

Safeguarding Policy: Introduction



The following statement was agreed by the leadership of the American International Church.

Safeguarding is taken seriously by The American International Church. We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ invites all to reconciled relationships with God, with our fellow humans, with the earth, and within our own selves. We further believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is called to join God in the work of salvation and reconciliation in our world. To that end, safeguarding those who are vulnerable in our community is not merely a modern legal requirement, but a divine calling as we bear witness to the gospel. Through safeguarding, we contribute to healing and reconciliation and avoid causing the brokenness of sin to harm our children and adults.

We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk
- the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected
- an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the Church, and how to respond appropriately
- ensuring everyone who engages with the life of the Church is responsible for keeping people safe
- working together with voluntary/statutory agencies and other denominations and faith-based organisations.

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent any form of abuse and neglect of children and adults, and ensure the well-being and pastoral care of those who are or may be at risk.

We will prevent abuse for extremist or other purposes and put all suitable health and safety arrangements in place as well as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and online safety policies that everyone understands.

We will create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all, especially children and adults at risk, in which the dignity and rights of each person are respected.

We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living and it can affect both adults and children.

We will always acknowledge that the welfare of the child and adult at risk is paramount, and that the priority is always to act in their best interests, following legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice guidance to enable them access to support and protection.

We will support everyone to ensure that as a place of worship all will work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (when available) are the persons to whom all concerns or allegations should be addressed for appropriate actions to be taken. In the absence of a Safeguarding Coordinator, the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. Their contact details will be always available in our posters, websites, or other communications with the public.

We will exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of the Church Council and those who will work with children or adults at risk within the church, whether paid, volunteers, lay or ordained. We will ensure that Council members, staff and volunteers are suitable and legally able to act in their positions. We will use DBS/PVG checks as part of a wide range of checks on Council members, staff and volunteers to ensure that we have a broad and informed view to assist us in minimising the risk of abuse, harm or neglect.

We will support, supervise, resource and train all those who undertake work with children and adults in need of protection.

We will respond without delay to every concern, incident or complaint which suggests that a child or adult has been harmed, or is at risk of harm and cooperate with ecumenical partners, the Police, DO (the Designated Officer, formerly known as LADO), Local Safeguarding Boards (in Wales), Children's Partnership Boards (formally Local Safeguarding Children's Boards) and Children's and Adult Social Care Services in any investigation, while maintaining confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We are committed to working with those who have suffered or suffer any form of abuse, offering appropriate pastoral support where possible as well as to challenging any abuse of power, especially where it involves someone in a position of trust.

We will manage risks and those who might pose a risk to the welfare of people and the life of the Church and offer support to those known to pose a risk to children and/or adults, including supervision, referral to the appropriate agencies, and implementation of safeguarding contracts, when appropriate.

We are committed to ensuring that any allegations, concerns and complaints about abuse or neglect that we discover or suspect are recorded accurately, reported promptly and shared safely within and outside the denomination.

We will review our safeguarding policy, practices and procedures annually, considering lessons learned from safeguarding cases and changes in legislation, statutory guidance and good working practice.

We will ensure processes and practices in all aspects of safeguarding, including discipline, risk management, whistleblowing and bullying/harassment in alignment with Good Practice 5 – United Reformed Church's Policy and Guidance in Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

Any local policy changes will be formally approved by the church Council.

Safeguarding Policy



Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy 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 within our church, or those who attend our activities and events.

Who this policy applies to

This policy is approved and endorsed by the Church Council and applies to:

- all members of our church
- all those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- our church council
- paid staff (both internal and external, such as consultants)
- volunteers
- organisations and groups which hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

The policy and procedures should be interpreted in accordance with the principles in the above introduction 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.

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 beneficiaries of the church, 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

The church will appoint Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator(s) for safeguarding children and adults. A job/role description is attached as **Appendix 2**.

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 **Appendix 8** for the church's 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) checks for eligible roles and positions
 - For applicants with less than 3 years of residency in the United Kingdom, a police check will be obtained from their primary country of residence. If this cannot happen, a risk assessment will be completed to assess the candidate being recruited, taking into account the other areas of safer recruitment that can be completed. The government's webpage has more information about criminal records checks for overseas applicants (<http://bit.ly/CR-check-overseas>).
- taking up two references (not from family members)
- interviewing candidates
- providing workers/volunteers with written contracts/covenants.

All Council members, paid staff and volunteers will work within a code of conduct (codes attached as **Appendices 3 and 4** 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 known to have harmed or harm children or adults, we will inform the Church Safeguarding Coordinator or Synod Safeguarding Officer 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 and 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 the church's own 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 6** 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. 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.

Church workers and 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. **Appendix 1: 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 will be communicated to children and workers will 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 church Safeguarding Coordinator 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 5**). 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 Church Safeguarding Coordinator or the Synod Safeguarding Officer **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 5**. 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 church staff member or church volunteer

If someone in the church 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. DO contact details are included below in the Key Contacts section of this policy.

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

In accordance with the law, a referral needs to be made to the DBS 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 Council 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 their 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.

See Appendix 8 for the church's full statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

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 or qualified member of the church staff. The Safeguarding Coordinator(s) should ensure that Council members 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:

Name: Jared Jagers, Associate Minister of Faith Formation

Telephone No: 07565 687 333

Email: jared@amchurch.co.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 and support

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

Name: Sue Stroman

Telephone No: 0781 712 3159

Email: suestroman@aim.com

- **Synod Safeguarding Officer**

Name: Belinda Nielsen

Telephone No: 0771 664 0596

Email: safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

- **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)
Safeguarding helpline: 0303 003 1111

- **Designated Officer (DO)**
Contact the Children and Families Contact Service by calling 020 7974 3317 who will direct your call to the Duty DO.

- Statutory contact in the case of a child
Camden Council Children and Families Contact Service
Contact: Duty Manager
Telephone No 0207 974 3317. Out of hours: 0207 974 4444
Email LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk
Website <https://www.camden.gov.uk/early-help-for-families>

- Statutory contact in the case of an adult at risk
Camden Council Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board
Telephone No 0207 974 4000 and select option 1
Email adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk

Review

The Council will review this policy annually with the guidance of the Safeguarding Coordinator(s), amending and updating it as required, and informing the congregation at the Annual General Meeting that this has been done.

Date of the most recent review: 27 September 2022

Date of the next review: September 2023

Signed: Jared Jagers, Associate Minister of Faith Formation

(on behalf of the Church Council)

Appendix 1: Online Safety Policy



Technology is constantly advancing, bringing with it additional safeguarding considerations. An online safety policy is necessary to safeguard all electronic communications between the church and children/young people (those under 18 years of age) recognising the merging between online and offline worlds and the distinctiveness and difficulties within faith based organisations of defining clear boundaries for everyone.

This online safety policy sets out the roles, responsibilities and procedures for the acceptable, safe and responsible use of online technologies for adults and children within this church, including the use of mobile phones, computers and other electronic devices.

It explains what will happen in the event of unacceptable use of these technologies and details the support that will be provided to support children, parents and others in the safe and responsible use of these technologies beyond the church.

Why we have a policy

The use of the Internet and mobile devices has become an integral part of church and home life. There are always going to be risks to using any form of communication which lies within the public domain. It is therefore imperative that there are clear rules, procedures and guidelines to minimise these risks and especially when children use these technologies.

It is also important that workers and church members are clear about appropriate procedures so that they are safeguarded from misunderstandings or allegations through a lack of knowledge of potential risks.

This church acknowledges that whilst we will endeavour to safeguard against all risks we may not be able to completely eliminate them. Any incidents that may arise will be dealt with quickly and according to policy to ensure that children are best protected

Policy Aims

- to ensure the safeguarding of children within and beyond church by raising awareness of appropriate and acceptable uses of online technologies
- to outline the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved
- to have clarity about procedures following the misuse of any online technologies
- to work with parents / carers and to maintain a continued awareness of both the benefits and potential issues of online technologies

Our commitment to online safety

We will equip children with the skills and knowledge that they need to use the technology in this church safely and responsibly, and to manage the possible risks. We will also ensure that they are aware of where they can go to get help, apart from trusted adults, if they are uncomfortable with anything in the digital world.

Children and Young People are expected to make appropriate and safe use of the electronic communication & devices

When using electronic devices with internet access in any church-related interactions, children will be made aware of what is acceptable usage and will agree **not** to:

- search for and/or enter pornographic, violent, racist or hate-motivated websites
- download, forward-on, copy or burn onto CD any music, images or movies from the Internet where permission has not been granted by the copyright holders
- disclose any personal information about another person – addresses (postal, email or messenger), telephone numbers, bank details, including personal information
- send or display offensive messages or pictures
- deliberately browse, download, upload or forward material that could be considered offensive or illegal
- use obscene language
- violate copyright laws
- trespass in folders, work or files belonging to others
- retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures
- harass, insult, bully or attack others
- damage computers, computer systems or computer networks
- use another user's password
- use computers for unapproved commercial purposes

Sanctions:

- violations of the above rules will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet use
- further action may be taken such as informing parents / carers
- when applicable, police or local authorities may be informed

We will make appropriate use of any photographic images and/or video footage taken during church activities.

Clear guidelines will be operated as follows:

- permission will be sought from parents / carers before any images are taken and/or displayed. Images will only be used for the specific purpose agreed by the person photographed
- written consent will specify what purposes the image will be used for, and how it will be stored. For instance if the intention is to use an image on the church website or other forms of publicity, this will be clearly stated at the time that consent is sought
- further written consent will be sought if images are to be used in ways other than originally specified
- if children object, even if parents / carers have agreed, their wishes will be respected
- photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will not enable individual children to be clearly identified
- children's full names and/or other details will not be used anywhere in association with photographs or other media
- when using photographs of children, group pictures will be used wherever possible
- any use of images will reflect the diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity

- workers will not keep images of children on their personal mobile phone; if photos are taken on mobile phones for church use, they will be transferred to secure church computers as soon as reasonably possible and deleted from the personal device
- except in exceptional cases, which will be agreed, and known about, digital media relating to children will be stored on church computers. Should this not be possible for any reason, where the media is to be stored will be recorded

We will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, including the use of filtering software on all computers used within this church.

To ensure that unwanted and unsolicited information, viruses and other malware does not intrude on the use of digital technology, we will ensure all appropriate and reasonable steps are taken to protect computers and the users of them as follows:

- filtering software will be installed on all computers used at this church or as part of any activities operated by the church.
- on our church website/s, details will be prominently displayed as to where to find help online including having the CEOP button on the website

We will respond appropriately and sensitively to all online safety concerns.

In the event of concern that there may be an online safety incident, this will be reported to the church's designated safeguarding co-ordinator in the same manner as the reporting of any other safeguarding concern. The safeguarding co-ordinator will then determine if the matter should be reported to the statutory authorities or other appropriate agencies, including CEOP or the Internet Watch Foundation. In case of church's designated safeguarding co-ordinator not being available, the matter needs to be reported to the synod safeguarding officer.

We will operate safe email communications with children and young people.

When using email to communicate with children and young people, workers will:

- obtain parental agreement on an annual registration form before they use email services to communicate with a child or young person
- use clear, unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation
- ensure that all messages can be viewed if necessary by the worker's supervisor and that this policy is explained to children and young people.

We will make appropriate use of virtual gatherings by platforms such as Zoom.

Clear guidelines will be operated as follows:

- language and behaviour should be professional and appropriate, following the code of conduction for working with children
- permission will be sought from parents / carers before a child is invited to a virtual gathering
- details for joining a virtual gathering will not be published in publicly available spaces, but will be emailed directly to parents / carers
- the privacy settings for the virtual gathering should be set up in such a way that no outside participants may unexpectedly join and the adult(s) leading the gatherings should have the ability to remove participants if necessary – a "waiting room" should be used, participant screen sharing should be disabled, meeting should be locked once all the participants have joined

- virtual gatherings should NOT be recorded, and screen-shots or photos should only be captured with the prior permission of parents / carers
- adults should keep a record of date, time, length, and attendance of any virtual gathering
- care should be taken anytime the video functions of a platform are used to ensure that all participants (children and adults) are fully clothed and that no participant will be embarrassed or brought to disrepute
- 1:1 video conferencing should not take place; in the case of the arrival of one child at the beginning of a virtual gathering, video should be turned off until other participants join the gathering
- the privacy and protection of personal information should be maintained, including what can be seen in the background of a video; leaders should prompt children to ensure that they have an appropriate background
- in lessons or activities where internet use is pre-planned, it is best practice that sites should be pre-checked as suitable for their use
- in the unusual case of volunteers leading a virtual gathering of children or adults-at-risk, these guidelines will be sent to the volunteer to ensure their appropriate use of the online platform

We will make appropriate use of mobile phones where they are needed.

Not every child or young person has the use of a mobile phone and, even if they do, parents may not want a worker to have the number. Workers will therefore have alternative means of communication and will ensure that communication goes through parents if this is their preference.

Mobile phones should only be used where necessary and will be guided by the following considerations:

- where appropriate group rather than individual texting will be used
- care will be taken with the language used, avoiding ambiguous abbreviations such as 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and always end with people's name.
- any texts or conversations that raise concerns will be saved and passed on/shown to the worker's supervisor
- any images of children stored securely on a church computer
- workers will not keep images of children on their personal mobile phone; if photos are taken on mobile phones for church use, they will be transferred to secure church computers as soon as reasonably possible and deleted from the personal device
- workers will not give out their personal mobile number to children
- as well as ensuring that calls / texts are not sent after 9pm or before 9am, workers will also ensure that calls and texts are not sent whilst the child is at school / college, as this may be against the educational establishment's rules
- workers will enable a password/lock on all devices to ensure data protection and will prevent unauthorised access being gained

We will consider the appropriate use of Chat & Messenger Services and whether these are necessary.

Instant Messenger Services (IM) are internet programmes that allow people to write and receive messages in real time.

As with other forms of online communication, workers will take care with regard to language and content, as well as when and for how long a communication lasts.

Workers will ensure that all communications using IM services adhere to the following:

- communication will not take place between the hours of 9 pm and 9 am
- workers will ensure that they enable settings when using IM services which allow for significant conversations to be saved as text files and will keep a log of when and with whom they communicated
- children/young people will be made aware that conversations will be recorded and kept (via text files or similar)

We will make safe and appropriate use of social media platforms when communicating with young people.

When using social media platforms we will ensure that the following guidance is used by all workers:

- workers will not add young people with whom they work to their personal social media platforms if they are under the age of 18.
- if workers find it beneficial to communicate with young people / parents via social media, workers will set up a group / private page for the church or church group and invite young people (in the appropriate age group) to be members
- workers will only use an agreed social networking account for contact with young people with whom they are working
- workers will ensure that their personal profiles on any social media platforms are set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature
- messages sent to young people regarding youth activities will be posted openly and 'inbox' / direct messaging should be avoided. If this is necessary in exceptional circumstances, a copy will be sent to an identified person to assist transparency

Sanctions

Workers will be made aware that not complying with any of the above will incur sanctions, which could include suspension or dismissal and referral to appropriate authorities.

We will store data securely

Where digital data of any form about children is stored, it will be on church-owned computers or servers that are password protected and in general data be stored securely on the church premises. If this is not possible then a record will be made of where the data is stored. Where it is necessary for data to be transported, memory sticks will be purchased for workers so that there is a separation between personal and church information.

Child Covenant



The following covenant regarding responsible use of technology will be communicated to children and young people in a manner appropriate to their age and use of technology. All children should agree to the following expectations:

- Where using a social media platform I will use only use my own login and password which will be kept secret
- I will not deliberately browse, download or forward material that could be considered to be offensive or illegal, for instance pornographic, violent, racist or hate-motivated material
- I understand that I must not bring software into the church without permission
- I understand that I must not violate copyright laws
- I am responsible for email that I send and for contacts I make. I will only send messages which are polite, appropriate and free from unsuitable language.
- I will not send any attachments which are hurtful, abusive or offensive
- If I receive anything, see anything or come across a website which may be unsuitable or makes me feel uncomfortable I will immediately tell Sue Stroman (Safeguarding Coordinator) or Jared Jagers (deputy Safeguarding Coordinator), or report it to The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) or the Internet Watch Foundation
- I understand that I must never give my home address, phone number, send photos, give out personal information, or arrange to meet someone who contacts me over the Internet
- I will not send anonymous messages and I know that chain letters are not permitted.
- I understand that any youth and children's workers are not allowed to accept friend requests via social media platforms
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I will not be allowed to use the Internet at church and that my parents / carers will be informed

Worker Agreement



To ensure that all adults are aware of their responsibilities when using any online technologies, they are asked to sign their agreement to specific Acceptable Use Rules. This is both to provide an example to children regarding safe and responsible use and as a safeguard from any potential allegations or inadvertent personal misuse.

These rules apply to all online usage and to anything that may be downloaded or printed.

General:

- I have been given a copy of the church online safety policy to refer to for all online safety procedures I should follow
- I know who the church Safeguarding Coordinator is
- I will only use church equipment in an appropriate manner and for professional uses (if portable equipment is taken home I will ensure my home insurance covers this)
- I will adhere to copyright and intellectual property rights
- I will take measures or seek advice to prevent the introduction of viruses to the network.
- I will ensure that all devices, including memory sticks, containing information about children are password protected and that I keep my password secure
- I will report any accidental misuse
- I will report any incidents of concern to the church Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Photographs & video:

I know that:

- all images should be appropriate and beyond first names not reveal any personal information about children if uploaded to the Internet. Images should only be uploaded with permission from the parent / carer, as well as the child involved
- I should not take images on any personal devices, except by prior agreement with the Church Safeguarding Coordinator and should be promptly transferred to a church computer and deleted from the personal device
- Images of children should be stored securely on the church computer, never on personal devices, including memory sticks

Communication & Social Networking:

- I will ensure all messages are written carefully and politely
- I will not keep communications secret from those in the church to whom I am accountable
- I will not communicate with children online without consent from a parent / carer

- I realise that I am putting myself at risk of misinterpretation and allegation should I contact children via any systems other than those agreed
- I will not accept or request the 'friendship' or 'following' of children/young people via social media platforms
- I understand the value of setting my 'Privacy' settings appropriately on any social networking site
- I will keep a record of any online communication with a child
- I will not publish, post or release information that is considered confidential by the church, a young person or anyone else

I have read, understood and agree with the online safety policy and the rules specified above and understand my responsibilities regarding safeguarding children when using online technologies.

I also understand that if I fail to follow agreed procedure there will be sanctions that could lead to my being suspended or dismissed, once appropriate procedures have been followed.

Signed

Dated

Appendix 2: The Role of a Church Safeguarding Coordinator



Context

We believe that children and adults at risk deserve the best possible care that the church can provide and that the church should be a safe place for everyone involved. We recognise and give thanks for the time and devotion given by anyone carrying out this role.

Purpose of the role

- To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedures in the church.
- To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues.
- To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church.

Responsibilities

To coordinate safeguarding policy and procedures in the church

- To familiarise themselves with church policies and procedures and URC good practice guidelines in safeguarding and to keep abreast of any changes and developments.
- To ensure that church policies and procedures are reviewed annually, kept up to date, and are fit for purpose.
- To make sure that elders and others in the church are aware of the church safeguarding policies and procedures, including URC guidelines and Charity Commission responsibilities.
- To collaborate with the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (when there is one), the minister, the DBS/PVG signatory people and the Synod Safeguarding Officer on all matters around safeguarding.
- To ensure safer recruitment practices are operated in the recruitment of all workers (both volunteers and paid) including, but not exclusively, ensuring that the relevant workers have up to date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) checks.
- To review and ensure others' safeguarding policies and arrangements are in place when any church premises are let to an external organisation, informal group or individual.

To be the first point of contact for safeguarding issues

- To be a named person that children / adults at risk, church members and outside agencies can talk to regarding any issue to do with safeguarding.
- To be aware of the names and telephone numbers of appropriate departments and teams within Social Care and the Police in the event of a referral needing to be made.
- To be aware of when to seek advice, and when it is necessary to inform Social Care, the Police or the Designated Officer (previously known as LADO) or the equivalent in Scotland and Wales of a concern or incident.
- To take appropriate action in relation to any safeguarding concerns which arise within the church.
- To ensure safe practice is in place for supporting people who pose a risk to children and adults at risk at church.

- To cooperate with Social Care or the Police in safeguarding investigations relating to people within the church.
- To ensure that appropriate records are kept by the church, and that information in relation to safeguarding issues is handled confidentially and stored securely.
- To inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer about any referrals made to the statutory authorities, or of any information received from the statutory authorities.
- To report safeguarding information annually to the Church Council and the Synod Safeguarding Officer, using the URC's Appendix H1 as part of the annual returns process, to enable them to monitor safeguarding in the Synod.

To be an advocate for good safeguarding practice in the church

- To promote sensitivity within the church towards all those affected by the impact of abuse.
- To promote positive safeguarding procedures and practice and ensure procedures are adhered to.
- To arrange and/or promote opportunities for training in safeguarding to any relevant members of the leadership team and all people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, staff and volunteers), as recommended by the synod, and ensure that their training is renewed every three years.
- To attend appropriate training for the role, including refresher training every three years, and keep updated on matters related to safeguarding.
- To seek appropriate support and advice in carrying out this role.
- To make arrangements for a suitable person to carry out this role when on leave, and to publicise who the substitute is and the dates of the alternative arrangements.

Requirements for the role

- To have knowledge of policy and practice for safeguarding children and/or adults at risk.
- Good communication (written and oral) skills
- Be willing to attend appropriate safeguarding training/refresher training organised by the synod.
- Be willing to be easily contactable – and prepared to make contact details public to enable direct contact when needed.

Appendix 3: Code of Conduct for Working with Children and Young People



All workers of the church should agree to the following code of conduct when working with children and young people. The word 'child' refers to all those under the age of 18 throughout this document

DO

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect
- Respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices
- Encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture
- Act inclusively, seeking to make everyone feel welcome and valued
- Use appropriate language
- Be a good role model
- Treat people with equal care and concern
- Take all reasonable adjustments for young people with disabilities and special education needs
- Listen to children and tell the Church Safeguarding Coordinator if you have any concerns about a child's welfare
- Refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning
- Encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently
- Seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact
- Interact with children in a public place. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk
- Make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent and is transparent, accountable, recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies. Using church platforms and not private accounts
- Have a designated photographer to take, store and share photos of your group's activities, in line with the safeguarding policy
- Use physical contact wisely and in accordance with **Appendix 7** below; it should be:
 - in public
 - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child
 - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult
 - respectful of the child's wishes, feelings and dignity
- Respect children's and young people's privacy
- Ensure that any communication online is done through a work or church account – this may require setting up an account specific for that purpose
- Ensure, where possible, parents or guardians are present in the building or other workers are aware when young people are communicating with you via social media. Communication with a child via social media should only ever take place when their parent or guardian and other adult workers are aware of these online interactions.
- Inform your line manager or point of contact of your intention to communicate online with families or young people and keep a record of times and dates when you do this.

- Keep up to date on policies, procedures and training, including safeguarding and health and safety
- Understand that your conduct outside of work including on line can impact on your work with children and young people

DO NOT

- Do not abuse the power and responsibility of your role for example do not belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a child or young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo)
- Exclude children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason
- Overshare about your own situations
- Show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts)
- Threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed
- Feel you have to deal with every problem on your own
- Use physical restraint unless they are causing harm to themselves or others
- Spend time alone with children out of sight of other people
- Contact them through private messaging
- Keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences
- Use child/young person's personal data for other purposes than activities consented
- Take photos or videos without consent
- Engage with children or young people through your personal social media or mobile account
- Assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker
- Promise to keep anything a secret, it may be that if a child or young person is being harmed or at risk of harm, that you will need to share that information but only on a need to know basis
- Work in ways that puts your needs and interests before those of the children you work with
- Discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged
- Interact with children you are working with from personal social media accounts

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with children and young people

on behalf of _____
[church name]

Name of worker: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4: Code of Conduct for Working with Adults at Risk



This code describes the standards of conduct, behaviour and attitude expected of all church workers working with adults, including adults at risk, to ensure that you are providing a compassionate, caring and supportive environment.

Safeguarding adults at risk means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect (14.7 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014). The safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has care and support needs (whether or not the adult is being provided any services from the local authority or other statutory body to meet their needs) and;
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

All workers of this church should agree to the following code of conduct when working with adults.

Be accountable

- Be honest with yourself and others about what you can do, whether or not the adult is being provided with any services.
- Recognise your abilities and limitations.
- Only carry out or delegate tasks agreed in your role description.
- Be able to justify and be accountable for your actions.
- Ask your leader/supervisor for guidance if you feel inadequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your role.
- Tell your leader/supervisor about any issues that might affect your ability to perform your role.
- Always establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in your relationships with people.
- Never accept any offers of loans, gifts or benefits from anyone you are supporting or anyone close to them.
- Comply with United Reformed Church (URC) policies and procedures.
- Tell your leader/supervisor or person in charge of safeguarding if you are concerned that another worker is acting outside of this code of conduct.

Promote the privacy, dignity, rights and wellbeing of people

- Always protect the rights of people and treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- Ensure that a vulnerable adult is not treated, without justification, any less favourably than the way in which a person who is not an "adult at risk" would be treated in a comparable situation.
- Always act in the best interest of people, with their present and past wishes and feelings being considered.
- Put the needs, views and wishes of people first, helping them to control and choose the help and support they receive.
- Always gain consent before providing help and support. You must respect a person's right to refuse if they can do so, but also report any concerns if you feel that someone does not have the capacity to consent.

- Always maintain the privacy and dignity of people who have help and support, and their carers.
- Promote people's independence, while helping them maintain existing family and social contacts.
- Always make sure that your actions do not harm an individual's health or wellbeing.
- You must never abuse, neglect, harm or exploit anyone.
- Challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour.
- Always take comments and complaints seriously; respond to them in accordance with the safeguarding policy and inform the safeguarding coordinator.

Work effectively with other volunteers/colleagues

- Understand and value your contribution and the vital part you play in the church.
- Recognise and respect the roles of other church workers/colleagues and those from other denominations and agencies; work in partnership with them.
- Work openly and co-operatively with other church workers/colleagues, including those from other denominations and agencies, and treat them with respect.
- Work openly and co-operatively with people who have help and support, including their families or carers, and treat them with respect.
- Honour your commitment to the church and be reliable, dependable and trustworthy.

Effective communication

- Make efforts to assist and facilitate communication, using whatever method is appropriate to the needs of the individual.
- Always explain and discuss any help and support you are offering/providing with the person; only continue if they give consent.
- Communicate respectfully with people in an open, accurate, effective and straightforward way.
- Communicate effectively with other church workers/colleagues as appropriate.
- Maintain clear and accurate records of the help and support the church provides, as appropriate.
- Recognise both the extent and the limits of your role, knowledge and ability when communicating with people who have help and support.

Respect people's right to confidentiality and decision-making

- Treat all information about people who need help and support, and their carers, as confidential.
- Ensure people participate as fully as possible in any decisions being made, with support in place to help that participation in a way understood by the adults.
- Only discuss or disclose information in accordance with legislation and church policy.
- Always seek guidance from your leader/supervisor regarding any information or issues that you are concerned about.

Training, policy and procedure

- Attend all necessary training which helps to support you in your role.
- Complete all necessary safeguarding training at least every three years.
- Have a good awareness of URC policy and procedures, including *Good Practice 5*.

Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion

- Respect the individuality and diversity of all people, including those we encounter and work with.

- Treat all adults equally and inclusively and do not discriminate on grounds of age, gender reassignment, ethnicity, race, religion/belief, cultural background, sexual orientation and disability.
- Promote equal opportunities and inclusion for the people we encounter and work with.
- Report any concerns regarding equality, diversity and inclusion to a leader/supervisor as soon as possible.

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with adults, including adults at risk.

On behalf of the American International Church

Name of worker:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 5: Reporting Form for Safeguarding Concern



American
International
Church

Where a person is in imminent danger of harm or a criminal act may have been committed, the police must be notified immediately on 999. Otherwise, call 101 to report a crime or any other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

- Please fill in this form with the information available within 24 hours after becoming aware of a safeguarding incident or concern. You do not have to fill in all sections.
- Please ensure you are as accurate and detailed as possible. Use quotes wherever possible, and do not interpret what was said using your own words.
- Record what you said as well as what the child, young person or adult said.
- Include details such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language.
- If you have formed an opinion please state it, making it clear that it is your opinion and give reasons for forming that opinion.
- The completed form must be passed on or sent by secure email to the designated safeguarding person, and immediately followed up after sending.

Date on which this form is completed				
Full name of the person reporting the concern/incident				
Relationship to child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk				
Church details, if known	Synod	Church	Number	
Contact details of church or organization, if known	Address	Phone numbers	Email	
Full name of child, young person, or adult concerned of being at risk				
Date of Birth, if known				
Contact details, if known	Address	Phone numbers	Email	
Has the individual given consent to report? (or report as appropriate)	Yes		No	Reason for no consent:
If under 18, have the parents/carers /guardians of the child been informed?	Yes		No	Reason for no consent:



American
International
Church

Please give a summary of the safeguarding incident/concern				
Date/time of incident				
What happened? Please provide detailed information about the circumstances and the person experiencing or being at risk of harm, abuse or neglect (preferably as a timeline)				
When did it happen? (date, time)				
Where did it happen? (specific location)				
What action/s were taken, and by whom?				
Name of anyone involved and in what way, including witnesses				
Other services or agencies involved <u>Note:</u> If referred to statutory authorities, or other services, please include name and contact details				
Next steps or recommendations				
INTERNAL USE				
Date received				
Full name of Designated Person				
Progress				
Conclusion				

Appendix 6: Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

It is important to be able to recognise the possible signs of abuse. Observing any of the signs or symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person is being abused; there could be a perfectly ordinary explanation. However, the observation of multiple signs and symptoms, together with explanations which are inconsistent or do not 'ring true', should give more cause for concern.

Below is a comprehensive table of definitions, signs and symptoms of some of the types of abuse. The table has been compiled from a number of different sources, including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. **Please note:** it is not an exhaustive list, and relates to the abuse of both children and adults.

Physical Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
To inflict pain, physical injury, impairment or suffering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, slapping and beating. • Shaking, pinching, throwing and pushing. • Kicking, biting, burning, drowning and hair pulling. • Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning and using inappropriate restraint. • Parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. • Inappropriate use of restraint techniques or other physical sanctions. • Isolation or confinement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them. • Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, welts. • Bruising and discolouration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc. ○ in unusual places (e.g. around the mouth), in unusual patterns (e.g. symmetrical) or in particular shapes (e.g. fingertip bruising or belt marks). • Black eyes, burns, broken bones and skull fractures. • If the person is seen to have injuries that recur or are in the same place on more than one occasion or are without plausible explanation. • Any injury that has not received medical attention or been properly cared for. • Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene. • Loss of hair, loss of weight and change of appetite. • Repeated or unexplained tummy pains. • Person flinches at physical contact and/or keeps fully covered, even in hot weather. • Person appears frightened or subdued in the presence of a particular person or people.

Emotional Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The use of threats, fear or power gained by another's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes.</p> <p>Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological stress. In children it can cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behaviour. • Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation. • The lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity, deprivation of social contact or deliberate isolation. • Making someone feel worthless, a lack of love or affection or ignoring the person. • Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. <p>Emotional abuse may well be indicative of other forms of abuse.</p> <p>All forms of abuse have an emotional component.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in mood, attitude and behaviour. • Becoming quiet, clingy or withdrawn or conversely becoming aggressive or angry for no apparent reason. • Denial and hesitation to talk openly. • Excessive fear or anxiety • Behaviour such as rocking, hair twisting or thumb sucking. • Changes in sleep pattern or persistent tiredness. • Loss of appetite. • Low self-esteem, helplessness or passivity. • Confusion or disorientation. • Implausible stories and attention seeking behaviour. • Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults. • Running away, school non-attendance, stealing or lying.
Sexual Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>For a child – forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities.</p> <p>For an adult - Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour.</p> <p>No one should enter a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the person has not consented, could not consent or was pressurised into consenting. • Indecent assault, incest, being forced to touch another person in a sexual manner without consent. • Making sexual remarks, suggestions and teasing. • Indecent exposure, being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts. • Filming or photographing a child in sexual poses or acts. • Enforced or coerced nakedness or inappropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional distress. • Preoccupation with anything sexual and age-inappropriate knowledge of sexual behaviour. • Mood, attitude or behaviour changes. • Expressions of feelings of guilt or shame. • Itching, soreness, bruises or lacerations, particularly around the genital areas. • Difficulty in walking or sitting, or unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding. • Unexplained venereal disease or genital infections. • A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults. • Disturbed sleep patterns. • Torn, stained or bloody underclothing. • Significant changes in sexual behaviour or outlook. • A very young girl or a woman who lacks mental capacity to consent to intercourse becomes pregnant.

	<p>photography of a person in sexually explicit ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being spied on while a person is undertaking or receiving personal care activities. • 'Sexting', grooming and using social media to share inappropriate content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underage Pregnancy/Termination.
Neglect	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs (physical and/or psychological) are not met.</p> <p>In a child, neglect is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.</p> <p>Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services. • Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment. • Ignoring medical or physical care needs, including not providing adequate food or assistance with eating/drinking, or not providing sufficient or appropriate clothing. • Leaving alone or unsupervised. • Failing to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous (particularly when the person lacks the mental capacity to assess the risks to themselves or to others). • Deliberately withholding medication or aids, such as walking sticks or hearing aids. • Denying social, religious or cultural contacts, or denying contact with the family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person looking unkempt or dirty and has poor personal hygiene. • Person is malnourished, has sudden or continuous weight loss and is dehydrated – constant hunger, stealing or gorging on food. • Person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions. • Dirt, urine or faecal smells in a person's environment. • Developmental delay in children. • Low self-esteem, socially isolated and poor concentration. • Home environment does not meet basic needs (for example no heating or lighting). • Health and safety hazards in the living environment. • Untreated medical conditions, pressure sores, rashes, lice on the person. • Depression or low mood. • Person and/or carer have inconsistent or reluctant contact with Health and Social Services. • Callers/visitors are refused access to the person. • Prolonged isolation or lack of stimulation. • Person who is not able to look after themselves is left unattended and so put at risk. • Not being helped to the toilet when assistance is requested. • Change leaving alone to 'child/vulnerable person being left alone or unsupervised'.

Self-Neglect	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
An unwillingness or inability to care for oneself and/or one's environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding or having no possessions at all. • Living in squalor and neglecting self-care and hygiene. • Failure to provide oneself with adequate food, water, clothing, shelter, healthcare and safety precautions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dehydration, malnutrition or obesity. • Untreated medical conditions and poor personal hygiene. • Unsanitary living conditions. • Inappropriate and/or inadequate clothing and lack of necessary medical aids. • Homelessness. • Not adhering to medical advice. • Not taking medication as advised/prescribed.
Financial Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft, fraud or embezzlement of monies, benefits or goods. • Exploitation or profiteering. • Applying pressure in connection with Wills, property or inheritance, or financial transactions. • The abuse of influence, power or friendship to persuade a person to make gifts or change their will. • Being charged excessive amounts for services such as minor building works on a property. • Loans made under duress, threat or dishonestly extracted. • Mate-crime – where vulnerable people are befriended by those who go on to exploit them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained loss of money. • Missing personal belongings such as art, jewellery and silverware. • Deterioration in standard of living, not having as much money as usual to pay for shopping or regular outings. • Unexplained lack of money, inability to pay bills or getting into debt. • Sudden changes in a person's finances or a disparity in assets and living conditions. • Person unable to access their own money or check their own accounts. • Cheques being signed or cashed by other people without someone's consent. • Recent acquaintances expressing sudden or disproportionate interest in the person and their money. • Reluctance on the part of the family, friends or the person controlling the person's funds to pay for necessary food, clothes or other items. • Recent changes of deeds/title of home. • Inappropriate granting and/or use of Power of Attorney. • Sudden change or creation of a will to benefit an individual significantly. • Someone else having possession of money/ bank cards. • Someone else reported making financial decisions. • Fraud.

Discriminatory Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageist, racist, sexist, or abuse based on a person's disability. • Abuse linked to a person's sexuality. • Harassment, slurs or similar inappropriate use of language and treatment. • Withholding services without proper justification, or lack of disabled access to services and activities. • Lack of respect towards a person's culture, or deliberate exclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low self-esteem. • Withdrawal and social isolation. • Anger. • Person puts themselves down in terms of their age, race, gender identity or sexuality. • Abuse may be observed in conversations or reports by the person of how they perceive themselves. • Preference not to receive care from particular individuals. • Feeling as though there is a lack of control based on age, gender, religion. • Signs of substandard service offered (health/education).
Institutional Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
The mistreatment of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inability of an institution to safeguard people from emotional or even physical harm and neglect. • Having fixed rules and routines by which people are controlled. • People prevented from acting within their rights. • No access to personal possessions or personal allowance. • Inadequate staffing, poorly trained staff and a lack of leadership and/or supervision of staff or volunteers. • Inappropriate use of physical interventions and poor practice in the provision of intimate care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate or poor care. • Being routinely referred to in a condescending fashion. • Disrespectful language and attitudes. • Adult being spoken to or treated like a child. • A person's privacy and dignity being routinely compromised. • Failure to recognise the individuality of each person and applying a 'one size fits all' approach to support. • No evidence of support services care plans that focus on the individual's needs. • Inadequate staffing levels and the absence of individual care. • Lack of adequate procedures. • Poor record keeping/missing documents.
Domestic Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
Any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults or young	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, psychological, sexual or financial abuse. • Patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruises or injuries. • Unusually quiet or withdrawn. • Fear, anxiety or panic attacks.

<p>people, who are or have been intimate partners, family members or extended family members, regardless of age, gender or sexuality or social status.</p> <p>Rarely is domestic abuse a one-off incident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child to parent/carer abuse. • Abuse towards elderly family members. • Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). • Honour based violence, committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and community. • Forced marriage. • Children can experience it by seeing and/or hearing the abuse, or seeing the injuries or distress afterwards, as well as being directly targeted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent absences from work or other commitments. • Stops talking about their partner/family member. • Is always accompanied by their partner/family member. • Becomes isolated and withdrawn from friends and other family. • Doesn't have control over possessions or money. • Anxious about being away from home and rushes to get back.
Spiritual Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. Coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The abuse of trust or misuse of power by someone in a position of spiritual authority (such as a minister).</p> <p>The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forcing religious ideas or practices on to people, particular those who may be vulnerable to such practices. • Extreme pastoral interference in personal matters – reducing individual choice and responsibility. • The misuse of scripture or power to control behaviour and pressure to conform. • Oppressive teaching and isolation from others. • The requirement of obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a "divine" position. • Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in people experiencing emotional, physical or sexual harm. • The denial of the right to have a faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God. • Exclusion of people from the full range of church life 	<p>It is often difficult for churches to identify spiritual abuse because its definition may be more an issue of personal interpretation of common practices in the church or denomination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral practices that 'force' people into accepting religious values or ideas. • A Feeling of confusion and uncertainty as to who, what or why they believe any more. • Deeply scarred – emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. • Feelings of betrayal leading to deep distrust, self-isolation and powerlessness. • A changed and damaged view of church – loss of church as a safe space.

	<p>(no arrangements for gluten-free wafers or non-alcoholic wine at Communion, or promoting fear of involving those who are HIV positive).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversimplification of forgiveness and healing without regard to pain or suffering. 	
Online Abuse	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The use of the internet (via email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, online games, live-streaming etc) to harm or harass in a deliberate manner.</p> <p>It can happen at any time and is not limited to a specific location – can be experienced even when alone.</p> <p>It can affect anyone at any age.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications seeking to intimidate, control, manipulate, put down, falsely discredit, humiliate. • Threatening earnings, reputation, employment, safety. • Cyberbullying/Harassment – repeated offensive, rude, insulting messages. • Denigration – derogatory information and/or digitally altered photos. • Flaming – posting insults using vulgar/profane language. • Impersonation – hacking accounts and taking on someone else's identity. • Outing/Trickery – sharing someone's secrets or tricking them into revealing embarrassing information. • Cyber stalking – repeated online threats/activity making someone afraid for their safety. • Trolling – online provocations, starting arguments, threats and insults. • Grooming – building emotional connection to gain trust for exploitation/abuse. • Sexting – sharing or coercion into sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawn, time spent alone, exclusion from social events. • Spend a lot more/less time than usual online, texting, gaming, on social media. • Reluctance to let anyone near their phone/ tablet/laptop etc. • Change in personality – anger, depression, anxiety etc • Changing appearance, trying to 'fit in' • Staying away from school/work • Nervous behaviour. • Losing self-confidence. • Distressed/withdrawn.

	sexual, naked or semi-naked images/videos/messages.	
Modern Slavery	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. Includes human trafficking, where people are moved from one place to another into a situation of exploitation, using deception, coercion and violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic servitude – forced to work in private houses with restricted freedoms, long hours, no pay. • Criminal exploitation – pick pocketing, shoplifting, drug trafficking. • Forced labour – long hours, no pay, poor conditions, verbal and physical threats. • Sexual exploitation – prostitution and child abuse. • Organ removal, forced begging, forced marriage and illegal adoption. • Travel and identity documents removed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a dependency situation, under the control and influence of others. • Malnourished or unkempt, wearing the same clothes all the time. • Travel, identity and financial documents held by someone else, or use of false/forged documents. • Living in cramped, dirty, overcrowded accommodation, living and working at same address, few personal possessions. • In debt to others, low or no pay, excessive deductions made for food, accommodation, transport. • Unfamiliar with the neighbourhood, unsure of home/work address. • Scared, untrusting, withdrawn, anxious, avoiding eye contact. • Showing signs of abuse, having old/untreated injuries and healthcare issues. • In fear of the authorities and in fear of removal or consequences for family.
Radicalisation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The process that moves a person to legitimise their support for or use of violence. The promise of an ideology which gives purpose and belonging. Can take place over a long time period or happen quickly.</p> <p>The person may not understand that they have been radicalised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to violent and inappropriate material. • Being recruited in person – online or face-to-face. • Joining extremist organisations. • Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues. • Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology. <p>Extremist recruiters speak directly to the vulnerabilities people experience at times in their lives, e.g. sense of not belonging, low self-esteem, issues at home, involvement with gangs/criminal groups or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expression of extremist views • Accessing extremist websites/social networks or possessing extremist, violent literature. • Behavioural changes, anger and use of inappropriate language. • Becoming disrespectful and intolerant of others. • Using words and phrases that sound scripted, talking about 'us' and 'them'. • Sympathies, admiration or associations with known extremists. • Advocating violent actions or means. • Changing name or friends.

	identity crisis with their cultural heritage.	
Child Sexual Exploitation	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>A type of sexual abuse. The child is given gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. The tricking or grooming of children to believe they are in a loving and consensual relationship. Can be both in person or online.</p> <p>The child may not understand that they have been abused. They may seem to be condoning or even encouraging the abusive behaviour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of violence, coercion and intimidation to force the child into sexual activity. • Invitations to parties where drugs and alcohol are freely given in exchange for sex. • Deceiving children into producing online indecent images/films of themselves. • Children being used to recruit other children into sexual exploitation. • Children being trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. • Sexual exploitation as part of gang initiation, status, protection or punishment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. they can't or won't explain. • Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour. • Swings and changes in mood or character, being secretive. • Gang-association and/or isolation from friends and social networks. • Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups. • Sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy. • Being frightened of some people, places or situations. • Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area. • Alcohol or drug misuse. • Going missing for periods of time. • Skipping school.
Self-Harm	Includes....	Some of the key indicators
<p>The intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is often used as a way of coping with, expressing or releasing overwhelming emotions and distress.</p> <p>It may also be about converting emotional pain into physical pain, expressing something that is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting • Burning • Bruising • Scratching • Hair pulling • Poisoning • Overdosing • Intentionally putting themselves in risky situations • Overeating or undereating • Inserting objects into their own body • Hitting themselves or walls • Exercising excessively • Self-neglect (adults) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained cuts, bruises and burns, which are likely to be on wrists, arms, thighs and chest. • Keeping themselves fully covered, even in hot weather. • Signs of depression, including low mood, tearfulness and a lack of motivation or interest. • Becoming withdrawn and a reluctance to speak to others. • Weight loss or weight gain due to changes in eating habits, including being secretive about eating. • Low self-esteem, such as an inclination to blame themselves for external problems and expressing that they are not good enough.

hard to put into words or feeling that they are in control.	Some may self-harm to create a reason to physically care for themselves, or to feel something instead of numbness or disconnection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol or drugs misuse. • Bald patches from pulling out hair.
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Things to note about abuse:

- It is unlikely that just one type of abuse will occur in isolation from another
- There can be an overlap of the signs and symptoms with different types of abuse
- All abuse involves the misuse of power
- There is an emotional abuse aspect to all types of abuse, including the witnessing of abuse
- If a child witnesses (including hearing) domestic abuse, this is considered to be child abuse
- Any type of abuse committed within the church can also have a negative impact on someone's faith and relationship with God
- It is not our role to determine which type of abuse it may be or to investigate.

For more information about specific forms of abuse, useful contacts of relevant organisations and details about those who are vulnerable to abuse, see the following documents from the URC's safeguarding resources (<https://urc.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding.html>):

- ***Appendix R: A Guide to Domestic Abuse***
- ***Appendix V: Safeguarding and Digital Communications***
- ***Appendix X: Responding to Allegations of Bullying and Harassment***
- ***Appendix E: A Guide to Working with People with Disabilities***
- ***Appendix U: Useful Contacts – For All Forms of Abuse of Children and Adults***

Appendix 7: Guidelines for Touch and Maintaining Behaviour



The goal of these guidelines is to establish a caring, safe, and welcoming environment for all children and will seek to maintain orderly behaviour that contributes to worship and spiritual engagement. We seek to provide a consistent approach to guiding behaviour during regular weekly Children's Worship and for any other events taking place with minors. All adults volunteering with children will seek healthy relationships with children that affirm positive behaviour as well as correcting disruptive behaviour.

Guidelines on Touch

- All physical contact should be an appropriate response to the needs of the child or adult at risk, and not the adult.
- Touch should always occur in public. Giving someone a hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Be sensitive to the individual's reaction to touch. If someone is not happy with physical contact, respect this and find another way of conveying your concern for them.
- Touch with children should be age-appropriate, and initiated by the child.
- As far as possible, be aware of the individual's culture, and the meaning that touch has to them.
- Adults should be able to monitor each other's behaviour with regard to touch and physical contact. They should feel safe and confident to check out issues, discuss any concerns and to constructively challenge anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.

Appropriate Physical Contact:

- Brief hugs initiated by the child.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- High-fives and hand slapping.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.

Inappropriate Displays of Affection:

- **Any form of unwanted affection.**
- Long hugs or embraces.
- Kisses on the face.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth.
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Inappropriate tickling.

- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development.

Guidelines on Correcting Behaviour

“Do ...” – ideal methods of correction:

- affirm children for behaving well and affirm their positive contribution to the lesson;
- offer restless or fidgety children something to do with their hands – a colouring page, an item to hold, or simply some paper and crayons;
- relocate children when needed without entirely excluding them from the group;
- restrain a child from hitting or hurting another child only when absolutely necessary and with gentle restraint;
- allow children multiple opportunities to comply with correction;
- ask parents to collect a child who is consistently unresponsive to correction;
- explain to children the reason for any correction;
- provide correction with a focus on love and guidance for the spiritual growth of the children.

“Don’t ...” – inappropriate methods of correction:

- use any striking or physical correction, except to restrain one child from harming another;
- shout or raise your voice for correction;
- relocate a child outside of the common area or to a place alone with a single adult;
- withhold affirmation or interaction from a child;
- deliberately silence a child or refuse to allow them to express their own view or contribute to the group during discussion times;
- mock, “make fun of,” or otherwise make a child feel unloved or undervalued.

Appendix 8: Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders



Policy statement

The American International Church (AIC) complies fully with the [DBS code of practice](#) when accessing an applicant's suitability for positions within the church which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order. We are committed to treating all applicants fairly and to not discriminate against any subject of a criminal record check based on convictions or other information revealed.

AIC will only request that an individual disclose details of convictions or cautions that we are legally entitled to know about. Where the position advertised is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order, a DBS certificate at either a basic or enhanced level can legally be requested. Where a position falls within the legal definition of a "regulated" activity, a check against the Barred Lists for Children and Adults will also be undertaken.

AIC will only ask potential candidates about convictions and cautions that are not protected in law. We actively promote equality of opportunity for all and encourage applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records and regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

AIC will only make an application for a criminal record check through the DBS service where the law indicates that this is proportionate and necessary to the position advertised, such as those roles which involve working with children and adults at risk in a regulated or unregulated activity. Where this is the case, application forms, job adverts and recruitment information will contain explicit reference to the fact that this position requires a criminal record check in the event that the applicant is offered the position.

At interview or during an appropriate discussion, AIC will ensure that an open conversation takes place with the applicant regarding any offences or other information that may be relevant to the position. Failure of the applicant to share any information that is relevant to the position sought may result in the withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary position.

AIC ensures that all those who are involved with the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. AIC will also ensure that they have received appropriate training and guidance in the relevant legislation and understand the importance of confidentiality throughout the recruitment process.

AIC will discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before a decision is made whether to continue with the offer of employment. A risk assessment will be conducted with the applicant and only in cases where the disclosure impacts upon the applicant's ability to safely hold the offer of employment will it be withdrawn. This is provided that the information revealed has been brought to AIC's attention prior to disclosure being received.

AIC makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the [code of practice](#), and makes a copy available on request.