

Shepshed Word of Life Church

Child Safeguarding Policy

Version 1.0 (March 2025)



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1.0 Objectives

This section states the objectives of this Child Safeguarding Policy, which all the following detailed policies and guidelines support. Whilst primarily in place for the safeguarding and benefit of children and young people, it also provides support for leaders, workers, parents and carers of children and young people, and for the church as a whole.

1.1 For Children and Young People in our care

- Ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure they are safe from all harm.
- Respecting them and valuing them.
- Listening to them and relating effectively with them.
- Treating them fairly and honestly.

1.2 For Leaders and Workers

- Taking all reasonable care to ensure that suitable individuals are appointed (whether paid or voluntary).
- Giving them the necessary guidance, support and training.
- Helping them to behave in a wise, appropriate and exemplary fashion.
- Supporting them in being above reproach when dealing with children and young people.

1.3 For Parents and Carers

- Demonstrating that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure workers and leaders have been assessed and checked both within the church, and independently of the church.
- Demonstrating to them that their children are safe and valued in our care.
- Encouraging and supporting them in their role.
- Making sure they are consulted and communicated with.

1.4 For the Church

- Maintaining and enhancing the witness of the church in the community.
- Promoting the church as a place and a people where everyone feels, and is, welcome, safe and valued.

1.5 Summary of Abbreviations Used in Document

- SH: Child Safeguarding Head
- SL: Child Safeguarding Lead
- CSS: Christian Safeguarding Services
- DBS: Disclosure and Barring Service
- PNC: Police National Computer
- DoH: Department of Health
- DfES: Department for Education and Schools

2.0 How the Policy Works

This section covers the principles by which the policy has been constructed, what it covers, and the church activities to which it applies. It also describes how it should be maintained and communicated and to whom. Note that the various roles referred to here are defined in the next section.

2.1 Principles

The policy has been written according to the following principles:

- Work within the law and guidelines from authorities.
- Have policies in place before you need them.
- Be clear and comprehensive.
- Be pragmatic and balanced.
- Be biblical.

2.2 Contents

The policy sets out policies and guidelines relating to the following areas:

- Appointment of leaders and workers for children's and young people's meetings.
- Recognising and responding to possible abuse or neglect.
- Supervising and running of meetings and activities.

2.3 Scope and Application

The policy applies to all meetings and activities involving children and young people up to the age of 18, held under the auspices or direction of Shepshed Word of Life Church, Shepshed, Leicestershire. Unless otherwise stated, the policies and guidelines apply to all of the following activities.

- a) Weekly Activities - Weekly meetings for children and young people within the church and community, including games, activities, bible teaching, and refreshments. These meetings have selected and regular Youth Leaders and Workers, plus occasional helpers and teachers. They take place on the church premises, except for occasional trips out.
 - Young People's Group (Secondary school age)
 - Mothers & Toddlers (Kangaroos) (ages 0-4, accompanied by a parent or carer).
- b) Sunday activities:
 - Crèche for babies and toddlers is available during Sunday morning worship (and other special meetings), at which parents can either stay themselves or agree if they are happy for others to care for their children. Workers are on a rota basis.
 - Sunday School for school age children has regular leaders and involves Bible teaching.
- c) Camps and residential events (ages 10-17).
- d) All other church meetings and activities that include children and young people, such as Sunday worship, fellowship lunches, trips out and home study groups.

2.4 Implementation and Amendments

- a) The policy should be reviewed periodically (ideally annually): this is the responsibility of the SL.
- b) The policy, and all subsequent changes to it, must be approved by the SH, the SL and the Officers of the Church.
- c) The policy, and all changes to it, must be communicated in detail to the Youth Leaders and Workers (as defined in section 3).
- d) All Youth Leaders and Workers must acknowledge in writing or by email that they have read and understood the policy summary and will implement it to the best of their ability.
- e) A copy of the policy should be located on the premises where the activity is taking place.
- f) Church Members should be made aware of the policy and how it may affect them, including any changes.
- g) Parents & carers must be made aware of the policy, and from where they may obtain a copy.
- h) A copy of this policy should be produced on request to anyone who asks, either within or outside the church.
- i) The policy should be reinforced on an annual basis by the SL before each new school year.

2.5 Other Documents & Sources

- a) This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Constitution of the Church and Health & Safety documents published by the Church.
- b) The policy has been reviewed in accordance with Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS) guidelines. This is an independent Christian organisation providing professional child safeguarding advice and support to churches and organisations. We are subscribed to this organisation. Please refer to their website for further information at <http://www.theccs.co.uk/>
- c) Leicestershire County Council – Child Protection and Safeguarding

3.0 Roles & Responsibilities

This section outlines the various roles and responsibilities of all those concerned with the safety and care of children and young people.

3.1 Child Safeguarding Head (SH)

The SH must be a trustee, normally the Pastor. Ultimately he is responsible for all aspects of child safeguarding at the church. Along with the other Elders, he will appoint a SL.

3.2 Child Safeguarding Lead (SL)

The SL must be a church member, but not an Elder or Deacon. Ideally they should not be a parent of a child actively involved in the young people's activities.

- ❖ The SL is the person who implements the safeguarding policy on behalf of the SH and is the person to whom all safeguarding concerns should be raised. They are responsible for making sure workers have up to date DBS checks and any necessary training.
- ❖ There must be no discussion between workers about concerns – the SL is not obliged to inform anybody. It is crucial that confidentiality is maintained, because this supports the legal process.

The role of the SL is to:

- a) Be familiar with the requirements of a church safeguarding policy, including the basics of the 'Safe from Harm' Home Office Guidelines, the Children's Act 1989, the Data Protection Act, and other relevant Governmental and European guidelines and legislation.
- b) Take responsibility for the development and implementation of the church's Child Safeguarding Policy, and to approve any changes.
- c) Ensure the church's Child Safeguarding policy is communicated and available.
- d) Ensure the church's Child Safeguarding policy is being followed.
- e) Verify the appointment of all Youth Leaders and Workers, having carried out the DBS checking.
- f) Be the person to whom any incidents, queries or concerns connected with child safeguarding are reported.
- g) Be involved with the SH in the decision-making process should an incident arise.
- h) Keep all records confidentially and securely, in line with Section 8.0.
- i) Provide support to the Safeguarding Lead where known offenders are in the congregation.

3.3 Elder(s)

The role of the Elder(s) is to:

- a) Exercise overall spiritual leadership over all the activities for children and young people.
- b) Appoint the SH (where there is no Pastor) and, along with the SH, appoint the SL.
- c) Assist with and approve the appointment of all Youth Leaders and Workers.
- d) Assist and support the SH and SL, in the event of incidents notified to them.
- e) Approve the Child Safeguarding Policy.
- f) Provide support where known offenders are in the congregation and ensure measures are put in place to protect children.

3.4 Deacons

The role of the deacons is to:

- a) Maintain the premises and grounds as a safe and secure environment for everyone.
- b) Deal promptly with any Health & Safety risks or issues.
- c) Maintain and implement the church's Health & Safety Policy.

3.5 Fire Officer

For all matters relating to fire safety, refer to the church's fire officer. All other Health & Safety matters are covered in 6.6.

3.6 Youth Leaders, Workers and Speakers

These fall into various categories as described below. These terms are referred to specifically elsewhere in the document.

Leader – The person in overall charge and leadership of a meeting/activity. Assists with the selection of Workers and is responsible for the equipment being safe & secure, and that the rooms used are set out safely and securely. The Leader must be a Church Member.

Worker – A person who works with children or has responsibility for children. This includes regular workers at the Young People's Group and Mothers & Toddlers and also includes those who have responsibility for children and young people in Sunday School or Crèche.

Speaker – A speaker or teacher who does not have responsibility for the children or young people, including those from outside the church.

3.7 Current Safeguarding Responsible Personnel

The names of the current SH and SL will be displayed on church notice boards. The names of the Elders and Deacons are either displayed on church notice boards or can be obtained from the SH or SL.

3.8 Current Youth Leaders & Workers

A list of the names of all the current youth leaders and workers is held by the SL, also noting who is qualified in first aid.

4.0 Appointment of Leaders & Workers

This section outlines the process for the selection, verification and appointment of Youth Leaders and Workers (as defined in the previous section)

4.1 Responsibilities

- a) Youth Leaders are selected and appointed by the Elder(s).
- b) Youth Workers are selected by the Youth Leader for that activity, assisted by and approved by the Elder(s).
- c) The SL must verify these appointments.

4.2 Appointment of New Leaders & Workers

The process for appointing new Youth Leaders and Workers will be as follows:-

(Note: this is not required for Speakers)

- a) The Elder(s) and (for Workers) the Leader of the activity, will meet with the individual to discuss their suitability for the role. Individuals will be selected from church members or from regular members of the congregation, such as students who can give a recommendation from their home church. If the individuals are not church members or regular members of the congregation, then the following procedures apply.
 - i. The individual will complete a Youth Leaders/Workers Information Form (Appendix A), including the nomination of two referees, only one of whom may be a church member and neither of whom should be members of their family or close relatives.
 - ii. The SL should take up the two references specified on the Information Form (see Appendix B & C for proposed letter and reference form).
- b) Criminal record checks will be taken up as a matter of course. See Section 4.3.
- c) The individual must sign their understanding and acceptance of the Child Safeguarding Policy before they can take up their role (Appendix A).
- d) There should then ensue a trial period of 3 months, following which the Elder(s) and the SL will review the individual.
- d) The SL must file all the above records away confidentially. All the above information is confidential and must comply with the Data Protection Act.

4.3 Criminal Checks

- a) All children and young people's leaders and workers must hold an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate, for which they will need to undergo a criminal record check. This was enforced from March 2005. If an individual already has a current Enhanced Disclosure Certificate, they will not need to be rechecked. The checks will be coordinated by the SL. The SH and SL will only need to be DBS checked if they work with children or young people.
- b) Applications for all checks will be via Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS) to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the government agency set up to administer the scheme. The application will be for an Enhanced Disclosure. Disclosures will reveal whether or not an individual has a criminal record and, if so, will give details. The Disclosure will form part of the basis on which decisions to appoint can be made. Having a criminal record, by itself, would not necessarily prevent a person from being appointed.
- c) A Disclosure is a document containing information held by the police and government departments. It enables organisations to check the background of job applicants (paid or voluntary) to ensure that they do not have a history that would make them unsuitable for the post they wish to fill. Disclosures provide details of a person's criminal record, including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the police national computer (PNC). If the position involves working with children, disclosures also contain details from lists held by the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department for Education & Skills (DfES), of those considered unsuitable for this type of work. Depending upon the level of Disclosure, it might also contain information held by local police forces.
- d) DBS checks will be implemented either online or by paper. If online, the SL will send an email to each individual containing a link and a password ^[1].
- e) Copies of the certificate will be forwarded to the applicant by the DBS.

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- f) All leaders and workers require an initial DBS check which should be renewed at least every 3 years.
- g) If a past conviction is revealed on the certificate, the SL may telephone the CSS if they would like to discuss the implications of the Disclosure. The CSS will have no prior knowledge of the situation, which is confidential. When ringing the CSS, the name of the individual concerned will not be, and must not be, disclosed.
- h) Note that the scheme covers England & Wales only.
- i) The Church is required to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice. Failure to follow the laid-down procedures could involve individuals or the church failing to fulfil obligations under Human Rights and Data Protection legislation, and possibly in some instances committing an offence.
- j) The DBS Code of Practice requires users of the service to treat all applicants for positions fairly, including those who have a criminal record and not to discriminate against the subject of the disclosure on the basis of information revealed. It also obliges the user organisation to have a written policy on the recruitment of such individuals where, of course, this does not conflict with the safety of children or vulnerable adults. This is in Appendix G.
- k) Another requirement in the Code of Practice is for user organisations to have a written policy on the correct handling and safekeeping of disclosure information. This is in Section 8.0.

[¹] : With respect to the online DBS checks, the SH and SL act as the Lead Recruiter and Recruiter respectively. The Recruiter is the person primarily responsible for assessing the child safeguarding aspects of workers with children and young people. The Lead Recruiter is the person who supports the Recruiter in their work.

5.0 Recognising & Responding to Abuse

This section defines abuse and then outlines how to recognise possible abuse. It then describes how to respond appropriately.

Abuse: Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

5.1 Recognising Possible Abuse

The following behavioural signs may be indications of child abuse, but they should not be taken in isolation. This includes possible abuse at home, at school, or within the church environment. These guidelines are taken from “CSS - Guidance to Churches - Protecting Children and Appointing Children’s Workers”.

Indicators of Possible Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures, etc. which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cutting/slashing/substance abuse.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegation made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- A child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.

Indicators of Possible Neglect

- Signs that the child is not receiving enough food for their growth rate.
- Exposure to situations, e.g. harmful substances or unsafe environments, which indicate a lack of supervision or care.
- Child who is left ‘home alone’ or in other circumstances without appropriate adult supervision.
- Untreated medical conditions.

Indicators of Possible Emotional Abuse

- Changes in mood and behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression/aggression.
- Nervousness/frozen watchfulness.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

The above signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

5.2 Responding to Possible Abuse

STAGE 1 - The Worker or Church Member

A worker / church attendee has a concern about the welfare of a child or the behaviour of an individual. The person who has the concern has a duty to:

RECOGNISE, RESPOND AND RECORD

Workers must report any safeguarding concerns as soon as possible to their activity leader, who should then report to the SL (or in their absence, the SH) who is nominated to act on behalf of the church in referring all allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

If the suspicions involve the leader, then the report should be made directly to the SL. If the suspicions involve the SL, then the report should be made to the SH or directly to the Elder(s). If the allegations involve both the SL and the SH, then the report should be made to the Elder(s). If those nominated above are unavailable, then either make direct contact with Social Services or contact CSS for advice. Suspicions will not be and must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is, of course, the right of any church member to make direct referrals to the child safeguarding agencies or seek advice from CSS, although we hope that members of the church will use the procedure described. If however, you feel that the SL (or SH) has not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is your duty and responsibility to contact the relevant organisation directly. If you have any concerns about your responsibility, then please approach the SL, or in their absence the SH. **Note: We all have a collective responsibility to ensure the safety of children connected to the church.**

If the activity leader and/or the Child Safeguarding Officer consider the incident to be significant, then a careful and accurate record of the event should be made as per 5.4. Section 5.3 gives details of how to react when a child wants to talk about abuse.

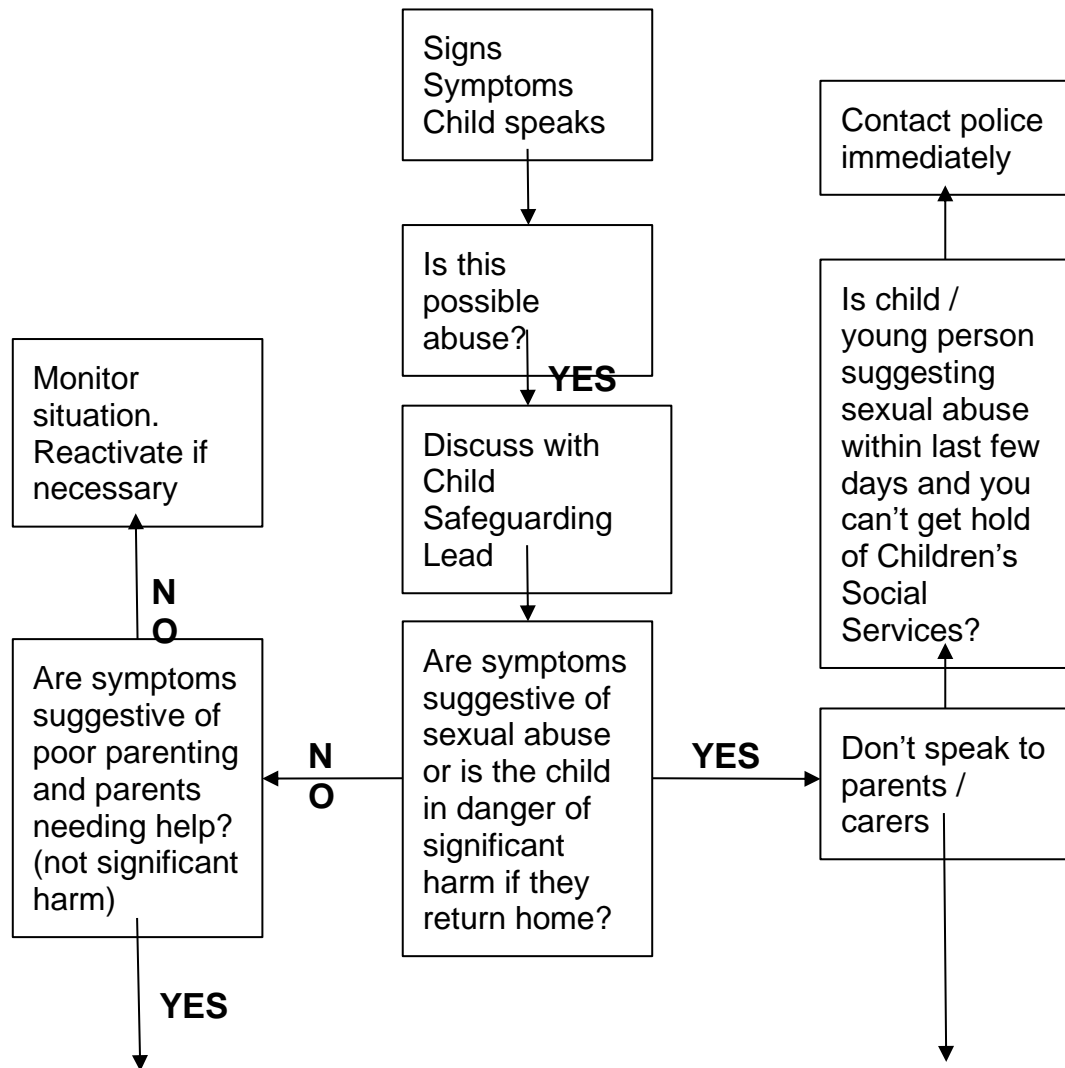
STAGE 2 - The Child Safeguarding Lead

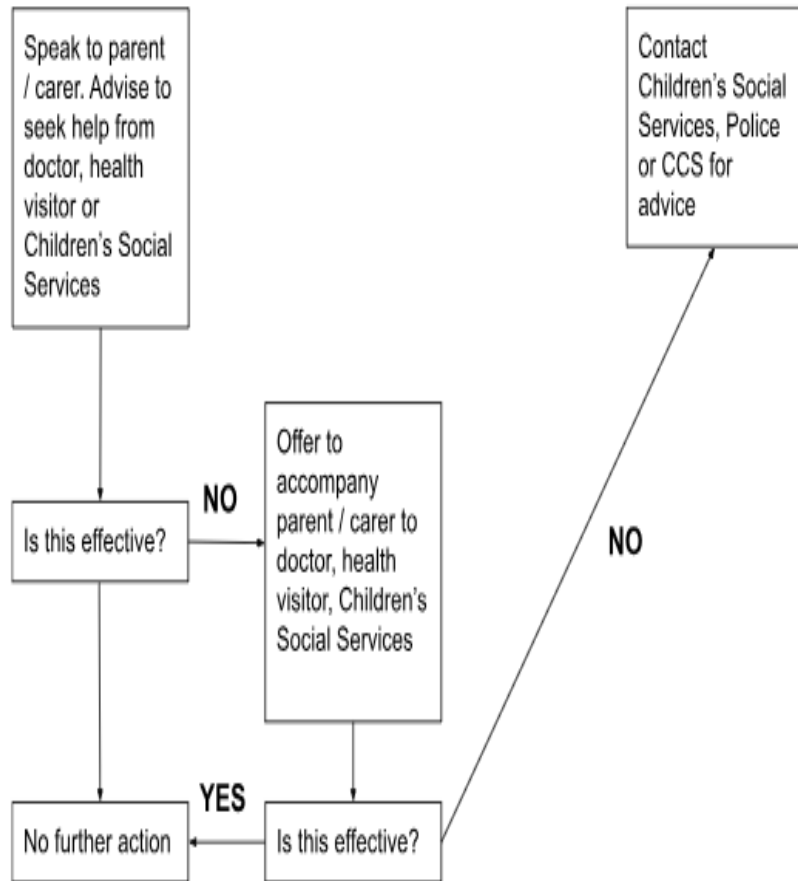
The Child Safeguarding Lead receives the report of a concern and then has a duty to:

REVIEW AND REPORT

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Any safeguarding concerns raised or reported to the SL should be reviewed, together with any relevant information, and a decision taken (often in liaison with others, if that is thought necessary) as to what action should follow. The flowchart below will help you make quick, but accurate decisions. Sections 5.6, 5.7 & 5.8 give further details of how to respond to 'Allegations of physical injury or neglect' (5.6), 'Allegations of sexual abuse'(5.7), and 'Allegations against workers or church members' (5.8).





Taken from Safe and Secure
- the manual

STAGE 3 - The Next Steps

After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken, the Child Safeguarding Lead together with the Elder(s) may have a duty to:

SUPPORT AND REPORT

Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns (this could be the church as a whole, but more specifically victims; alleged perpetrators; children at risk; other family members; church workers; the SL; the Elder(s)). Where formal referrals are made, reports may need to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Charity Commission.

5.3 How to react when a child wants to talk about abuse

- a) Never guarantee absolute confidentiality.
- b) Listen to the child, rather than question him or her directly. Offer him / her reassurance without making promises and take what the child says seriously.
- c) Allow the child to speak without interruption. Accept what is said – it is not your role to investigate or question. Do not overreact.
- d) Aim to alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgement.
- e) Advise that you will try to offer support, but that you must pass the information on. Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell. Record the discussion accurately, as soon as possible after the event. Use the child's words or explanations – do not translate into your own words in case you have misconstrued what the child was trying to say.
- f) Contact the SL for advice / guidance. The SL may then discuss the concern / suspicion with the relevant organisation, and, if appropriate, make a direct referral.
- g) If the SL is not available, or it is inappropriate to approach them, the worker / church member with the concern should speak to an Elder prior to making direct contact with the relevant organisation themselves.
- h) Record any discussions or actions taken within 24 hours.

5.4 Contact Details

Contact details for all the above are either displayed on church notice boards or can be obtained from the Child Safeguarding Lead. In addition, the following useful numbers are noted.

Child Safeguarding Lead	Anna Holmes	07910 138407
Child Safeguarding Head	Simon Clarke	07722 940263
Leicestershire Police (non-emergency)		101
Leicestershire Police (emergency)		999
Leicestershire County Social Service Department	First Response Children's duty	0116 305 0005
Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS)	http://www.thecss.co.uk/	0116 2184420 info@CSS.co.uk

5.5 Recording

Careful and accurate recording of events will be vital should abuse be detected or an allegation made. For this reason, all groups must keep records of who is at each meeting using a format similar to that in Appendix F. All significant incidents and accidents must be recorded using the form in Appendix E. Any conversation(s) with a child concerning potential or actual abuse must be carefully recorded using the guidelines in Section 5.3.

The written record should be made as soon as possible after the event; be legible, include the name, age and address of the child at risk; include the nature of any concerns and description of any bruising or injuries that have been noticed. Include an exact record of what the child at risk has said, using their own words where possible (see 5.3); include any action taken; be signed and dated; be kept secure and confidential (available only to the Child Safeguarding Lead and others responsible for safeguarding).

5.6 Allegations of physical injury or neglect

If a child has a clear physical injury or symptom of neglect, SL will:

- a) Refer the matter to Social Services immediately (or to CSS) if concerned about the child's safety, having consulted with the Elder(s) as necessary. If the injury and circumstances are such that it may not be safe for the child to return home, this must be discussed with Social Services and/or police to ensure safety measures are put into place for the child.
- b) Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The SL will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- c) In other circumstances, speak with the parent/guardian and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child.
- d) The doctor will then initiate further action, if necessary. If appropriate, the parent/guardian will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services Department.
- e) Where the parent/guardian is unwilling to seek help, then if appropriate, the Youth Leader or an Elder will offer to go with them. If they still fail to act, the SL should, in cases of real concern, refer the matter to Social Services with or without the agreement/cooperation of the parents.
- f) Where the SL is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then advice from CSS will be sought and followed, after consultation with the Elder(s) as necessary. CSS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future. Advice may also be sought from Social Services where there is any element of doubt.

5.7 Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the SL will:

- a) Contact CSS or the Social Services Safeguarding Coordinator for advice/support if there is any doubt or uncertainty, having consulted with the Elder(s) as necessary. If there is a clear allegation or evidence, then the matter will be referred to the Social Services Safeguarding Coordinator/Police Child Protection Team directly.
- b) The SL will not speak to the parent (or anyone else). If the allegation and circumstances are such that it may not be safe for the child to return home, this must be discussed with Social Services and/or police to ensure safety measures can be put into place for the child.
- c) If for any reason, the SL is unsure whether to follow the above, then advice from CSS will be sought and followed. CSS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
- d) Under no circumstances will the SL or any other worker attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the SL is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Social Services or the police.
- e) Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the SL, their absence should not delay referral to the Social Services or the police.

5.8 Allegations against workers or church members

Church workers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual accountability, holding each other to the highest standards of safeguarding practice. The following procedure should be followed:

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- a) Allegations should be directed to the activity Youth leader or to the SL.
- b) All allegations should be responded to. It is up to the discretion of the SL as to the further course of action taken: this may involve discussing the matter with the Elder(s), prior to continuing the investigation as per normal.
- c) When an allegation of abuse has been made do not approach the alleged perpetrator about it. Follow the usual safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report.**
- d) Where there is a serious allegation or suspicion against any worker or member (including the Elders), the Elder(s)* and the SL shall be immediately consulted. They shall come together straight away and, after prayer, consider the accusation being made. The Elder(s)* shall support the SL, but the ultimate decision as to the appropriate course of action belongs to the SL. This whole process should ideally take less than two hours from the allegation being made.
**Or other Elders (or other trustees where there are no other Elders) in the case of an allegation made against an Elder.*
- e) Where the allegation is adjudged by the SL to be of a serious nature, then the requirements of paragraphs 5.6 (Allegations of Physical Injury or neglect) or 5.7 (Allegations of sexual abuse) should be implemented.
- f) In the event of a serious allegation against a worker or church member, the Elder(s) will appoint one of their number to act as a designated support contact for that person, once liaison with the Police and/or Social Services has been established.
- g) The role of the support contact is to provide an objective and honest point of support, recognising that whether or not the allegation or suspicion is confirmed, there is a clear duty of pastoral care towards that person. However, it is vital that this does not, or is not perceived to, interfere with any ongoing investigation.
- h) Every effort should be made to ensure that the church's supportive role is recognised throughout by the statutory agencies, and that wherever possible the Elder(s) and the Child Safeguarding Officer are involved in the decision-making processes.
- i) Details of the allegations and those involved must be kept confidential.
- j) See also Section 5.2 'Responding to Possible Abuse'.

5.9 Previous Offenders in the church or congregation

- a) Where someone attending church is known to have previously abused children - whilst extending friendship and support to the individual, the Elder(s) and the SL will meet with the individual and discuss the boundaries that the person will be expected to keep.
- b) Details of allegations and those involved must be kept confidential.
- c) The boundaries that may be defined will include the following:-
 - i. Restrictions on where they may sit, talking with children and young people, use of toilets etc.
 - ii. An acceptance that parents can be notified of the offender's past.
 - iii. Limitations on activities they may engage in or attend - e.g. not going to the church when young people's and children's activities are taking place, not offering to help in children's activities.

5.10 Victims of Abuse in the church or congregation

- a) As a church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse and encouraging them in their faith.

6.0 Running Activities

This section provides advice and guidelines for running activities. Unless otherwise stated, it applies to all activities and meetings, as outlined in section 2.

6.1 Personal Records

- a) For all children and young people attending, regularly or otherwise, an accurate and up-to-date record book should be kept, including contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, and any relevant medical details which may be required. Details should be captured for all new children and young people attending an activity. This record book must either be kept in the church safe or stored safely in a leader's home. Personal information should only be kept as long as necessary. If a child leaves a group, any data connected with them should be deleted.
- b) A record must also be taken of children and young people whose parents have not provided permission for them to be photographed or videoed (see 6.11 below).

6.2 Recording who is present

For Weekly Activities and Camps/trips (as defined in Section 2.3 a & c)

- a) Leaders, workers, speakers and other adults in the building should record times of arrival and departure, and their reason for being in the building. This can exclude parents or carers simply dropping off or picking up children, and not staying. A suggested format is in Appendix F.
- b) For meetings in homes, a record must be kept of attendance, to be completed by the leader.
- c) A register for the children and young people should also be kept. A leader or worker must be designated to register the children as they arrive.
- d) On arrival, a note must be taken of any visible injuries or illnesses.
- e) On arrival, a note must be taken of any special collection arrangements. If a child leaves early, this must be noted, with the time they left and the reason why.
- f) For "off-site" activities, parents must be advised of the activity and location and the Consent form signed. See Appendix D.
- g) The completed consent forms should be retained for one month after the outing.
- h) Contact details for children and young people must be taken on outings.

6.3 Recording Incidents and Accidents

- a) Should an accident or incident occur, details must be recorded by an independent witness (i.e. one not involved in the incident). This includes who was involved, who witnessed it, and what happened. See Appendix E.
- b) These may include incidents and accidents resulting in injury, fights between children, and accusations against leaders or workers or other adults during an activity.
- c) The Leader should discuss any follow up action required with the Child Safeguarding Officer, who should make a record of these on the form (part two) and sign them off when they are completed. The SL keeps these forms.
- d) A log book which is kept in the safe is used to record minor incidents/observable injuries or other relevant events. This is to enable leaders to spot a pattern of behaviour or frequent injuries.

6.4 Guidelines for being with children & young people

- a) No person under the age of 16 should be left solely in charge of children or young people.
- b) It is important that the correct number of adults be present. The recommended adult/children ratios are:
 - Children 0 – 2 years: 1 adult for every 3 children
 - Children 2 – 3 years: 1 adult for every 4 children
 - Children 3 – 7 years: 1 adult for every 8 children
 - Children 8+ years: 1 adult for every 10 children
- c) Adults should avoid situations where they are alone with a child. This may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room. In a counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. If possible, leave the door open and ensure another adult is nearby and the young person should know they are there.
- d) Do not invite a child or young person to your home alone: invite a group or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parents know where the child is.
- e) If activities involve staying away overnight, e.g. camping, do not share sleeping accommodation with the children or young people.
- f) Code of Conduct: Leaders should be very vigilant regarding their sharing of information and communication with children and young people via mobile phone and social media - e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp. A method of communication should be agreed should there be a need to contact the children or young people to cancel or re-arrange a meeting - for example a text to the whole group. One to one communication should be avoided at all times.

6.5 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be carried out by the leaders of each group for general risk management of their activities and should be backed up with specific risk assessments for special activities such as trips out etc. Risk assessment forms will be available for this purpose.

6.6 Health & Safety

- a) Leaders and workers should be prepared and ready before admitting children into the building. It is recommended that leaders & workers should arrive at least 15 minutes before the activity begins.
- b) The Property Deacon has overall responsibility for ensuring that the premises are safe for activities. If you are aware of any danger regarding the building, advise the activity leader, who must in turn report this to the property deacon.
- c) Leaders and workers must ensure that all equipment is safe and appropriate for use. If you are aware of unsafe equipment, advise the activity leader immediately.
- d) The kitchen is to be out of bounds to children without the permission of an adult. Children should also be advised of other out of bounds areas and safety rules.
- e) Leaders and workers should be familiar with the fire equipment, evacuation routes and the location of the First Aid box. This information will be given by the leaders at the beginning of each new year. Leaders should be able to lead their groups out of the building safely in case of fire.

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- f) A qualified First Aider should be present at each activity. Leaders must notify the SL when any First Aid box needs replenishing. When taking trips, a First Aid kit must be carried in one of the vehicles.
- g) Children should be kept away from the car park unless escorted or supervised by an adult.
- h) Children should not leave the church premises unless accompanied by a parent or nominated guardian (unless permission has been given). If a child has to leave early, this should be logged (see section 6.2 above).
- i) Avoid overcrowding and crushes. Dangerous or excessively rough games must be avoided.
- j) Follow the church's written Health & Safety Guidelines.

6.7 Travelling

- a) When transporting children to and from trips by car, the leader should keep a record of who travelled with whom.
- b) Ideally, do not give lifts to children or young people on their own. If having a single child in the car is unavoidable (e.g. when dropping children home) they should sit in the back. Parents should keep their own children in the car wherever possible, so that they avoid being alone with other people's children.
- c) Children under 135cm tall and under 12, must, by law, use a child restraint – i.e. a booster seat or cushion, unless for a short distance for reason of unexpected necessity. If two occupied child restraints prevent fitment of a third, the child should sit in the rear and use an adult seat belt.
- d) Drivers are legally responsible for making sure that children under 14 years use seat belts or child restraints in cars. Those 14 years and above are responsible for themselves.

6.8 Taking care of Children & Young People

- a) Leaders and workers should treat all children with respect and dignity in attitude, language and actions. They must act appropriately in their relationships, both with the children and their fellow workers.
- b) All games and activities should be appropriate to the age group involved. The teaching given to the children should also be sensitive and age appropriate.
- c) Inappropriate or intrusive touching of any sort must be avoided. Inappropriate or excessive physical contact should be avoided. Inappropriate or adult language or humour must be avoided.
- d) Touching and physical contact should be avoided unless it is appropriate to the child's needs to show care when distressed and after asking the child that it is all right to do so.
- e) The level of personal care, e.g. toileting, must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst accepting that the child may have special needs.
- f) Try to ensure another adult is present if a child has soiled their underclothes and needs washing.
- g) Never indulge in favouritism or special relationships. There should be no scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting a child or young person.

6.9 Discipline & Social Media

- a) Lay down ground rules for the activity e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property. Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if they are not kept.
- b) Agree clear procedures for dealing with a breach of the ground rules, and make sure the children are aware of them. This may include various levels of exclusion from activities.
- c) NEVER smack or hit a child, although physical restraint for safety reasons is sometimes necessary.
- d) Discipline out of love and not anger. Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with a situation unwisely in your anger. Do not shout in anger or put down a child.
- e) Talk to a child away from the group, not publicly. Explain what they have done wrong, encourage remorse - leave them on a positive note.
- f) Never reject a child, just the behaviour. Encourage the child that you are interested in them, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour.
- g) Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We therefore need to ask ourselves, "Why is this child behaving like that?"
- h) Be a good role model and set a good example. Don't expect children to do what you don't do and vice versa.
- i) Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention and don't allow some children to take all your time and energy. Try to be fair in the allocation of your time and energy.
- j) Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other workers know what you have said, to avoid the child playing one worker off against another.
- k) Children should NOT be allowed to take photographs or videos of other children without their consent. The use of mobile phones for this purpose must be closely monitored.

6.10 Practical ideas for dealing with difficult behaviour.

- a) Encourage, praise and reward good behaviour.
- b) Change voice tone but try not to shout!
- c) Separate children who tend to be disruptive when together. These children are often friends, so give them a chance, perhaps warn them and only separate if they are disruptive.
- d) Have a child sit in front of you to reduce difficulties or get a worker to sit next to a child.
- e) Take a child aside and talk to them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging them in their strengths.
- f) Warn a child that you will speak to their parents and do so if necessary. We need to be wise, as speaking to parents may incur their wrath on the child, and a ban from attending.
- g) If a child's behaviour is constantly disruptive, seek advice and guidance from other leaders, workers and the parents of the child.
- h) Keep in regular communication with the parents of the child, respecting their role and knowledge of the child as parents/carers.

6.11 Photographs and Videos

- a) Photographs and videos of children of church members may be taken during church activities provided parental consent has been obtained.
- b) For other children and young people, we will need to seek permission each year for photographs and videos to be taken and used for personal use, display and publicity. Photos and videos of children are not to be taken or used where parents/guardians have not given consent.

7.0 Equal Opportunities

This church is committed to providing a vital, practical response to the needs of those we serve, regardless of race, religion, lifestyle, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor.

- a) As an organisation using the DBS Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the church undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- b) A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.
- c) Where a Disclosure is to form part of an appointment process, we encourage all candidates to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the recruiter and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.
- d) Unless the nature of the position allows Shepshed Word of Life Church to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- e) We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of circumstances of offences. We will also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- f) We ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of a position
- g) We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing the opportunity of a position.
- h) Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from a position. This will depend upon the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

8.0 Control of Disclosures and Disclosure of Information

- a) General Principles. As an organisation using the DBS Disclosure service to help assess the suitability of applicants for a position of trust, the church complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention, and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to all those who wish to see it on request.
- b) Storage and access. Disclosure information is always kept separately and securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. At the present time all records are stored electronically.
- c) Handling. In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and we recognise that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.
- d) Usage. Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.
- e) Retention. Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep Disclosure information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the CSS Disclosure Unit, who in turn will discuss this with the CRB and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights individual subject access requirements before doing so. Throughout this time the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.
- f) Disposal. Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any Disclosure information is immediately suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the disclosure or any copy or representation of the disclosure. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of the issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.
- g) Our relationship with CSS as an umbrella organisation. We accept that the CSS Disclosure Unit as our umbrella organisation has a responsibility to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that we comply with all the requirements made upon us in the DBS Code of Practice, this and other policy statements, and in other DBS procedures and processes. We undertake to keep CSS informed of any changes in our organisation, personnel or practices which could materially affect our ability to work within these expectations.

9.0 Versions

This Policy should be reviewed annually.

Version	Date	Authors / Reviewers	Status/Amendments
0.2	June 2010	Ann Goddard, David Bottomley, Simon Clarke Based on v1.3 of Shepshed Evangelical Free Church Child Protection Policy, with amendments proposed by Roger Hitchings and other general updates	Initial Draft
0.2	Aug 2012	Updated for new Youth Workers – David Bottomley	Draft
0.3	March 2013	Changed name of Safeguarding Lead to Anna Holmes – David Bottomley	Draft
0.4	June 2013	Changes agreed by Simon Clarke, Anna Holmes and David Bottomley on 10 th June	Draft
0.5	Sept 2013	Further updates made by Anna, including reference to DBS	Draft
0.6	Sept 2014	Further updates, the majority agreed by Elders Sept. 2014	Draft
0.7	Feb 2017	Further changes proposed by Anna & Alison	Agreed by Elders, Nov 2016
0.8	Apr 2019	Changes based on Simon Clarke's meeting with Anna Holmes on Monday 29th October 2018.	Agreed by Elders, April 16th 2019
0.9	Mar 2023	Updated with various changes	Agreed by Elders 07-3-23
1.0	Mar 2025	DBS to be renewed at least every 3 years	Agreed by Officers March 2025

Appendix A – Youth Workers Information Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Shepshed Word of Life Church

Information about Leaders and Workers with Children and Young People

The church is responsible for the acceptance and work of its workers with children and young people. Every prospective leader and worker should complete this form, which will be retained by the Child Safeguarding Lead. It is confidential and will be seen only by the Elder(s), and (for workers), the leader of the activity

Full Name

Maiden or Former Name

Date of Birth

Place of Birth

Home Address

Post Code

Telephone (Day): (Evening)

How long have you lived at the above address?

If less than twelve months, please give your previous address

Previous Church(es) attended regularly (with approx. dates)

Do you suffer, or have you suffered from any illness which may directly affect your work with young children, young people or vulnerable adults?

Yes / No (please circle). If 'yes', please give details

Please give details of any relevant qualifications or training.

Do you hold a driving licence? Yes / No (please circle)

Are you a qualified First Aider? Yes /No (please circle)

Please give the name, address, telephone number and position of 2 people who know you well, at least one of whom must not be a member of this church or a relative.

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1.

2.

DECLARATION *

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or are at present the subject of criminal investigations? (NB. Disclosure of an offence may not prohibit appointment).

Yes / No (please circle)

If 'Yes' what was the nature of the offence?

Date of offence

Have you ever been involved in court proceedings concerning a child for whom you have parental responsibility?

Yes / No (please circle)

If 'Yes' please give details

I confirm that I have read and understood the Church's Child Safeguarding Policy, and will endeavour to carry out the policy to the best of my ability. I agree to police checks being undertaken. I confirm that the submitted information is correct and complete.

Signed

Date

All convictions must be disclosed, as the provision of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply.

* You are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the Act and in the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children and/or young people within the church.

Appendix B – Youth Workers Reference Letter

Shepshed Word of Life Church

Address
Shepshed
Leicestershire
LE12 9xx
Date

Address

Dear *(name)*

Application to be a Worker with Children and Young People

The above named person has applied to work with children and young people and has given your name as a referee. I would be most grateful if you answer the questions on the enclosed form about the applicant based on your knowledge of *him/her* and return it in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

(include some details of the activity and the responsibility of the individual)

In responding, please bear in mind the responsibility the church carries in ensuring that the children and young people we work with come to no harm of a physical, emotional or sexual nature. Accordingly please be as honest and impartial as you can.

Yours sincerely,

Church Safeguarding Lead

Appendix C – Youth Workers Reference Form

Reference Form for Worker with Children and Young People

Name of Applicant -

1. What is your relationship with the applicant?
2. How long have you known *him/her*?
3. Do you have any reason to believe that the applicant should not work with children or young people? If “yes” please give details.
4. As far as you know, is the applicant honest and reliable? If “no” please give details.
5. Do you have any other information, which you feel is relevant?

Signed

Please Print Name

Date

Address

Telephone Number

Appendix D – Outing Consent Form

Shepshed Word of Life Church Consent Form

Activity:

Proposed visit/activity:

Date:

Departure time/place:

Return time/place:

Cost where applicable: (Please make cheques payable to Shepshed Word of Life Church):

Transport arrangements:

Other info:

.....

REPLY SLIP

Full name of child:

Contact name and phone number for emergencies: Day:

Evening:

Please advise any medical condition/disability that may be affected by this activity:

Please provide a suitable child restraint for children under 12 and under 135cm.

I have read the above information and give permission for

.....

to attend/take part in this activity. I also give consent for any medical treatment that may be necessary in the event of an emergency.

I enclose a cheque/cash to the sum of £

Signed (parent/guardian).....

Appendix E – Accident and Incident Form

PART ONE: INCIDENT DETAILS: To be completed immediately after any significant incident or accident by an independent witness

Date of incident		Time	
Duration		Location	
Those Involved			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Address</i>	
Witnesses			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Address</i>	
Description of the incident/accident			
Name of Meeting		Leader at time	
Other leaders/workers/adults present			
Have you retained any defective equipment?	Yes	No	None involved
Where is it being kept?		By whom?	
Are the premises still safe for your meeting to use?	Yes	No	
Completed by		Signature	
Date		Time	

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PART TWO: FOLLOW UP

The meeting leader should now discuss with the Child Safeguarding Lead what follow up action is necessary, who should then complete this section. The Safeguarding Lead should keep the form.

Action Required	By whom	Date Completed
Agreed		
DSO. : Name		Signature
Leader : Name		Signature
Date		Time
All completed		
DSO. : Name		Signature
Leader		Signature
Date		Time

Action required must be in line with the church Child Safeguarding Policy.

Appendix G – Policy for the Use of Criminal Records Information

On behalf of the church we confirm our commitment to recruit all staff and volunteers in accordance with “Safe from Harm” principles, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) “Code of Practice” and legislative requirements. In particular, the church has adopted a policy on the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of disclosure information in accordance with the DBS code of Practice.

