

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Responsible Person: Angela Culley

Review Completed: August 2024

# Statement of commitment to safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of all our members is our highest priority. Our aim is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment so that every member can learn in safety. We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by everyone so that every member can develop their full potential and feel positive about themself as an individual. All members should care for and support each other. To that end all leaders are required to follow this policy and to attend any training when required to do so.

# Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the Youth Council is:

# Mrs Angela Culley

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for safeguarding and child protection at The Youth Council. The key role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads is to:

* + manage referrals from leaders or any others from outside The Youth Council.
  + work with external agencies and professionals on matter of safety and safeguarding when required.
  + undertake training.
  + raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst the leaders and parents
  + be aware of members who have a social worker

All members of the Safeguarding team undertake update training every three years.

# Aims

The central aim of the policy and training is to ensure the safety and well-being of members in line with the above legislation. More specifically, the aims are: -

* + To ensure that any person working at The Youth Council understands that everyone is responsible for the welfare of the children, and that it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that the best interests of the child are always safeguarded.
  + To educate young people on how to keep safe and how to recognize behavior that is not acceptable.
  + To recognize and support anyone who has been subject to abuse.
  + To ensure that all leaders at The Youth Council understand their responsibility to be alert to signs of child abuse and to refer any concerns to the DSL’s.
  + To ensure that new leaders are only appointed when all the appropriate checks have been made.
  + To deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse.
  + To design and operate procedures which promote this policy.
  + To design and operate procedures, which, so far as possible, ensure that leaders and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations.
  + To support children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
  + To be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions.
  + To be alert to the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities
  + To take all practicable steps to ensure that The Youth Council premises are as secure as circumstances permit.
  + To assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, based on an understanding of the potential risk in the local area.
  + To identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalization and know what to do when they are identified.

These aims are achieved by the following means:

* + The DSL has been fully trained for the demands of this role in child protection.
  + **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks:** An enhanced DBS disclosure is required for all new volunteer leaders to The Youth Council.

# Procedures

It is recognized that children need protection from: -

* + Physical harm
  + Emotional abuse
  + Sexual abuse
  + Neglect
  + Harmful material on the Internet
  + Sexual harassment

We also recognize these specific safeguarding issues:

* + **Child on Child abuse**: Child on Child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate). Child on Child abuse can take various forms, including: serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behavior, and/or gender- based violence. Abuse by children could take the forms of upskirting, banter and online abuse.
  + **Child sexual exploitation (CSE):** Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child Sexual Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through use of technology. (Statutory Definition DfE February 2017).

*At The Youth Council we recognize that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most members. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behavior and poor mental health. We take these needs into account when making plans to support members who have a social worker.*

# Radicalization and the Prevent duty:

Where leaders are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling

extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

# Recognizing Extremism

Early indicators of radicalization or extremism may include:

* showing sympathy for extremist causes
* glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
* making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside The Youth Council
* evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
* advocating messages similar to illegal organizations or other extremist groups
* out of character changes in dress, behavior and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programs and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
* secretive behavior
* online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
* intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
* graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
* attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
* verbalizing anti-Western or anti-British views
* advocating violence towards others

**Honor based Abuse:** So-called ‘honor-based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honor of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Where leaders are concerned that a child night be at risk of HBA, they must contact the Designated

Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency.

**Protecting children from the risk of radicalization is part of The Youth Council’s wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.**

# Action by The Youth Council staff

All leaders at The Youth Council should have an understanding of Safeguarding and Child Protection issues and should appreciate the importance of their vigilance.

The Youth Council recognizes that it has a duty to protect children who have suffered or who are likely to suffer significant harm, and also that it has a duty to provide support for those who are in need of additional support from one or more agencies.

# Leaders may suspect a case of abuse from a variety of sources:

* + a member discloses to them personally
  + from behavior of, or marks on, the member (e.g. bruises, welts, lacerations, abrasions)
  + a member informs them that he/she knows or suspects that another member is being abused
  + another third party informs them that he/she knows or suspects that a member is being abused.

Child abuse can take many forms and a summary of the possibilities can be found detailed in Appendix 2.

*All leaders should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognize their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated or are being threatened. It is also important that leaders determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.*

# Disclosure

If a young person starts to disclose, the following procedures are essential:

* + **REASSURE** the member that she/he is right to tell and is not to blame.
  + **CONFIDENTIALITY**: **DO NOT** promise confidentiality, explain that you have to make sure that the member is safe and may need to ask other adults to help you to do this.
  + **IT IS CRUCIAL THAT YOU DO NOT ǪUESTION THE MEMBER.** Let the member tell you what she or he wants to and no more. The member may have to disclose to a specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigations.
  + **LISTEN CAREFULLY** and repeat the member’s words. When the member has finished, make sure that she/he feels secure; explain what you are going to do next.
  + **FOLLOW UP BY** making arrangements with the member to speak to them later. They have chosen you as an adult they can trust.
  + **REPORT WITHIN 24 HOURS : (more details below**) Alert the DSL. It is important to record as much as you can remember using the member’s own words. Write facts and information only, taking care to avoid opinion. A specific safeguarding incident/concern form is shown at Appendix 1.
  + **DO NOT ATTEMPT ANY EXAMINATION** or remove a member’s clothes to look further at an injury.
  + Under no circumstances should photographs be taken of a member’s injury. The member should only be examined by an appropriate doctor.

The DSL will inform parents before a referral of a member *except where it appears that the abuse has been carried out by a parent.*

# Reporting records of concern

# Allegations of Abuse Made Against One or More Members

If an allegation of abuse is made against one or more members, the allegation must be passed immediately to the Church Safeguarding Officer.

# Allegations of abuse made against a leader or other adult at The Youth Council

If an allegation of abuse is made against a leader the allegation must be passed immediately to the Church Safeguarding Officer. The Youth Council must consider carefully the possibility of abuse if a leader has:

* + behaved in a way that had harmed, or may have harmed, a member
  + possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a member
  + behaved in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with members

When a complaint of abuse is made against a leader on behalf of a member there should be immediate consideration of whether the member is at immediate risk and in need of protection. Any volunteer who becomes aware of a possible allegation or concern of a child protection nature must take immediate steps to ensure that the matter is reported to the Church Safeguarding Officer. It is important that the leader reporting the concern acts quickly.

# Low Level Concerns

The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

* being overfriendly with members.
* having favorites.
* taking photographs of members on their mobile phone.
* engaging with a member on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
* using inappropriate sexualized, intimidating or offensive language.

# Review

The Safeguarding policy is reviewed annually by Miss Daphne Pilcher. - Safeguarding Officer St. Paul’s Church, Rusthall

# Useful Contacts:

**Heads of Safeguarding (DSL)**

Mrs Angela Culley 07779 098026**Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Record of Concern**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Member’s Details:  Name | Does the member know this form has been  completed?  Yes No |
| **Why are you concerned about this membe**r**?**  (Please provide a description of any incidents/conversations and the dates they occurred. You must make clear what is fact and what is opinion or hearsay. You must **not** ask the member leading questions or try to investigate the concern yourself.) | |
| **What have you observed and when? (This relates to anything you have personally**  **witnessed)** | |
| **Do the member’s parents know this form has been completed?**  **(Parents should not be contacted by anyone in The Youth Council if this could place the member at risk)**  Yes No | |
| **Does the member have any visible injury or have they told you they have been injured?**  Yes No    If Yes, has medical advice been sought? | |
| **Date and time of this record:** | **Signature:**  **Full name:** |
| **Name and position of the person this record was handed to:**  **Date and time the above person received this record:** | |

**A Body Map is available for completion at Appendix 4 in case it would be useful to make a diagrammatic submission.**

# This form must be returned to the DSL within 24 hours of hearing the disclosure or raising the concern.

If you have concerns about filling the form in then ask for guidance from the DSL. You should not seek guidance from other leaders as that could compromise confidentiality.

**Appendix 2**

# Types of Abuse

Abuse is defined as a form of maltreatment of a young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a member by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or young people.

Child abuse can take many forms, but is usually divided into four categories:

# Physical injury

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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.

Physical indicators include:

* + Unexplained bruises/welts/lacerations/abrasions:

on face, lips, mouth or torso, back, buttocks, thighs, in various stages of healing clustering, forming regular patterns reflecting the shape of article used e.g. belt, buckle, electrical flex on several different surface areas

* + bite marks or fingernail marks which regularly appear after absence e.g. after a weekend

Unexplained burns:

* + cigar or cigarette burns, especially on soles, buttocks, palms or back
  + immersion burns where hands, feet or body have been forcibly immersed in very hot water
  + patterns like electrical burner, iron etc
  + rope burns on arms, legs, neck or torso

Unexplained fractures:

* + to skull, nose, facial structure
  + in various stages of healing
  + multiple or spiral fractures

Behavioral indicators include:

* + flinching when approached or touched
  + reluctance to change clothes for P.E. lessons
  + wary of adult contacts
  + difficult to comfort
  + apprehension when other children cry
  + crying or irritability
  + frightened of parents
  + afraid to go home
  + rebelliousness in adolescence
  + behavioral extremes – aggressiveness, withdrawal, impulsiveness
  + reports injury caused by parents
  + apathy
  + depression
  + poor peer relationships
  + panics in response to pain.

# Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, and is 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; failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm or danger; failing to ensure adequate supervision; or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Physical indicators of neglect include:

* + consistent hunger
  + inappropriate dress
  + consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities for long periods
  + unattended physical problems or medical needs
  + abandonment

Behavioral indicators include:

* + begging; stealing food
  + constant fatigue, listlessness
  + poor relationship with care-giver
  + frequent delays in picking child up from The Youth Council

# Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves the 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.

Physical indicators include:

* + Difficulty in walking or sitting down
  + stained or bloody underclothing; pain or itching in the genital area
  + bruising, bleeding, injury to external genitalia, vaginal and/or anal areas
  + vaginal discharge
  + bed wetting
  + excessive crying
  + sickness

Behavioral indicators include:

* + inappropriate sexual behavior or knowledge for the child’s age
  + promiscuity
  + sudden changes in behavior
  + running away from home
  + wary of adults
  + feeling different from other children
  + unusual avoidance of touch
  + reporting of assault
  + substance abuse e.g. glue sniffing
  + emotional withdrawal through lack of trust in adults
  + over compliance with requests of others
  + frequent complaints of unexplained abdominal pains
  + eating problems or sleeping disturbances
  + poor peer relationships
  + possessing money or ‘gifts’ that cannot be properly accounted for
  + inappropriately sexually explicit drawings or stories
  + enuresis or soiling, especially at the end of the The Youth Council day
  + frequent non-attendance at The Youth Council

# 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 a child 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 a 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 cyber-bullying), causing children 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.

Physical indicators include:

* + failure to thrive
  + delays in physical development or progress

Behavioral indicators include:

* + sucking, biting, rocking
  + anti-social, destructive behavior
  + sleeping disorders, inhibition of play
  + compliant, passive, aggressive, demanding, inappropriately adult or infant behavior
  + impairment of intellectual, emotional, social or behavioral development

# In addition as noted in the main body of the policy, all staff need to be mindful of the following:

1. **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organized crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

# Female genital mutilation FFGM

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practice FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. From October 2015 every adult who is concerned about a child who may be at risk of FGM has an obligation to report this (see Appendix).

# Radicalization and the Prevent duty

* + The Youth Council has a legal duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
  + The Youth Council aims to build members’ resilience to radicalization by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. The Youth Council is committed to providing a safe space in which children, and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.
  + The youth council use the Government's definitions for the purposes of compliance with the Prevent duty: **Extremism:** "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas". **Radicalization:** "the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism".

1. **Honor Based Abuse**

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/honour-based-violence-and-forced-marriage>

The CPS and Hone Office adopt the following definition of Honor Based Abuse(HBA):

* "Honor-based" abuse is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honor of the family and/or community."
* There is no statutory definition of HBA.
* There is no specific offence of "honor-based” crime". It is an umbrella term to encompass various offences covered by existing legislation. HBA can be described as a collection of practices, which are used to control behavior within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honor. Such abuse can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honor code.
* A Forced Marriage (FM) is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. FM is a specific offence under s121 of the Anti-Social Behavior, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Prior to the introduction of the offence, prosecutors dealt with FM cases using existing legislation such as false imprisonment, kidnapping and offences of violence where this is a feature of the offending.
* Other forms of HBA include practices performed by perpetrators on victims for cultural or socio- conventional motives which have harmful consequences. Sone of these practices include (this list should not, however, be considered as complete: FGM; Breast Ironing; and dowry abuse.
* Further information for CPS prosecutors can be found on the Knowledge Hub.
* Breast ironing is a form of child abuse and whilst there is no specific offence it can still be

prosecuted under UK law. Please refer to the CPS legal guidance on [Child Abuse](https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/child-abuse-non-sexual-prosecution-guidance).

Since 2010, the CPS identifies and flags all cases of HBA and FM. It is important that these cases are identified and flagged at the beginning so that issues are identified and the case is managed properly.

# 9. County Lines definition and guidance can be found here:

[http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/832-county-lines-violence-exploitation-and-](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/832-county-lines-violence-exploitation-and-drug-supply-2017/file) [drug-supply-2017/file](http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/832-county-lines-violence-exploitation-and-drug-supply-2017/file)

The main indicators are:

* + Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
  + Being found in areas away from home
  + Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
  + Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
  + Unexplained absences from The Youth Council, college, training or work
  + Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewelry
  + Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behavior
  + Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn’t expect them to know
  + Coming home with injuries or looking particularly disheveled
  + Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.

# Serious Violence:

The Serious Violence Strategy, which was introduced by the government in 2018, identifies offences such as homicides and knife and gun crime as key factors which account for one percent of all recorded crime. The impact of serious violent crime on individuals and the community is significant. The main areas of the Serious Violence Strategy focus on:

* + Tackling County Lines
  + Early intervention and prevention
  + Supporting communities and local partnerships
  + Effective law enforcement and the criminal justice response

**Appendix 3**

# Low Level Concern Policy

* 1. **Introduction**

As stated in The Youth Council’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, “the safety and well-being of all our members is our highest priority.” This includes ensuring adult leaders who work with our members do so in a way that is in accordance with The Youth Council’s ethos and policies. This policy details what low-level concerns are, and what processes leaders should follow should they be presented with any concerns of this nature.

# What is a Low-Level concern?

The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant. Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to :

* + - *being* *overfriendly* *with* children.
    - *having* favorites.
    - *taking* *photographs* *of* *children* *on* *their* *mobile* phone.
    - *engaging with* *a* *child* *on a* *one-to-one* *basis* *in a* *secluded* *area* *or* *behind* *a* *closed* *door;* or,
    - *using* *inappropriate* *sexualized,* *intimidating* *or* *offensive* language.

Such behavior can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behavior that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.

It is crucial that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold (see Part Four - Section one), are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately.

As part of its approach to safeguarding, The Youth Council will ensure that it promotes an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of The Youth Council are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

|  |
| --- |
| **Allegation** |
| Behavior which indicates that an adult who works with children has:   1. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; 2. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; 3. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicated they may pose a risk of harm to children. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Low-Level Concern** |
| Any concern – no matter how small, even if no more than a “nagging doubt” - that an adult may have acted in a manner which:   1. Is not consistent with an organization’s Code of Conduct, and/or 2. Relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or   omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult’s suitability to work with children. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Appropriate Conduct** |
| Behavior which is entirely consistent with the organization’s Code of Conduct, and the law. |

**Appendix 4 BODY MAP FOR COMPLETION IF NOT USING CPOMS TO REPORT**

A black background with lines

Description automatically generatedA black and white silhouette of a person

Description automatically generatedA hand with a glowing fingernail

Description automatically generatedA black background with a black face

Description automatically generatedA black background with a black outline

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceA white hand with black background

Description automatically generated