



Network Church

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy

October 2022

(Amended re Safeguarding Lead June 2023)

1: Details of Network Church

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation:

Network Church

Address:

c/o 33 Mayflower Road Park Street, St Albans. AL2 2QP

Tel No: **01727 768521**

General Email address: **info@networkchurch.org**

Senior Leader Name: **Trevor Withers**

Email: **trevor.withers@networkchurch.org**

Senior Leader Contact Telephone 01727 858379

Safeguarding Coordinator Name: **Elizabeth Harris**

Email: **elizabethharris05@gmail.com**

Safeguarding Coordinator Contact Telephone: **01727 812288 / 07950 462518**

Deputy Safeguarding Officer Name: **Nina Viljoen**

Email: **ninaviljoen@gmail.com**

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator Contact Telephone: **01727 848804 / 07879 817531**

Membership of Denomination/Organisation: **Affiliated to Pioneer Network**

Organisation Safeguarding Officer: **Elaine Davidson**

Contact Details for Organisation Safeguarding Officer: **safeguarding@pioneer.org.uk**

Charity Number: 1078577

Regulators:

Insurance Company: Congregation & General Insurance PLC, Currer House, Currer Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire. BD1 5BA Tele: 01274 700 700

The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and youth.

Network Church is a lively informal group of Christians, whose aim is to be welcoming, inclusive and participatory. We value a sense of community, support, and encouragement, also enabled by our midweek small groups.

We meet in a hired building for our Sunday gatherings, and have children and youth groups during the morning. These groups may also meet elsewhere occasionally for social activities.

We have a community pottery studio which is open a few hours a week to anybody, whether part of Network or not, and of any age.

2. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY STATEMENT

Our commitment

As the Leadership of Network Church, 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. We accept the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Ensure the safe recruitment, supervision and training for all the children's/youth workers within the church.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected by abuse in the church.
- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all 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 in order to protect children and young people. and adults with care and support needs.

3. SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

Churches and groups often fail to provide guidelines in relation to the general supervision of children and specific activities. It is easy to assume that everyone knows what is appropriate supervision and is working to the same end. Therefore, clear guidance of expectations needs to be given to all workers in order to promote excellence in childcare, protect children from possible abuse and workers from false accusation.

We will issue a Code of Conduct to all those serving children or young people to ensure they understand any expectations for their behaviour

All volunteers working with children and young adults are safely recruited with application forms, interviews and references, using DBS checks where appropriate.

Adults awaiting DBS checks or references are sensitively supervised, never left alone with a child or children and always have a safely recruited/DBS cleared member of the team in the room or toilet area with them.

Volunteers receive induction training regarding policies and specific group practices before they start on rota.

All volunteers complete Level 1 Safeguarding training as soon as possible and ongoing training is monitored. This may be training received from other organisations, or in-house. Training will be recorded for each volunteer.

Records of DBS dates, and training received by volunteers, will be kept up to date.

Adults are not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.

Parents/carers are clear when responsibility for their child's care transfers from them to the children's worker and is returned to them at the end of the session.

Parents of all children attending our groups complete a Registration and Consent Form giving contact details, outlining medical needs, any food allergies and giving consent, or denying permission for photographs to be taken.

Parents can nominate other adults to collect their child if they are unable to collect them.

Children with special needs are fully integrated and protected within the church community.

Registration forms for each session are kept up to date and any information that may be shared for concerns is monitored.

Children's Workers/Youth Leaders attend further safeguarding training, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone.

All staff and volunteers will follow our Network Church safeguarding policies and procedures handbook, outlining expected best practice.

4. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Should a member of staff or a volunteer have a concern or a disclosure of abuse shared with them, they will follow the appropriate procedures in our policies and procedures handbook. Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. In summary they will:

- Respond with care and compassion towards the child or young person.
- Document the concern.
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Name: Elizabeth Harris (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator")

Tel: 01727 812288 / 07950 462518

Email: elizabethharris05@gmail.com

The above 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 Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:

Name: Nina Viljoen (hereafter the "Deputy")

Tel: 01727 848804 / 07879 817531

Email: ninaviljoen@gmail.com

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency, or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

Name of local authority: Hertfordshire County Council

Children's Social Services

- **Tel: 0300 123 4043 (24 hours telephone line)**

Website Address: [Children's social care | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
 - Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/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, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

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 who have a legal duty to investigate.

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:

- Contact Children’s Social Services (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 Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

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

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

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 the place of worship/organisation.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Please refer to our Practices Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers issued as a separate booklet

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the leadership and will be reviewed annually on:

Signed by:

Position:

Signed by:

Position

Date:

A copy of this policy is also lodged with: Pioneer Network