



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

The Forge Community Church
The Old Chapel, Forward Green, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 5HP Tel: 01449 710437
Email: safeguarding@forgechurch.com

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SECTION 1: The Safeguarding Policy

CHURCH DETAILS

Name: The Forge Community Church (hereafter, "the Church")

Registered Office Address: The Forge Community Church Office, The Old Chapel
Forward Green
Stowmarket
Suffolk IP14 5HP

Tel Number: 01449 710437

Email address: info@forgechurch.com

Charity Number: 1101080

Company Number: 4964286

Insurance Company: AVIVA Insurance

Location of Sunday services:

Debenham Sports & Leisure Centre Gracechurch Street
Debenham
Stowmarket
Suffolk IP14 6BL

The Forge Community Church meets Debenham, Suffolk. Adults, youth and children meet each Sunday. The Forge has a number of kids & youth activities which run during the week at different locations. The safeguarding policy covers all aspects of our work with children and young people at the above three locations and at other venues and locations.

OUR COMMITMENT

The Board of Directors and Staff of the Forge Community Church recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the 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 a right to be protected from "all

forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership team 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 should be read in conjunction with:

- Staff Handbook
- Health & Safety Policy
- Detached, lone worker and one to one guidance policies.

It has been written in reference to:

- The Children Act 2004 – Sections 10, 11, 12 and 13, 1989 – Sections 17 and 47
- The ten safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight, the independent Christian safeguarding charity.
- Working together to safeguard Children – July 2018
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Prevent Strategy 2011
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (2022 Update)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
- The Munro Review 2011 and 2012
- UK Council for Internet Safety: Online safety guidance for practitioners – February 2019
- NSPCC Safeguarding Standards and Guidance – 2017
- Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work with

Children or Those who are in a Position of Trust, Suffolk Safeguarding Board The Forge 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 (paid and voluntary) and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Support the Safeguarding Team in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.

This document is reviewed annually and formally adopted by the Board of Directors. All workers (paid and voluntary) are required to read this policy annually and sign to say it has been read and understood.

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 that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that the 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 vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect. This responsibility is more clearly outlined and dealt with within the Forge Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children.
- 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 (paid and voluntary) are trained appropriately and adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.

- Following organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- 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 those in the Forge Community Church affected by abuse.

We recognise:

- Suffolk Social Care Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.
- 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 of 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 partner agencies in the relevant country.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you have any concerns for a child then speak to one of the following safeguarding co-ordinators for this organisation.

Names & Addresses of Safeguarding Co-ordinators and other agencies

Forge Community Church Safeguarding Team:

Tim Warnock (Youth Director/ASL) 16 Firecrest Drive Stowmarket Suffolk IP14 5FL Tel: 07717 496190	Lisa Sparkes (Chair of Safeguarding Team) C/O The Forge Office The Old Chapel, Forward Green, Stowmarket, IP14 5HP	Luke Allard C/O The Forge Office The Old Chapel, Forward Green, Stowmarket, IP14 5HP
Vulnerable Adults (Position Vacant)	Michelle Ling (DBS Administrator) C/O The Forge Office The Old Chapel, Forward Green, Stowmarket, IP14 5HP	Mike Walsh (Director Responsible for Safeguarding) C/O The Forge Office The Old Chapel, Forward Green, Stowmarket, IP14 5HP

Thirtyone:eight (Independent charity that works with churches nationally to assist with safeguarding needs)

PO Box 133, SWANLEY, Kent BR8 7UQ

Tel: 0303 003 1111

Email: info@thirtyoneeight.org

Suffolk County Council Safeguarding Children Board:

Customer Service Direct PO Box 771

Needham Market Ipswich IP6 8WB

Tel: 0808 800 4005 during normal working hours www.onesuffolk.co.uk/scb Outside normal office hours phone is automatically diverted.

Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)

Local Designated Officers can be contacted via email on LADO@suffolk.gov.uk or 0300 123 2044

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Professional Consultation Line: 0345 606 1499

Police Station Contact:

Tel: 101 and ask for Police Child Protection Team or in an emergency 999

Charity Commission

102 Petty France

Westminster

LONDON SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 0300 066 9197 www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership

www.suffolkscb.org.uk

08456 066067

NSPCC Helpline

www.nspcc.org.uk

0808 800 5000

Section 2: Prevention

Safer Recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all paid 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
- A member of the interview panel for paid staff to be 'Safer Recruitment' trained.

Steve Fenning (senior leader) and Michelle Ling (administrator) have undergone this training.

- Where appropriate, safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- Gaps in employment history to be identified, and reasons for these gaps verified
- A Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check has been completed (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 and induction 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(s) and knows how to report concerns.

As a church, The Forge also utilises the skills of volunteers. Not all its volunteer posts will require the applicant to complete an application form or be given a role profile, however, where that is appropriate these steps will be taken. All the volunteers who work with children and young people will be required to read the Safeguarding Children policy, complete the application forms contained within and attend a training session. References will be taken up and an enhanced DBS disclosure applied for. Each volunteer will be given training, delivered by an

appropriate adult e.g. Children's or Youth Leader, DSL or external trainer. Enhanced DBS checks are completed every 3 years as a matter of good practice.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

We are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers (paid and voluntary) have been issued with a code of conduct towards children & young people. The Forge undertakes to follow the principles found within 'Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work with Children or Those who are in a Position of Trust' by the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership. It is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues. In reference to the 2022 updated Sexual Offences Act 2003, all staff and volunteers will be made aware that it is a criminal offence for those within a religious setting to abuse a position of trust.

Section 3: Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children and young people 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 accusation.

Working in Partnership – local & global

The Forge Community Church is committed to working in partnership with other local and global organisations. Whilst undertaking work overseas, we acknowledge, that due to differing cultural values, safeguarding policies and procedures can vary. We make every effort to work alongside local organisations in the following ways:

- Use the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as the basis for safeguarding children.
- Distinguish clearly between children in need of protection due to poverty, conflict or crisis, and specific acts of maltreatment towards children.
- Ensure all trip participants sign a code of conduct to adhere to appropriate and proper behaviour based on local sensitivities.
- Resolve through a process of dialogue and discussion, any differences between what is acceptable behaviour locally, and what is acceptable under this safeguarding policy.
- Discuss with the local organisation a clear mechanism for evaluating the existence and effectiveness of local child welfare/judicial infrastructure, and a clear process for deciding whether or not to work with it.
- When mission personnel are seconded to a local partner, we make them aware of the local partner's safeguarding policy (if a safeguarding policy does not exist locally, we will work with the local partner to assist in developing a policy).
- Ensuring that there is a partnership agreement between us and the local organisation that states clearly what the reporting mechanisms are to be used both locally and in the UK.

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

Section 4: Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation

Abuse is defined as a form of maltreatment of a child. 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Specific Types of Concern:

4.1 Domestic Incidents/Abuse

The Government defines domestic abuse as;

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”

The legal definition of “significant harm” to children was extended in January 2005 to include harm suffered from seeing or knowing of the abuse of another, particularly in the home. This was reinforced by the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

A referral must be made direct to Customer First / Children’s Social Care if it seems reasonable to suspect that:

1. a) a child sees, hears, experiences or is otherwise aware of domestic abuse – i.e. that domestic abuse is part of their experience of family life. This applies regardless of whether they actually witness any particular event or are physically harmed, and
2. b) the non-abusing parent will not be able – for whatever reason – to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their child without significant professional assistance and support.

It needs to be noted that the child themselves may be the perpetrator of domestic violence resulting in their own and other’s safety being in question.

Referrals should be made with the agreement of a parent unless the child’s best interests are not served by seeking or obtaining consent. Non-consent should not be a barrier to referral if there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child may suffer significant harm or otherwise not have significant needs met.

A disclosure or allegation by a victim is not a pre-requisite for referral of concerns regarding a child. Concern about the effects of domestic abuse on a child may be triggered in other ways – for example, by hidden or inadequately explained injuries to a parent or carer, or damage to the home or personal property, or by the

behaviour of parents, or concerns expressed by the child, or concerns about the child's wellbeing.

Child protection referrals where the primary concern relates to a domestic abuse incident may include:

Verbal Altercation

- Children not present but usually part of the household
- Children in house but not witness to the incident
- Children present
- Children present and victim of abusive behaviour Damage to Property
- Children not present but usually in the household
- Children present but not witness to the incident
- Children present Physical Assault
- Children not present but usually part of the household
- Children in house but not witness to the incident
- Children present and witness the incident
- Children present and a victim of assault

Sexual Assault

- Children not present but usually part of the household
- Children in house but not witness to the incident
- Children present and witness to the incident
- Children present and a victim of sexual abuse

4.2 Female Genital Mutilation

'Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003 ("the 2003 Act"). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.'

A range of support materials can be found at www.gov.uk/dh/fgm, and some of the risk factors and signs of potential FGM cases are included in Appendix 1..

Section 5B of the 2003 Act places a statutory duty upon regulated health and social care professionals and teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police.

Staff and volunteers at The Forge should follow the normal safeguarding procedures

for any safeguarding concerns in relation to FGM and discuss the case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to agree an appropriate a course of action.

4.3 Preventing Radicalisation

From 1st July 2015, professionals have a duty under the *Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015* to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism - The Prevent duty. Within a childcare context these requirements include;

- Childcare providers are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including the support of extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology.
- The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements.
- The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Childcare providers must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the Internet under our care.

Any concerns must be referred to Designated Safeguarding Lead. Referrals are then made, when it is appropriate, to the **Channel** programme, which focuses on providing support, at an early stage, to people identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

The Department for Education has set up a telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) to enable people to raise concerns directly. Concerns can also be raised by email to counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Both the DSL and the ASL should undergo regular Prevent training.

4.4 On-line safety

Children and Young people can be exploited and suffer bullying through their use of modern technology such as the internet, mobile phones, online gaming and social networking sites.

Where it is suspected that a young person is at risk from abuse on the internet or cyber bullying, we will report our concerns via our normal safeguarding procedures. It is best practise that children and young people are supervised when accessing the internet whilst in our care.

Be aware that young people may take or share photos of their private body parts; these photos would likely, in a legal context, be considered to be indecent images of children. If you are aware of indecent images of a child, do not print, forward,

save or share these images (this is illegal); report concerns immediately to your designated safeguarding lead.

The following agencies can provide advice and support in relation to on-line safety issues:

- Professionals Online Safety Helpline – Advice and support for professionals working with children with any online safety issues children in their care may face – 0344 381 4772 or helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- NSPCC helpline – Advice and support for anyone who is worried about a child or needs information about child protection – 0808 800 5000
- CEOP is a law enforcement agency and is here to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse over the internet. You can report concerns or encourage others to report their concerns via the following link - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

4.5 County Lines

‘County Lines’ and the supply of drugs is effectively a gang of at least three people who have established a drug market in a rural town, with origins to an urban city location. For Suffolk, it is likely to be a gang from London with them moving into local towns, predominantly Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft to transport/sell class A drugs (specifically crack cocaine and heroin). Gangs typically use vulnerable young people to deliver drugs to customers and this can include deception, intimidation, violence, and/or grooming. The nature of this activity causes disputes with other gang members or local drug dealers for the custom and hence many violent incidents occur because of this.

Where it is suspected that a young person is involved or at risk from County Lines involvement, we will report our concerns to the appropriate agency via our safeguarding procedures. Professionals working with young people and children can contact the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) consultation line on 0345 606 1499.

The Leadership will also ensure that children 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.

4.6 Mental Health

The Forge Community Church has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of those that attend the Church. Where it is identified that a young person has a mental health concern that is also a safeguarding concern this should be reported to the DSL. Appropriate support to be put in place to protect the young person and prevent concerns from escalating.

SEE APPENDIX 1 FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RECOGNISING ABUSE.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The steps below should be followed:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to one of the safeguarding co-ordinators who are nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities. Everyone has a duty to report a concern or allegation regardless of whether you think it has already been reported or not.
- Once an allegation of abuse has been reported, a member of the safeguarding team will meet with reciprocate of allegation to ensure correct support is in place.
- If the suspicions implicate one the Safeguarding Co-ordinators, the initial report should be made to one of the other named co-ordinators.
- The member of the safeguarding team receiving that information will discuss the referral with another member of the team, whom they are not related to. Unless emergency action needs to take place and then this conversation will happen afterwards.
- If the suspicions implicate all the Safeguarding Co-ordinators, or none are contactable then the report should be made to Ali Colchester, Director responsible for safeguarding or direct to Customer First or the MASH.
- Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) should contact Customer First.
- Where required, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should then inform the Directors. Directors are required to report a 'Serious Incident' to the Charity Commission. Names and contact details of the Directors can be found on the Forge website www.forgechurch.com. Advice would need to be sought from the Charity Commission as to whether, or not, the Forge insurance company would need to be informed and when.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in the locked designated filing cabinet at The Forge headquarters.

- To ensure that procedures have been followed at least one other member of the safeguarding team to be notified. Information to be shared with safeguarding committee as appropriate.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies, although the Leadership hope that members of the Forge Community Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) have not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.
- The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator(s) 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.
- If the child is under 18 contact to be made with parents if appropriate and safe to do so.
- The Forge will keep the alleged person up to date and support that person as required, including monitoring if necessary.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Contact Customer First (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.
- After speaking to Customer First decide if safe and appropriate to contact the parents
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- In the case of a serious incident or a crime being committed contact the police immediately.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm. Record that a conversation has been had.

- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Customer First direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight, the MASH or Customer First.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a person who works with children and young people also known as a person in a position of trust, are dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child or young person, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

The framework for managing cases set out in this procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. It also applies to cases of allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. This may be due to concerns about the persons conduct in their personal or professional life that might indicate their unsuitability to work with children. It should be used in respect of all allegations that are consistent with the guidance in Working Together i.e. cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

In compliance with the Local Safeguarding Board's Allegations Management guidance, the following procedures will be followed;

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer of The Forge, the allegation must be reported immediately, at least within one working day, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the allegation is against the Designated Safeguarding Lead, then the allegation must be reported to the Director responsible for Safeguarding. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Director responsible for Safeguarding) must then report the allegation to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) on the same day.

LADO's details – 0300 123 2044 / Complete a LADO Referral form and send this to LADO@suffolk.gov.uk.

Initial consideration

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will discuss the matter with The Forge Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director responsible for Safeguarding) and, where necessary, obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child or young person is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the LADO should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion should also involve The Forge.

Action following initial consideration

Where the initial evaluation decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, it is dealt with by The Forge Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director responsible for Safeguarding). In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be instituted within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days. Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Director responsible for Safeguarding) will discuss who will undertake that investigation with the LADO. In some settings and circumstances, it may be appropriate for the disciplinary investigation to be conducted by a person who is independent of The Forge or the person's line manager to ensure objectivity. In any case, the investigating officer should aim to provide a report to The Forge within 10 working days. On receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Director responsible for Safeguarding) should decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed within two working days, and if a hearing is needed it should be held within 15 working days.

Suspension

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be managed and evaluated. The evaluation will be in respect of the child/ren or young person/s involved in the allegation and any other child/ren in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases, it will require consideration to be given to the use of suspension for the person involved in the allegation. This may be until the matter is resolved. A member of staff or volunteer must not be automatically suspended without careful thought and consideration of the circumstances of the allegation. In making the decision, the Director responsible for Safeguarding must consider whether the person should be suspended from contact with children for the duration of the investigation, or until resolution has been reached. In any case,

alternatives to suspension should be explored and advice sought from the LADO. If the allegation has been referred and a strategy meeting is to be convened, it will be a task of the strategy meeting to consider the facts of the allegation, and although a senior manager of the organisation cannot be directed to suspend, they will be supported in making the decision. This should be done after the views of the designated senior named officer from the police and Area Safeguarding Manager have been canvassed.

If the allegation is reported to a Forge staff member or volunteer against a member of staff or volunteer of another organisation or agency, then The Forge member of staff or volunteer should consult with The Forge Designated Safeguarding Lead and agree who should contact the LADO. However, if any delay in this procedure is likely to put a young person at risk of significant harm then The Forge member of staff or volunteer should contact the LADO directly.

Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will implement their safeguarding functions in a way that ensures that the child or young person is safeguarded from harm and promotes their welfare. In the case of allegations made against The Forge member of staff or volunteer, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the LADO and must follow the organisations procedures as identified above. In cases of actual or suspected abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the LADO will ensure the Police and/or other statutory bodies like Social Services are informed. The victim must be protected from further abuse while the Police / external agencies conduct their own investigation.

Any information held either electronically or in hard copy will be held securely in a password protected document or sealed envelope in a secure, locked cabinet/drawer.

If The Forge removes a member of staff or volunteer in regulated activity with children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, The Forge must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service to consider whether to add the individual to the barred list.

In case of a charge of responsibility within the safeguarding team an appropriate hand over meeting will be arranged to discuss on-going concerns and actions required if necessary.

More information can be found on the LSCB's 'Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work with Children or Those who are in a Position of Trust' Feb 2019 – 2022 and the Gov's 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' July 2018.

Section 5: Care & Support

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering care & support, 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 Forge.

Care & Support will be delivered, if required, by the most appropriate people for the task which may be members of the Directors, staff or care & support team. Support could be practical, spiritual or emotional and could take the form of a mentoring/coaching relationship or stand alone meetings. Any person undertaking this support needs to have read The Forge's policy 'One-to-one/Coaching Guidance'. We may also refer for support from external organisations such as Inspire Christian Counselling, The Mix, Social Care Services etc. A copy of a referral made is to be kept in the safeguarding files at The Forge Office and this is the responsibility of the DSL to ensure these are completed and monitored.

Working with offenders

When someone attending the Forge Community Church is known to have abused children, the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer care and support, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. This is likely to be the creation of a contract, with advice on the boundaries such a contract would contain being sought from thirtyone:eight who have shown their expertise in this area. Such a contract will be tailored to an individual's circumstances and informed by an internal risk assessment as well as advice from statutory agencies.

Different people will be used to offer care and support so that at no time will any one person be involved in offering care and support to both an abuser and someone affected by that abuse.

Section 6 – Useful Forms

FORM 1

Cause for concern: action and monitoring form

Name of Worker:

Date of Reporting:

Date of Incident/Disclosure:

Name of young person/people: DOB:

Area of concern (*i.e. abuse, addiction, etc.*)

Cause for concern (*inappropriate behaviour, bruises etc.*), please be as detailed as possible.

Action taken by you (*i.e. informing line manager, monitoring etc.*)

Are those with parental responsibility aware of this concern/referral? Yes/No (If No, please state why)

Signed:

To be completed by member of safeguarding team:

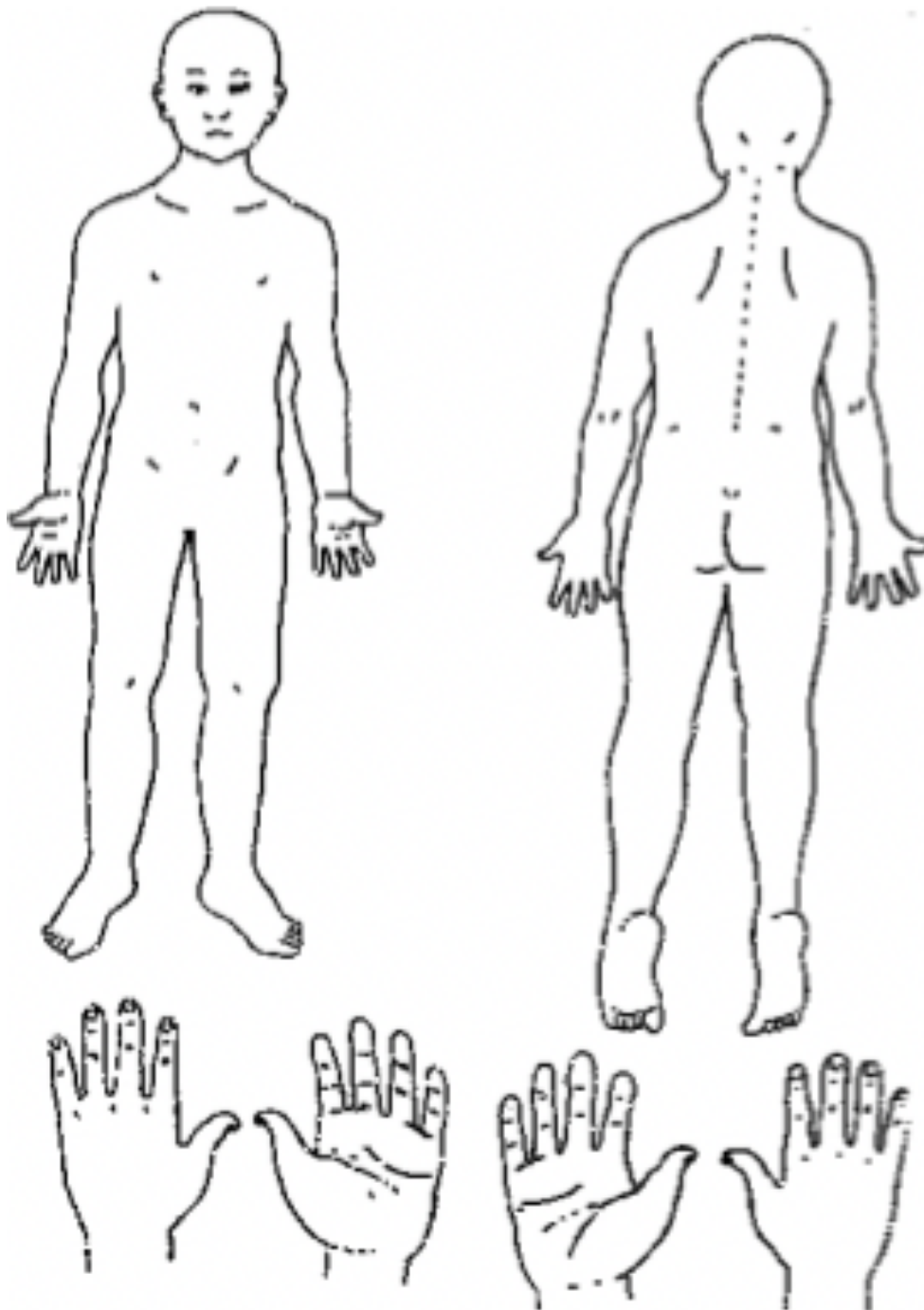
Further action required? YES / NO

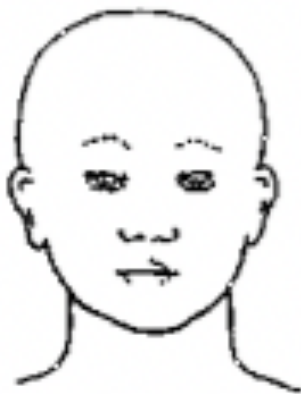
Signed:

Outcome:

Skin Maps to aid abuse identification

Date:





APPENDIX 1 Recognising Abuse

The following behavioural signs *may* be indicators of child/young person abuse, but care should be taken in interpreting them in isolation. For more information and types of abuse, visit the NSPCC - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/>

Physical abuse signs

If a young person or child regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

Physical abuse symptoms might include:

- Bruises
- Broken or fractured bones
- Burns or scalds
- Bite marks
- Scarring
- The effects of poisoning, such as vomiting, drowsiness or seizures
- Breathing problems from drowning, suffocation or poisoning.

Emotional abuse signs

As children and young people grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. Emotional abuse symptoms might include:

- Use language you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age
- Struggle to control their emotions
- Have extreme outbursts
- Seem isolated from their parents
- Lack social skills
- Have few or no friends.

Neglect signs

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child or young person is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs

that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem. Neglect symptoms might include:

- Poor appearance and hygiene: being smelly or dirty; being hungry or not given money for food; having unwashed clothes; having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter.
- Health and development problems: anaemia; body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints; medical or dental issues; missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations; not given the correct medicines; poor language or social skills; regular illness or infections; thin or swollen tummy; tiredness; untreated injuries; weight or growth issues.
- Housing and family issues: living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating; being left alone for a long time; taking on the role of carer for other family members.
- Change in behaviour: becoming clingy; becoming aggressive; being withdrawn, depressed or anxious; changes in eating habits.
- Displaying obsessive behaviour; finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities; missing school; showing signs of self-harm; using drugs or alcohol.

Sexual abuse signs

Sometimes children and young people won't understand what's happening to them is wrong. Or they might be scared to speak out. Sexual abuse symptoms might include:

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know.
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.
- Self-harm.
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.

Spiritual Abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has

revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

Domestic Violence

The shared Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and government definition of domestic violence is: 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.' (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)

In 2004 the Government's definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called 'honour crimes', which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence. Many of these acts are committed against children. (Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) 6.18)

Organised Abuse

Complex (organised or multiple) abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Complex abuse occurs both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools. (Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) Section 6.7)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) signs

CSE can happen in person or online. An abuser will gain a child's trust or control them through coercive behaviour, violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them. This can happen in a short period of time. Sexual exploitation symptoms might include:

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations
- Being secretive
- Sharp changes in mood or character
- Having money or expensive items they can't or won't explain

- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area
- Recurrent UTIs or STIs
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Staying out late or overnight
- Having a new group of friends
- Missing from home or care, or stopping going to school or college
- Hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups
- Involved in a gang or criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) signs

A child or young person who's at risk of FGM might ask you for help, but some might not know what's going to happen to them. FGM abuse symptoms might include:

- A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' visiting from abroad
- A special occasion or ceremony takes place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'
- A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM
- A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays
- A girl has an unexpected or long absence from school
- A girl struggles to keep up in school
- A girl runs away – or plans to run away - from home

County Lines signs

Vulnerable adults and young people are frequently used, and in some cases, criminals have taken over their properties to do the dealing from. This is known as 'cuckooing'. The vulnerable could be current drug users, addicts, young people who maybe in care or missing from home, pupils absent from school or people with mental health issues. County Lines abuse symptoms might include:

- Truanting from school or poor results
- Going missing for long periods of time or staying out unusually late
- Suddenly have access to more money than usual – spent on items such as new trainers/mobile phone/clothes
- Showing signs of a change in behaviour/mood/absences
- Talking differently – new slang or language with an aggressive tone
- Unfamiliar names on mobile phones
- Getting involved in fights
- Substance or alcohol abuse
- Committing crimes such as shoplifting

Appendix 2: How to respond to a young person/child wanting to talk about abuse

It can be very hard for children and young people to reveal abuse. Often, they fear there may be consequences. Some delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to. Children and young people value being believed and, as the adult they have chosen to tell, it's vital that you act on what you've been told.

If you're in a situation where a child discloses abuse to you, there are a number of steps you can take:

- **Listen carefully to the child.** Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the child to 'shut down', retract or stop talking.
- **Let them know they've done the right thing.** Reassurance can make a big impact to the child who may have been keeping the abuse secret.
- **Tell them it's not their fault.** Abuse is never the child's fault and they need to know this.
- **Say you will take them seriously.** A child could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person who will listen to and support them.
- **Don't talk to the alleged abuser.** Confronting the alleged abuser about what the child's told you could make the situation a lot worse for the child.
- **Explain what you'll do next.** If age appropriate, explain to the child you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help and let them know you cannot keep this information a secret.
- **Don't delay reporting the abuse.** The sooner the abuse is reported after the child discloses the better. Report as soon as possible so details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly. Take notes immediately (after the young person/child has left) to help you recall the key information.

For more information about how to react to a disclosure, visit the NSPCC -

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/what-to-do-child-speaks-out-about-abuse/>

If a young person that you come into contact within a professional capacity discloses abuse to you, you should follow The Forge's safeguarding reporting procedures.

Appendix 3 – Working Safely

3.1 Visiting Children at Home

Children's and Youth workers/leaders may need to visit children and their families at home from time to time. The parents/carers may or may not attend church and it is important therefore they have been given information about the group including contact telephone numbers. It may also be useful for staff to use their business cards as formal identification.

Guidelines for visiting:

- Inform someone of the proposed visit.
- Never go into a child's home if a parent/carer is absent.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
 - Purpose
 - Time you arrived and left
 - Who was present
 - What was discussed
- If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them if the child is home alone or with other children.
- The invitation of a child to a worker's home must be done with the knowledge of your line manager or team leader and the permission of the parent/ carer.

3.2 Unexpected attendance at activities

Sometimes children playing outside or wandering the streets with no adult supervision will want to join in with church activities without the knowledge of their parents. The Forge recommends the following:

- On arrival, welcome the child/children and try to establish their name, age, address and telephone number. Record their visit in a register.
- Ask the child/ren if a parent/carer is aware where they are, and what time they are expected home. If this is before the session ends, the child should be encouraged to return home, unless permission to stay can be obtained from the parent/carer via a telephone call. In any event suggest the child seeks the parent/carer's permission to return the following week.

- Without interrogating the child, you will need to find out as soon as possible whether they have any special needs, (e.g. medication), so that you can respond appropriately in an emergency.

3.3 Church-Based Young Persons Peer Group Activities

The Children's Act 2004 and the notes of guidance, makes it clear child protection applies to children and young people up to the age of 18. Young people can be victims of abuse. Sadly some are perpetrators.

All youth activities should be overseen by named adults who have been selected in accordance with agreed recruitment procedures. Whilst there may be a valid argument for groups of age 16+ to be led and run by their peers, adult leaders should always be in the vicinity and should contribute to any programme reviews and planning. The following points should also be taken into consideration:

- If there are children/young people under 16yrs at an activity, adults should be present or within earshot.
- No person under the age of 16 should be left with the sole responsibility of caring for or supervising other children.
- Young people who assist with caring for other children/young people should be subjected to the same recruitment process as adults.

3.4 Praying / Talking and Listening to Children

Prior to praying, always make sure you have the child's permission, and always pray in an open area where other leaders and/or children are around. If there is a general invitation for people to come forward to pray, it would be wise to have children's workers available. Ask the child what they are requesting prayer for and remember to listen to their reply. Don't laugh or dismiss out of hand if they want to pray for something you consider irrelevant e.g. my cat's poorly. If they do not have specific needs, just ask God to bless them. If you are praying for a child be alert to safeguarding issues and other concerns such as bullying. If a child becomes distressed while praying, stop, calm them and gently ask them what has caused the distress.

When praying with a child, be practical. Consider your body language, try to be level with them not towering over them. Refrain from placing a hand on their head. A child/young person may not understand the use of 'tongues' and it is important not to cause confusion or distress. Use clear uncomplicated language, keep it short and simple.

Whilst many churches have appointed adults to listen to and talk with children, it must be remembered that children will often decide themselves who they want to talk to. The child might test the adult out in some way before they are prepared to

talk. Because of this, all adults, including the children's workers in the Forge, need to understand the importance of listening to children and responding appropriately.

If a child wants to talk:

- Suggest where you might meet
- Offer the child/young person privacy but remember their and your safety
- Remember not to promise confidentiality
- A child/young person may not be wanting to talk about abuse
- Be aware of how to respond if a child/young person does disclose abuse

SEE POLICY ON ONE TO ONE GUIDANCE

3.5 Young helpers

Thirtyone:Eight suggests that the minimum age for a worker is 16 (the Children Act 2004 defines a child as someone under the age of 18). Whether the minimum age is 16 or 18, the process of appointment should be the same as any other worker.

Young people under 16 are frequently used as helpers. It is advisable that such helpers should be responsible to a named worker and never be in a position where they are providing unsupervised care of children. For example, they should not be counted as a 'worker' when considering staff/child ratios. In these circumstances the full recruitment procedure need not be applied, though the church would be expected to acquire basic information about the individual and take up personal references. DBS checks would not normally be required, but can be applied for, if it is deemed appropriate.

3.6 Lone Working

There should be restricted opportunities for lone working as there is a team ethos in The Forge. However, when an adult is alone with a young person, perhaps the young person has asked to meet with them, sensible safeguards should be put in place e.g. speaking to them alone but in an open space where others can see you, meeting in a coffee shop, not closing the door to a room whilst making sure others are in the vicinity. These parameters, if adhered to, will protect both worker and child alike.

SEE POLICIES ON LONE WORKING AND ONE TO ONE GUIDANCE

3.7 Adult:Child Ratios

Below are suggested ratios of adult to child, recommended for a specific indoor/outdoor activity or holiday event. These recommendations are based on guidance from the NSPCC

Tot Street (Age 0-2): 1:3*

Little Village (Age 3-5): 1:4*

Uptown Kids (Age 5-10): 1:6*

Transit (Age 10-13): 1:8*

Motion (Age 13-18): 1:10*

The Base (Age 11-18): 1:15*

*minimum of two over 18 year olds per group regardless of numbers attending. We are committed to ensuring there are sufficient adults for child supervision.

Following a risk assessment, this ratio would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered high risk or dangerous, or catering for children with disabilities/special needs. We may also decide to lower these ratios in some situations, such as The Base youth club due to the nature of the activity. Each of our activities involving children and young people are risk assessed and copies available.

In some circumstances a worker might be alone with a child. Examples include a small group situation, listening to a child, acting as a befriender/mentor or in transport arrangements. See the section on lone working for more guidance.

3.8 Transport Policy/Transporting Children

These guidelines should apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children and young people, organised by or on behalf of The Forge. They do not apply to private arrangements for transportation made, for example, between parties with parental responsibility.

Advice on transporting children is as follows:

- Only those who have gone through The Forge's recruitment procedures for workers or volunteers should transport children and young people.
- All drivers should have read The Forge's safeguarding policy and agree to abide by it.
- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of a line manager or team leader. This permission should be confirmed & saved within a written email or letter.
- Any motor vehicle adapted to carry more than eight passengers for hire or reward is regarded in law as a Public Service Vehicle (PSV). A small bus permit is therefore required for all mini buses used to carry between 6 and 16 passengers. All minibuses used to transport children should therefore have a

small bus permit, the necessary insurance, a driver with a valid driving licence that entitles them to drive a minibus.

- If the Forge uses a mini-bus and the children/young people are asked to make a contribution towards the trip, there is a legal requirement to obtain a Section 9 permit from the Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions. Thirtyone:eight recommends that when using minibuses for transporting children, seatbelts should be fitted for all passengers. This is compulsory for vehicles registered on or after 1/10/01.
- The law no longer permits car drivers who passed their test after 1st January 1997 to drive mini-buses without passing a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) driving test or unless they are driving under a section 19 permit. This does not apply to licence holders who were over 21 years of age in 1997. Check what categories a worker is entitled to drive by examining their driving licence.
- The driver should hold a full driving licence, have adequate insurance and the vehicle should be road worthy. If transporting younger children in private cars, the use of the appropriate care seats must be adhered to.
- Having checked drivers, (application form, interview, references etc.) it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Consideration could be given to dropping off the least vulnerable child last and plan routes accordingly. Two workers in a car does not in itself guarantee protection for a child but is a useful guideline.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk there and then, but arrange to meet the child / young person at a location where there are other adults around. It is advisable to be aware of instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular child e.g. where there has been a disagreement or where a child / young person has an attraction to a driver.
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist children stay in the same groups on the out-going and return journey. This will avoid the confusion over whether a child has been transported home or, at worst, left behind.
- If travelling in convoy with cars and minibuses, please note that the maximum speed for a minibus is 50 mph on single carriageway roads, 60 mph on dual carriageways, and 70 mph on motorways.

- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- If parents transport children around e.g. to and from activities, ensure that all are made aware that such arrangements are the responsibility of the parents involved, and not The Forge's.

3.9 Children with Additional Needs

Children and young people who have a disability may need extra help in such areas as communication and mobility. They may require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility etc, have limited understanding and behave in a non-age appropriate way. For example, a young person of 17 might behave in a manner more akin to a 2-3 year old, particularly in demanding cuddles or sitting on a worker's lap. Others experience difficulties in communication because they are blind, or deaf/blind, and are reliant on physical contact for communication. Some may have severe learning difficulties. It is therefore important to set appropriate boundaries that take their needs into account, but also protect workers from false accusations.

The Forge Community Church should:

- Ask the child, young person or carer attending an activity, how their needs might best be met.
- Ideally ensure that a worker of the same gender assists with toileting needs etc.
- Whatever the level of disability, children of a very young age may need nappies changing. Initially attempts should be made to contact the parent or carer to perform this task. If they are unavailable team members may perform this task. Ideally two team members should be present and the parent / carer informed that this task has been performed upon collection.

There is a need for extra vigilance recognising that a worker may encounter the following difficulties:

- Children may not fully understand what is said to them, or may not be able to express themselves in ways that can be understood.
- The worker may not possess the appropriate personal communication skills (e.g. specialised spoken and non-verbal communication such as Makaton signs and symbols, B.S.L etc).
- It can be hard to know if a child with a disability has been abused because of communication problems.

There are a number of reasons why a child with a disability is more vulnerable to abuse:

- Children with disabilities tend to have more physical contact than those without disabilities (i.e. therapists, care workers) and may require higher levels of personal care.
- The definition of what constitutes abuse is wider for children with disabilities. (This can include force-feeding, financial abuse, over-medication and segregation).
- Attitudes can play a part - the belief that a child or young person with a disability can't be sexually abused because they are seen as asexual.

The church and other organisations have a pivotal role in empowering those with disabilities by teaching personal safety skills to those with disabilities. The church can encourage a child with a disability to take some control of his/her body (i.e. provide sex education and teaching about feelings; that some parts of our body are private and to differentiate between good and bad touches). This is essential to counter the points above.

3.10 Internet & Mobile Phone Communication Advise

Youth workers need a balanced approach to using the internet when communicating with children & young people, together with a means of accountability.

Keep a log of when you have talked to a young person on the internet – this is often available automatically through the application such as Facebook, messenger apps etc.

- The Forge recommends that the cut off time for communicating with young people on the internet is 10pm
- Keep communication in the public domain. Group emails offer a way of keeping messages public
- Snapchat not recognised as an appropriate method of communication
As the use of mobile phones increases this area of advice will need to be constantly reviewed.

Currently:

- It is advisable for leaders to text only those young helpers/ people who are of the same gender
- Texting should not take place after 10pm
- No leader should take individual pictures of young people via their phones

- If the 'tone' of text's becomes inappropriate, advise a member of the safeguarding team.
- Leaders should avoid 'lending' their phones to children/young people as messages can be accessed and potentially confidentiality could be broken.

Online working is best used in conjunction with face to face sessions. Online only support is permissible under certain extenuating circumstances. For example, government enforced lockdown due to global pandemic.

- All sessions to be conducted using Zoom wherever possible. In the event of a young person/ young people not being able to access this service, other software may be used following adequate risk assessment and with permission from DSL/ASL.
- Sessions must be conducted in a professional manner where staff and volunteers maintain all professional boundaries as if working face to face with a young person.
- In group settings online, the comments tab to be monitored by a staff member or volunteer at all times. If inappropriate comments appear, the chat facility to be closed and the comments referred to person leading the session at the end to decide further actions. Refer to DSL/ASL if need further advice.
- It is the staff/volunteer members duty of care to ensure the young people are ready for the session e.g. they need to be fully awake, dressed and in an environment conducive to the session.
- Where practicable, ensure your environment is quiet and distraction free. Special attention must be given to ensure confidentiality can be maintained. Headphones can be worn to limit the chance of confidential information being overheard. This applies to ALL participants.
- Young people may not wish to be "on camera" for the session. However, you must ensure every young person in the session can be identified and you know who you are talking to. Send direct invites to email addresses or mobile phones, never post publicly or to a group. Even if its brief, try to encourage YP to turn on their camera so you can verify it is them. If you are not certain of the identity of a member of the session you must either remove them from the session or end the session to ensure the confidentiality and safety of all participants.
- Notes must be taken/ typed as normal for all one to one sessions.
- Parents of young people accessing online sessions must have read and signed the code of conduct (appendix 4).

3.11 Filming and taking Photos

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches must be very careful if they use photographs, videos and web cams of clearly identifiable people. There are several issues to be aware of:

- Permission (verbal or written) must be obtained of all the people (children and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video or web cam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- Paper copies are kept for this until this is transferred onto ChurchSuite. Forge Community Church Safeguarding Policy 2022
- It must be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this is regarded as a public area and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- If photographs or recordings of children's/ youth groups are made and individual children cannot be easily identified, children's / youth leaders must find out whether any parents do not want their children to be in the photograph.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses or telephone numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.

3.12 Parents/Carers Staying with Children's Groups

There may be occasions where parents ask if they can stay to watch the children's group's activity. The Forge does not want to operate in a way that seems guarded, but there may be concerns, particularly where the expectation is that all adults who work with children in any capacity should undertake a DBS check as outlined in this policy.

Parents should be encouraged to observe groups but not take part. A distinction should be made between the two.

- It can help certain children settle into a group, if the child knows that a parent/carer is there. After the settling in period, if a parent/carer wishes to continue to stay, consideration could be given to them becoming a helper/worker but they would be required to undertake the same recruitment and selection procedure as with any other worker.

- Whilst a person watching may be a parent/carer for one or more of the children, to the rest of the children they are strangers.
- Provide opportunities as part of the on-going children's programme to build relationships and encourage parents to take an active role in supporting the group.
- Be aware that for some children with special needs, it may be appropriate for their parent/carer to stay with them for an extended period. This should be considered on an individual basis to help the child become fully integrated into the group/activity.

3.13 Counselling

At The Forge, requests for counselling should be directed to The Senior Leader of the Church who can take next appropriate steps. If under 18's request counselling, the issue of a parent's rights to know is mitigated if the child or young person is willing for a parent/carer to be made aware of the situation.

Young people between 16 and 18 years of age are generally regarded as competent and able to consent to their own medical treatment by virtue of Section 8 of the Family Law Reform Act 1987. Parental consent to counselling a child under 16 years is regarded as

Forge Community Church Safeguarding Policy 2022

good practice. Parental participation in the decision to seek counselling may well be very beneficial even though a young person might not initially want to involve them.

If a young person under 16 seeks counselling and is adamant that they do not want their parents informed, the counsellor can only provide such a service if satisfied that the child is "Gillick competent".

There may be concerns, where there are risks of significant harm that some young people will suffer if parental involvement is insisted upon. If counselling or other help cannot be provided because the young person is not considered "competent", or there are serious concerns or perceived risks about involving the parents, then it would be wise to consider involving Social Care Services via Customer First.

3.14 Working with Disruptive Children

Sometimes children and young people become angry, upset and disruptive. Occasionally their behaviour may endanger themselves or others. The Government has developed national standards in relation to early years and day care:

If a child/young person is being disruptive:

- Ask them to stop.

- Speak to the child to establish the cause(s) of upset.
- Inform the child that they will be asked to leave if the behaviour continues.
- Warn the child that if they continue to be disruptive, this might result in longer term exclusion from the group.

If a child/young person is harming him/herself, another person or property then other children/young people present should be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring. At the same time, and with a second worker present, request the child/young person to STOP. If your request is ignored, you might need to warn the individual that you will consider calling for additional help, (e.g. Police) if they do not stop. In exceptional circumstances and with assistance, you might need to restrain the child/young person to prevent them harming themselves, others or property whilst you wait for the police.

The workers involved should always record what happened as soon as possible after the incident. This should include the following:

- What activity was taking place.
- What might have caused the disruptive behaviour.
- The child's/young person's behaviour.
- What you said and how you and others responded.
- A list of others present who witnessed the incident.

This paperwork should be given to the team leader or one of the safeguarding team at your earliest convenience.

3.15 Guidelines for discipline

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character and prepares us for life.

- Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare a child with another, but encourage and affirm them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.
- Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect children to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
- Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and resist allowing demanding children to take all your time and energy.

- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
- If children are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly.
- NEVER smack or hit a child and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary.
- Discipline out of love, NEVER in anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely.)
- Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if not kept.
- Every child is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows, therefore, that each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Some children have a tendency to be disruptive in a group.

- Have a disruptive child sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
- Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- It is very unlikely that a situation will arise that requires any action to be taken, however, it is wise to have a strategy to ensure a consistent approach with everyone prepared should a situation occur.

Use the following strategy for dealing with challenging behaviour:

- Discuss the behaviour with the child after the session. Make your team leader/other leaders aware of the issues and any agreements made. If necessary, involve the parent to explain what's taken place and ask for their support in encouraging a change of attitude/behaviour.
- If there is no improvement and you are faced with unacceptable behaviour from the child again, issue an age related warning; one warning for School Years 3-6, two warnings for pre- school to School Year 2. The child must understand what is unacceptable about their behaviour and what consequences will follow if they fail to make changes.
- Call whoever is in charge, if you need to stay with the child, send someone from the group
- The person in charge will remove the child from the group for a chat and have a follow up conversation with the parent to explain what is expected.

- If a child's behaviour continues to be disruptive despite measures taken above, seek advice and guidance from a leader.
- Pray with the other workers before the session and take time to debrief before you leave.

3.16 Duty of Care, Position of Trust and Abuse of Trust

There is a duty on all those who work and serve within the Forge to provide a safe environment which promotes wellbeing. This means that all who work and serve within the Forge should treat those they are caring for with respect and dignity as well as demonstrate competence and integrity. Before individuals start working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent to their role.

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, whether paid or as volunteers, are in a position of trust. It is therefore vital workers ensure they do not, even unwittingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately.

Workers, whether paid or as volunteers should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted. Any kind of sexual relationship between an adult worker and a child is never acceptable and if concerns arise in this area, this should be reported to one of the Safeguarding Co-ordinators.

The trusting relationship between worker and child, young person or vulnerable adult means the worker should never:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage.
- Use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships that are, or may be, sexual.

Abuse of trust:

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child under 18, it is a criminal offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in, or watch, sexual activity. In 2022, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 added 'religious settings' to the list of environments covered by the Act.

This may have implications for young adult youth leaders who may seek to form a relationship with a young person who is under the age of 18. If any worker or

volunteer has any concerns about their own behaviour, or the behaviour of others in this area they must report their concerns to a member of the safeguarding team.

As stated in section 4 – Responding to Disclosures, any reports of abuse of trust will be referred accordingly to the LADO, and if necessary the Police.

3.17 Handling of Disclosure Information (relating to applications for paid/voluntary work)

STORAGE AND ACCESS

Disclosure information must never be kept on an applicant's personal file. It must be stored separately in a secure, lockable, non-portable cabinet if in paper format, and securely in Microsoft Teams Folder (password protected) with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. Within the Forge this is the trained DBS recruiters and members of the safeguarding team.

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. A record should be kept of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

USAGE

Disclosure information must only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

RETENTION

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, Disclosure information should not be kept 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, consultation should be made with 31:8 (as umbrella body) and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service. Advice can then be given to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual. The above conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access would still apply in these circumstances.

DISPOSAL

Once the retention period has lapsed, Disclosure information must be suitably destroyed by secure means, i.e. shredding. Whilst awaiting destruction, Disclosure information must not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or

confidential waste sack). No copies of the Disclosure information may be kept, in any form. However, a record can be kept 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.

APPENDIX 4 – Code of Conduct for Online Meetings

Since the start of COVID-19 we have seen an increase in the use of online sessions to conduct youth work, this is primarily done via Zoom, but does not exclude the use of other platforms. To safeguard young people and our leaders we expect all participants and their parents to read the following and agree to this standard in taking part in online sessions.

- Our preferred online platform for all sessions is Zoom. Zoom terms of use state that anyone under 16 should not have their own Zoom account, however they are ok to connect to a session via a provided link. Please ensure this is being adhered to.
- Young people are to be ready for the session e.g. they need to be fully awake, dressed in an appropriate manner (as if you were meeting in person and in public) and in an environment conducive to the session. Where possible ensure the area is distraction free. If in a bedroom, please keep the door open. Headphones can be used if that is helpful.
- Young people are responsible for their own behaviour. All young people and youth leaders will behave in a respectful, considerate and kind manner to one another and show respect for the opinions of others in a group setting.
- Disruptive or abusive behaviour towards anyone will not be tolerated at any level.
- Young people may not wish to be "on camera" for the session. However, you must ensure that you can be identified and we know it's you on there. ie. your Zoom name needs to be your actual name. If we can't identify it's you on the call, you may be removed from the call.
- It is at the leader's discretion if the chat facility is active, any abuse of this function won't be tolerated and you could be asked to leave the call. It is not permissible for anyone to take screen shots of the call.
- If a leader notices anything inappropriate during a video call, The Forge's usual safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- There will be two leaders in a group session with young people at all times. All leaders will have done DBS checks and have had appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders will use the waiting room facility to ensure no young person is on a call alone.
- Primarily all zoom use will be for group calls. If there is a need for 1-2-1 call with a young person, this will need to be agreed and approved by Tim Warnock, Youth Co-ordinator.

- At times there may be a need to record the session, these will be kept securely for one month and then deleted. If this has to change for any reason, those on the call will be informed. Participants will be informed if the session is being recorded.
- Any concerns around use of online sessions and safeguarding should be directed to Rebekah Warnock, DSL.

I have read and understood the code of conduct related to online sessions for my young person and discussed this with them.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

(Email confirmation is also acceptable to youth@forgechurch.com)