed (see URC **Appendix D** for the church policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders) and ensure that all safer recruitment-related procedures are followed, which include:

- asking applicants to complete an application form
- providing workers with job or role descriptions and person specifications
- completion of self-declaration forms
- obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks for eligible roles and positions
- taking up two references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates
- providing workers/volunteers with written contracts/agreements.

All trustees, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (code for workers attached as **Appendices A3** and **A4** (*when it becomes available*) depending on the vulnerable group) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or the termination of people's service.

If we become aware of someone within our congregation or using our premises known to have harmed or harm children or adults, we will inform the Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours and co-operate with them and the relevant statutory authorities to put in place a plan to minimise the risk of harm to children, young people & adults.

When any church premises are let to an external, informal group or individual, those hiring the premises should hold and abide by their own safeguarding policy. If a hirer does not have a policy, they must abide by our church's safeguarding policy, a copy of which should be made available. Each hiring body is required to ensure that children and adults at risk are always protected by taking all reasonable steps to prevent injury, illness, loss or damage occurring.

How to recognise abuse

It is important to be aware of possible signs and symptoms of abuse. **Appendix A6: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse** provides definitions of different forms of abuse and further help and guidance. Some signs could be indicators of several different categories of abuse.

It is essential to note that these are only indicators of possible abuse. There may be other, innocent, reasons for these signs and/or behaviour. There might be domestic abuse that requires a different approach (please see URC **Appendix R: A Guide to domestic abuse**). The indicators will, however, be a guide to assist in assessing whether abuse of one form or another is a possible explanation for a child or adult's behaviour.

Staff, volunteers and congregation members will also pay attention to online safety and their electronic communications with children and adults. Grooming and abuse of any form can occur offline (both physically and verbally) and online. The URC **Appendix C: Model church online safety policy** includes an acceptable use policy in relation to the use of church computers by both workers and children and provides sample forms which children and workers could be asked to sign.

What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse

If a child, young person or adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and have been abused, it is important that the person being told:

- stays calm and listen carefully
- reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling
- does not investigate or ask leading questions
- explains that they will need to tell someone else if anyone is at risk of harm, in order to help them
- does not promise to keep secret what they have been told

- informs the Safeguarding lead or deputy within 24 hours (if they are implicated in the allegation, inform the Deputy or the Synod Safeguarding Officer)
- makes a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and signs and dates this record (using the template in **Appendix A5**). This should be given to the church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer and stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

Procedure in the event of a concern of abuse

If there is an immediate threat of harm, the Police should be contacted without delay.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm the following will occur:

- The concern should be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead or one of the deputy safeguarding leads, if the lead is unavailable **within 24 hours** and a decision needs to be made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory authorities (**NOTE:** Key Contacts of relevant statutory contacts in your local authority should be added in this policy)
- A confidential record will be made of the conversation and the circumstances surrounding it using the template at **Appendix A5**. This record will be kept securely, and a copy passed to statutory authorities if a referral is made
- The person about whom the allegation is made must not be informed by anyone in the church if it is judged that to do so could place a child or adult at further risk. If the statutory authorities are involved, they should be consulted beforehand
- The Synod Safeguarding Officer should be kept informed of any serious concerns and referrals to police and statutory authorities.

Prior to any referral to children's services, the child's wishes and rights should be considered when determining what action to take. There should also be a verbal consultation with local authority's children's services to ensure that making a referral is an appropriate action. The parent/carer will normally be contacted to obtain their consent before a referral is made. However, if the concern involves, for example alleged or suspected child sexual abuse, domestic abuse, Honour Based Violence, fabricated or induced illness, or the Synod Safeguarding Officer has reason to believe that informing the parent at this stage might compromise the safety of the child or a staff member, nothing should be said to the parent/carer ahead of the referral, but a rationale for the decision to progress without consent should be provided with the referral.

In the case of referrals to adult social care or other services for adults at risk, information should be shared with consent if the adult has capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act and if this does not place the referrer, them or others at an increased risk. A person's right to confidentiality is not absolute and may be overridden where there is evidence that sharing information is necessary to support an investigation or where there is a risk to others. See section 14 of Good Practice 5 for further advice and guidance.

If the allegation is regarding a member of staff or volunteer

If someone is alleged or known to harm/have harmed children or adults, it is essential to inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer so that they can offer advice and support.

For any concerns relating to children, the Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) will be contacted. The timing and method of any action to be taken will be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This will cover communication with the worker, suspension, investigation and possible strategy meetings. A decision will be taken by the DO about when to inform the worker and the church will follow this advice. As noted, DO contact details, are included in the Key Contacts section of this model policy.

For concerns relating to adults, Adult Social Care will be contacted. Likewise, their contacts details are included in the Key Contacts section of this policy.

In accordance with the law, a referral needs to be made to the DBS / PVG for consideration of barring to share information about any individual in regulated activity where for safeguarding reasons the organisation has either terminated the employment, failed to appoint, or would have terminated the employment had the individual not moved on through resignation, retirement or re-deployment. In such cases, the synod safeguarding officer needs to be advised/informed.

Depending on the seriousness of incidents or allegations, a report to the Charity Commission will also need to be considered at the elders/trustees' meeting, as they deem such a referral to be a 'serious incident' and require notification.

Managing those who may pose a risk to the welfare of people

The use of rigorous and careful supervision is paramount to protect people from the risks associated with known offenders within the congregation, including implementing safeguarding contracts with known or alleged offenders and those who have been assessed as posing a risk. Where it is known that someone has a caution or conviction for committing a sexual offence, the church can play an important role in the prevention of further abuse by helping the offender to live an offence-free life.

If anyone is made aware that a person attending our church has been convicted of an offence against a child or has had an allegation of this nature made against them at any time, we immediately inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer and Minister or Interim Moderator.

It is important to provide known or alleged offenders with a group of people who will offer support, friendship and supervision. Following advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer, when appropriate, a formal safeguarding contract will be drawn up between the church, the person

who is considered to pose a risk to the welfare of people in the church, and any statutory agencies when involved.

Training

Safeguarding training will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role. All relevant staff members and volunteers will receive appropriate safeguarding training delivered by the synod. The Safeguarding Coordinator(s) should ensure that trustees/elders and people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers) have undergone safeguarding training, as recommended by the URC.

Concerns, Complaints and Compliments

Should anyone have any concerns, complaints or compliments please contact:

The Chair of the Trustees/Elders Meeting, Revd John M Campbell

Telephone No 07 429 627 156

Email john.campbell@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

It would be helpful to have complaints in writing, as this avoids any possible misunderstanding about what the issue is. However, whether verbal or in writing, complaints will be acted upon.

Any written complaint will be responded to within 10 days.

Key Contacts: Sources of advice & support

the information in this section needs a little sorting out and more details added.

- The **Safeguarding Lead** is the person to whom all concerns or allegations relating to children, young people or adults should be addressed:

Name Joe Walker

Telephone No 020 8533 9676

Email joe@theroundchapel.org.uk

- In the absence of the Safeguarding lead, one of the three **Deputy Safeguarding Leads** can be contacted:

Name Becky Heuberger

Telephone No 07375 574336

Email rebecca@theroudnchapel.org.uk

Name Oliver Moore

Telephone No 07984 521344

Email oliver@theroundchapel.org.uk

Name Emma Spinelli

Telephone No 07751 162834

Email emma@theroundchapel.org.uk

- **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Name Belinda Neilsen

Telephone No 07 716 640 596

Email safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

- **City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Broad (CHSCB)**

Web site: <http://www.chscb.org.uk/>

Address: CHSCB, Hackney Service Centre,
1 Hillman Street, Hackney,
London E8 1DY

Worried About a Child?

Please contact City of London Children & Families Team

Phone: 0207 332 3621

Hackney First Access Screening Team (FAST)

Phone: 0208 356 6956

E-mail: Fast@hackney.gov.uk

- **Emergency Duty Social Worker – out of hours service:**
For emergency out of hours (5pm – 9am), please contact

Emergency Duty Team for children aged 0 - 18

Phone: 0208 356 2710

- **Worried about an adult?**

For emergency out of hours (5pm - 9am) adults social care service, please contact:

Phone: 020 8356 2300

- **Children’s Social Services Children and Families Access and Assessment Centre**

1 Hillman Street,

London E8 1DY

Telephone: 020 8356 5500 (Duty Main Line for daytime calls)

020 8356 2346 (Emergency Out of Hours calls)

For more information please go to www.hackney.gov.uk/childprotection.htm

- **URC Safeguarding Office** (This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)

Telephone No 020 7520 2729

Email safeguarding@urc.org.uk

- **ThirtyOne: Eight** (This should only be used for urgent advice if you are unable to contact URC)

24 hour helpline: 0845 120 4550

- **Designated Officer (DO)**

Name

Telephone No

Email

- Statutory contact in the case of a child
[Please insert contact details for your local MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) or Children’s Social Care Department, including out of hours number]

- Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk
[Please insert contact details for your local Adult Social Care Department, including out of hours number]

NOTE: A list of useful contacts for all forms of abuse of children and adults can be found on **Appendix U** and be used in this section of the local policy.

Recording

Recording of concerns should take place as close in time to the incident as reasonably possible, by filling an incident form, clearly noting the time of incident and of logging, and the person logging.

There are **computers** in the office place for this purpose for those sessional members of staff who do not have their own computer.

Where concerns are serious, in addition to logging concerns, staff should seek to speak to a DSL or deputy SL immediately either in person or by phone.

Review

The Trustees will review this policy annually, amending and updating it as required.

Date of the most recent review:

Date of the next review:

Signed:

(on behalf of the trustees)