



Safeguarding Policy

River of Life Church

River of Life Church, Christian Life Centre, 2 Carr Road, Felixstowe, IP11 2FS

An Elim Network Church

ROL Safeguarding Policy

Last reviewed: 30.07.25 Next Review: 30.07.26 {1 years}



Safeguarding Policy

SECTION 1

Details of the organisation

River of Life Church
Christian Life Centre
2 Carr Road
FELIXSTOWE
Suffolk
IP11 2FS

Telephone: 01394 273700

Email Address: mail@riveroflifechurch.net

Member of: The Evangelical Alliance

Charity Number: 1092998

Insurance Company: (Public Liability) Ansvar Insurance Company Limited

Description of the organisation and activities where children or adults with care and support needs may be present

River of Life Church is open to the public for worship and various activities.

River of Life Kids is divided into age groups to encourage young people in worship, Bible reading, Bible teaching and prayer. Occasionally, youngsters may be supported to attend Christian events, participate in mission work, which will include nights away from home.

Parent and Baby Room is a provided space for parents with babies/toddlers during the service

Toddlers provides an opportunity for parents and babies and toddlers to meet during the week. Parents/carers are entirely responsible at all times for the children in their care.

Social and "Fun" Events. River of Life Church will, from time to time, host social and recreational events for Church members and guests.

Life Groups meet weekly in people's homes for fellowship, worship, Bible study and prayer. The leaders are aware of safeguarding protocols and who to contact if the need arises.

Our Commitment

The Church Leadership, recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults with care and support needs. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults with care and support needs can be victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have the right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child". As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service, Thirtyone:eight, formerly CCPAS.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Church Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- The Church Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied to other organisations.

SECTION 2

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

- 1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

Safeguarding awareness

The Church Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis through Thirtyone:eight.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. They should follow the procedures set out below:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to **Ray Harvey** (the Church Safeguarding Officer), telephone **07759 326133** who is nominated by the Church Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Church Safeguarding Officer or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Church Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to **Sally Verow** (Deputy Safeguarding Officer), telephone - **07837 250438**.
- In the absence of both the Church Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy Safeguarding Officer or if the suspicions implicate both the Church Safeguarding Officer and the Deputy Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made in the first instance to **Rob Payne** (Senior Leader), telephone **07984 708035** and, failing that, to the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service, Thirtyone:eight, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone **0845 120 4550**. Alternatively contact Suffolk County Council, Customer First, telephone **0808 800 4005** (your call will be diverted out of hours) or Suffolk Police on **999** if urgent or else **01473 613500**.
- The Safeguarding Officer/Deputy/Senior Leader may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern.
- Where the concern is about a child, the Church Safeguarding Officer should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection, the Church Safeguarding Officer should contact Adult Social Services or take advice from Thirtyone:eight as above.
- Where required, the Church Safeguarding Officer should then immediately inform the insurance company: **Ansvar Insurance Company Limited**.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Church Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the Church Safeguarding Officer, Deputy or

Senior Leader - Pastor Rob Payne Tel 07984 708035 or

should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from
Thirtyone:eight. Or Elim Safeguarding Coordinator Grace Saalmans
Tel 01684 588917

- The Church Leadership will support the Church Safeguarding Officer/Deputy in their roles, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight, although the Church Leadership hope that members of this place of worship will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Church Safeguarding Officer/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Church Safeguarding Officer/Deputy as to the appropriateness of the referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Church Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Church Safeguarding Officer/Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

DETAILED PROCEDURES WHERE THERE IS CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD:

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Church Safeguarding Officer or Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (eg poor parenting), encourage parent/carers to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carers is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Social Services direct for advice.

- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Social Services.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Church Safeguarding Officer or Deputy will:

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

The following procedure will be followed where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OR HARM INCLUDING: PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, ORGANISATIONAL, FINANCIAL, DISCRIMINATORY, NEGLECT, SELF-NEGLECT, FORCED MARRIAGE, MODERN SLAVERY, DOMESTIC ABUSE

If there is concern about any of the *above* the Church Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who *have* responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is concern regarding spiritual abuse the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support.
- Contact Thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN/young PEOPLE

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff)

whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Church Safeguarding Officer, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures, will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Designated Officer (SA) formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH ADULTS WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Refer to Adult Services.

SECTION 3

Safer Recruitment

The Church Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description/person specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form.
- Those short-listed have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- A Disclosure and Barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified.
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period.
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns.

Management of Workers - Codes of conduct

As a Leadership, we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a Code of Conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

SECTION 4

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Church Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

Working with offenders

When someone attending this place of worship is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs the Church Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

SECTION 5

Practice Guidelines

As a place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusations.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers, we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached/will be developed.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines with regard to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets Thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This Safeguarding Policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Approved by the Leadership Team on 7 August 2011

Reviewed and amended by Steve Barber (Trustee) on 30 July 2012, 24 January 2013, 23 June 2013 and 20 June 2014.

Reviewed and amended by Mike Trower (Trustee) on 15 January 2015.

Reviewed and amended by Trevor Harris (Trustee) on 7 July 2015, 24 March 2017, 26 April 2018, 17th May 2019

Reviewed and amended by Ray Harvey (Trustee) 19 March 2024

Reviewed and amended by Ray Harvey (Trustee 30th July 2025

Signed by: 

Ray Harvey (Trustee)

Appendix 1

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership Team of Elders and Trustees at River of Life Church recognises the importance of its ministry/work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

We are committed to creating and enabling a healthy culture in order to minimise any coercion and control within our church.

The following statement was agreed by the Leadership on 7 August 2011.

This place of worship is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional, abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of this place of worship unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe in the necessity of creating a healthy culture in our church, where the value of all people is recognised and challenges are responded to appropriately.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the Church Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officer in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children or adults with care and support needs.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship.
- Supporting parents and families.
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people.
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has the lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.

- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or an adult with care and support needs then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of worship:-

Ray Harvey
Sally Verow
Rob Payne

Church Safeguarding Officer
Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator
Senior Leader

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from the Church Office.

Approved by the Leadership Team on 7 August 2011

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Reviewed and amended by Ray Harvey (Trustee) 19 March 2024

Reviewed and amended by Ray Harvey (Trustee) 30th July 2025

Signed by: 

Ray Harvey (Trustee)

This document is based on a Model Safeguarding Policy supplied by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service Thirtyone:eight. This Policy must not be copied by other churches/organisations without the written agreement of Thirtyone:eight.