



THREE BRIDGES FREE CHURCH

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

Safeguarding Policy

Policy and Code of Conduct for the protection of Children and Adults with care and support needs



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Introduction

The Biblical Basis for Safeguarding

Three Bridges Free Church exists to share the Gospel and thus the love of Jesus with all those people who come within the parameters of its ministry. The underlying ethos of all its work and of this policy is the Biblical teaching that every human being is made in the image of God and should be treated with great dignity and respect. No-one should be looked down on or treated differently. Neither should any have to live in fear of harm and all should respect the needs and rights of others.

We recognise that all those receiving care and support from the Church, and those working within her ministries, should be able to lead their lives free from fear, safe from danger and free to trust.

Some of the people who come to Three Bridges Free Church for help and fellowship have had any vestige of ability to trust their fellow human beings eroded. This policy and code of conduct lay great emphasis on the need for all individuals to feel safe and free to trust.

The Bible is full of exhortations to provide for and protect the needy and vulnerable. Here are just a few examples:

- Proverbs 14: 21 To ignore those who are poor or vulnerable is described as a sin.
- Isaiah 58: 6 - 12 True fasting is caring for those in need.
- Matthew 25: 31 - 46 Those who fail to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick or those in prison, fail to serve Jesus Himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself showed us through His daily life how to respect, protect and care for children and vulnerable adults: the hungry, those who were physically or mentally ill, and those who everyone else in society despised.

Jesus has been described in secular circles as the first children's advocate and we need no better example than Jesus, nor any greater incentive, to seek with all our energy to protect the vulnerable, reach out those who have been harmed or neglected by others and give all the care and protection they so much need.

Section 1: Details of Three Bridges Free Church

Contact Details

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation: *Three Bridges Free Church*

Address: *Three Bridges Road, Three Bridges, Crawley, RH10 1LS*

Tel No: *01293 403142*

General Email address: pastor@threebridgesfreechurch.org

Senior Leader

Name: *Roger Barden (Pastor)*

Contact Email/Tel: pastor@threebridgesfreechurch.org / *07958 478 635*

Safeguarding Coordinator

Name: *Paul Kennedy*

Contact Telephone / Email: *07485 232 307* / paulk3bfc@gmail.com

Safeguarding Trustee

Name: *Rob Cranfield*

Contact Telephone / Email: *07779 156 120* / Cranfield.rob@gmail.com

Membership of Denomination/Organisation:

Affiliation to the FIEC (Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, www.fiec.org.uk) and the Sussex Gospel Partnership (<https://sussexgospelpartnership.org.uk>)

Charity Number: *1074518*

Insurance Company: *Ecclesiastical – Public Liability (Policy No: CHPG112285)*

Organisation and Activities

The following is a brief description of Three Bridges Free Church and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

In addition to Sunday services we have several ministries that serve children and adults. Our children's ministries are creche, Explorers (Sunday School), Toddlers (parents and pre-school children group) and C21 (16+). We also hold an annual Holiday Bible Club usually in February. Our adult ministries are Agape, Women in the Word and Band of Brothers along with Home Groups and midweek prayer/Bible study groups in the church building. Daytime groups at church will often have children in attendance.

ThirtyOne: Eight

Three Bridges Free Church is also a member of ThirtyOne:Eight (formerly known as CCPAS) which is an independent Christian charity providing professional advice, training, support and resources in all areas

of safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm.

Our Commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and 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 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.

Safe and Secure safeguarding standards

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by ThirtyOne:Eight (formerly THIRTY ONE:EIGHT - the Churches' Safeguarding Advisory Service.)

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 Safeguarding Coordinator(s) 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 Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Section 2: Prevention

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:

1. States 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:

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.

Safer recruitment

The 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 (see appendix 2)
- All workers are members of the church and been in membership for sufficient time to get to know them.
- All who desire to serve meet with and are approved by the elders of the church.
- 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. This includes discussing the safeguarding policy as part of the church's membership course.
- 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.

Safeguarding training

The 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. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will run annual refresher and update training each new year.

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.

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 will be issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

Section 3: Practice Guidelines

As an organisation / 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 accusation.

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 or in the appendices.

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 in 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.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in 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.

Section 4: Responding to allegations of abuse

If you think a child or adult is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

RESPONDING, RECORDING AND REPORTING ABUSE

In the event of any staff member or volunteer having concerns that a child or adult with care or support needs has been abused or is at risk of abuse, they should report their concerns to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

If a child or adult discloses abuse, the staff member or volunteer to whom they choose to speak should remember the following:

- Stay as calm and relaxed as possible
- Let the child or vulnerable person talk freely and do not press for any information
- Never ask leading questions
- Always tell the child or vulnerable person that he/she is not to blame
- Never promise to keep information confidential but assure the child or vulnerable person that information will only be passed to people involved in solving the problem
- Always believe the child or vulnerable adult
- Do not try to investigate the abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

Documenting a concern

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

1. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Name: PAUL KENNEDY (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator")

Tel: 07485232307

Email: paulk3bfc@gmail.com

The above is 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.

2. In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:

Name: ROGER BARDEN

Tel: 07958 478 635

Email: pastor@threebridgesfreechurch.org

3. If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

thirtyone:eight PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

4. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

Name of local authority: West Sussex

Children's Social Services – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Tel: 01403 229900

Out of hours Tel: 03302226664

Website Address: <https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/>

Adult Social Services

Tel: 01243 642121

Emergencies only/out of hours: 03302227007

Website Address: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/social-care-support/adults/raise-a-concern-about-an-adult/>

5. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
 - a. Deacon responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - b. Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
 - c. 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 a secure place.
6. Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.
7. The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy 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.
8. 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 Leadership hope that members of Three Bridges Free Church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. 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/ 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 a 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 Safeguarding Co-ordinator/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, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- 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 Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/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.

Detailed procedures 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, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/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 a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator 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 Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regard to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

Section 5: Pastoral Care

What is Pastoral Care?

Christian pastoral care is the activity which flows from the attitude and commitment to love one another because we ourselves, are first loved by God.

- It embraces a wide range of activity including sustaining others through prolonged difficulty or immediate need, meeting one to one for discipleship through Bible study and prayer, offering relationship counselling and providing practical care and support.
- It can take the form of listening, encouraging, visiting, showing hospitality, advocacy, mentoring, befriending, practically helping, prayer, comforting, or enabling.
- It might be offered by an individual, by small groups, through a particular ministry or through an outreach project.
- Much Pastoral Care occurs in the Church in an informal and unofficial way as Christians seek to help in practical ways and to encourage one another in the faith. Formal or official Pastoral Care is carried out by the Pastors and elders on behalf of the Church community.

General principles for pastoral visitation by those representing the church

- Physical contact – Physical contact must always be appropriate. Those providing pastoral support will avoid invading people's personal space and will always ask permission before physical contact.
- Accountability – Pastoral Carers will not exploit the people they are helping - financially, sexually, emotionally, or in any other way. Where possible there should be transparency with spouses/the eldership about who is being visited and when.
- Boundaries - Pastoral Carers will be careful not to create unhealthy dependencies for either themselves or the persons to whom they are offering pastoral care. Those providing pastoral support will endeavour to signpost individuals to other services and professional assistance where required. It is advisable that those providing pastoral support do not visit someone of the opposite sex alone or without the knowledge of their spouses/eldership.
- Confidentiality - Pastoral Carers will maintain confidentiality, understanding that confidentiality does not necessarily mean secrecy (i.e. concealing information when concealment could be significantly harmful to others) or collusion (i.e. explicitly or inherently cooperating with illegal or unethical behaviour).
 - Exceptions to confidentiality include: when the Pastoral Carer has been required by legislation or a Court of Law to disclose certain information either to the Police or the Court; when the Pastoral Carer has reason to believe that others, particularly a child or vulnerable person, are or maybe, at risk of harm or injury; when the Pastoral Carer has reason to believe that the person is at risk of harming themselves.
 - Permission will be sought prior to sharing personal matters for prayer across the church community or with other members of the church leadership.

Supporting those affected by abuse

The 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 fellowship at Three Bridges Free Church.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending Three Bridges Free Church is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the 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. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the leadership and will be reviewed annually on:

Signed by: _____ Position (Pastor)

Signed by: _____ Position (Chair of Trustees)

Adopted formally by the church membership on 2nd November 2021

Date:

A copy of this policy is also lodged with:

Appendix 1 - PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT

Name of Place of worship/organisation*: **THREE BRIDGES FREE CHURCH**

The following statement was agreed by the leadership on: _____

- This church is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults at risk of harm and abuse and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise that the personal dignity and rights of adults and will ensure all our policies and procedures will reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- 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 experiencing significant harm.

We are committed to:

- Following statutory denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults and will ensure that as a place of worship/organisation all workers will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.
- Supporting all in the church affected by abuse.

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 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.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult, then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this church.

Paul Kennedy -Safeguarding Co-Ordinator

Roger Barden - Pastor

A copy of this church's policy can be seen on our foyer notice board.

Signed by leadership

Signed _____ (Pastor) _____ (Chair of Trustees)

Date _____

Appendix 2 -Job Descriptions – roles, responsibilities and process of appointment

Elders (including Pastor)

Role: to oversee and govern the various ministries of the church.

Responsibilities:

- Appointing the Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- Co-writing and maintaining the Safeguarding Policy alongside the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- Appointing all Ministry Leaders and working with Ministry Leaders to appoint Helpers.

Process of appointment: nominated by the current Eldership but voted into office by the church membership at a membership meeting (see the Church's Constitution). Should have a valid DBS check undertaken at 3 yearly intervals.

Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Role: to oversee the application of the church's Safeguarding Policy.

Responsibilities:

- Co-writing & maintaining the Safeguarding Policy alongside the Eldership.
- To ensure that all Ministry Leaders and Workers are aware of the policy.
- To oversee the process of DBS checks for all Ministry Leaders and Helpers and keeping appropriate records to ensure that repeat DBS checks are made at 3 yearly intervals.
- To provide advice to Ministry Leaders and Workers where there are Safeguarding concerns
- All incidents, queries or concerns connected with Safeguarding to be reported to co-ordinator who, will then liaise with the Eldership.
- To be involved with the church leaders in the decision-making should incidents arise.
- To keep a confidential written record of any such incidents in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.
- To be the churches main liaison officer with outside authorities in the matters of Safeguarding Concerns.

Process of appointment - appointed by the Eldership and subject to the same criteria as Ministry Leaders and Workers within the activities. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator must have been in membership for at least one year and have a valid DBS check which is renewed every 3 years.

Ministry Leaders

Role: to oversee a particular church ministry.

Responsibilities:

- The overall organising and running of a particular church ministry and its programme.
- Overseeing each ministry team including co-ordinating planning meetings.
- For ensuring that Workers in the team abide with the church's Safeguarding Policy and reporting any concerns to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and/or Pastor.
- Liaising with the Eldership in regard to the teaching programme of that ministry.
- Maintaining contact with parents/carers of those attending the Ministry.
- To take part in regular Children & Youth Ministry Leaders meetings with the Pastor/Lead Elder for Children and Youth Ministry to ensure good communication and awareness. This includes providing feedback for the annual review of the Safeguarding Policy.

Process of Appointment: appointed by the Eldership and subject to the same criteria as Ministry Helpers within the activities. Ministry Leaders must have been in church membership for at least 6 months and have a valid DBS check which is renewed every 3 years. All Ministry Leaders must sign to confirm they have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 7).

Ministry Helpers

Role: to support in various ways the running of a particular ministry.

Responsibilities:

TBFC Safeguarding Policy – October 2021

- Helping to run a particular ministry but not in overall responsibility.

Process of Appointment:

1. Ministry Helpers should be committed Christians and ideally members of the church. In certain circumstances non-members may be permitted to serve but this lies at the discretion of the elders and depends on the nature of the role in the team.
2. A Ministry Leader should initially approach the Elders about the person they wish to nominate to join their Ministry team. This should be done prior to approaching the individual.
3. With the Elders agreement the Ministry Leader will discuss the opportunity to serve with the individual.
4. If the individual is willing to serve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be approached to undertake a DBS check.
 - The church will not accept DBS checks undertaken by other organisations. However, if the applicant is a member of the DBS Update Service they can provide the Safeguarding Officer with their relevant ID as long as they are registered for relevant activities under that system.
 - If the potential volunteer has recently arrived from overseas it may be possible to obtain an equivalent overseas criminal records check. If this is not available the applicant will have to wait 12 months before a UK DBS check can be applied for. References may also be required but this is left to the discretion of the Safeguarding Officer and Elders to decide.
5. Ideally an individual should not start serving in a church ministry until the DBS process is complete and they have signed to confirm they have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 7). However, an individual may be permitted to begin serving depending on the circumstances, agreement from the elders and with appropriate measures applied to ensure that they are working alongside other DBS workers at all times.
6. Workers may be suspended from their activity involvement at the discretion of the Eldership - for example if undergoing church discipline or the church is made aware of an external safeguarding investigation from a third party.

Junior Helpers (Under 18s)

Role: additional ministry assistants for the purpose of training and supporting ministry teams.

Responsibilities: to assist Ministry Leaders and Helpers. Must be considered supernumerary in respect to minimum staffing levels. Their involvement and training needs to be supervised by the Ministry Leader. It must be remembered that Junior Helpers are still minors under the law. They are subject to this policy as children not as workers and therefore should not be left alone with a single leader at any time.

Process of appointment: Same process as with a helper. However, the parents/carers of the Junior Helper must be approached and first give consent following approval from the Elders. Those under 18 cannot have a DBS check and so cannot be responsible for supervising those under 18. They must be committed Christians.

Visiting speakers/Occasional Helpers

From time to time an activity may wish to invite a guest speaker, cover absence or someone to aid in the preparation of refreshments. Explicit approval must be obtained from the Eldership prior to their involvement.

If it is only an occasional attendance, they do not need to be DBS checked providing they are not left alone with any of the children at all. If they will be getting alongside the children and having conversations, forming relationships then it is recommended that they have a DBS check.

Appendix 3 – Junior Helper Form

Junior Helper Form

Ministry _____

Full Name of Junior Helper _____

DOB _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Thank you for agreeing to be a junior helper in _____ (name of group). We very much value and appreciate your willingness to serve God in this way. You will be expected to help _____ (leader) at _____ ministry with the following tasks listed below.

Above all help the children to have lots of fun but not forgetting to have fun yourself. Never be aggressive, angry or unfriendly towards the children. Try and have a happy smile and be gentle with them during games. Give praise for their achievements but help and encourage them with consideration when they find things difficult. Above all show them God's love through your caring actions.

You will be assigned a named leader (please state) _____ who will give you care, personal supervision and guidance. Please contact them if you cannot attend _____ (name of group). Under the requirements of our Safeguarding Policy you are still considered a child.

During _____ (name of group) other leaders may ask you to assist them when children are separated into different groups: please take your supervision from them for that period.

Finally, avoid too much close physical contact, children may wish to cling to you or constantly sit on your lap or jump on you whilst rolling around on the floor. Instead just encourage them to take part in what has been organised for them. To support you in the great work you will be doing as a helper we will ensure that you are NEVER alone with the children. We will ensure that you will only be involved in activities where you are under direct supervision and eye contact of the leader.

I _____ commit regularly to attend and help at _____ (name of group) for the agreed period of time with the exception of sickness, school outings, exams and study leave.

Signed _____

Age _____

Date _____

Travel arrangements getting home: I have made travel arrangements after _____ (name of group) particularly during the dark evenings, and these are as follows:

Approved by: Parent/Carer (person with parental responsibility)

Appendix 4 – Code of Conduct for running Children’s & Youth Ministries

Registration of children in Children’s and Youth Ministries

At the start of each school year new registration forms will be completed for each child (**Appendix 3a and b**) – Child Registration Form). These will ask for basic information about the child including relevant medical information and emergency contact details. The form used will depend on whether parents remain on site during the activity or leave the church premises. These forms will be seen and signed by parents/carers and the information will be stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

An electronic register of attendance will be taken of all Helpers and Children present at each meeting (paper back up - Appendix 6). The Ministry Leader will ensure one member of the ministry team is present on the door to register children on arrival and to ensure they leave only the appropriate parent/carer on close of the meeting. Children should continue to be supervised by workers until they are collected. The register will record whether any Safeguarding Incidents have been identified at each meeting.

Health and Safety

Ministry Leaders should seek to ensure that all activities take place in a safe and secure environment. Any concerns about health and safety should be reported to the Deacon responsible for Health and Safety.

- **Kitchen** – no children under the age of 16 should be in the Kitchen without supervision.
- **Accidents** – All accidents should be recorded in the accident reporting book (located in the kitchen). A first aid book is present in the kitchen for dealing with minor incidents. In the event of a serious accident the emergency services should be contacted on 999, parents/carers informed as well as a member of the church leadership team.

Ratio of adults to children

- Sunday Service Ministries - there must be a minimum of 2 DBS approved workers present in rooms out of observation to others.
- Midweek Ministries – there must be a minimum of 3 DBS approved workers present.
- Where all the children are female – there should be at least one female worker.
- Where all the children are male – there should be at least one male worker.
- In a mixed group there should be at least one male and one female leader/helper present.

It is recognised that some parents may wish to remain with their children when first attending a children’s ministry in order to settle them or gain confidence that the ministry will be a safe and supportive environment for their child. On such occasions Ministry Leaders will communicate with parents and have discretion to decide what would work best for different children. However, it is not expected that this would continue beyond a first few visits unless circumstances suggest this is wise. If a child requires a specific carer to help them participate in an activity due to a disability the carer will be invited to regularly attend. However, in both situations parents or carers should not be considered helpers or be asked to assist with other children (e.g. toileting). They should be considered supernumerary in respect to ratios. Any employed carers should be asked to provide a certified DBS where attendance will be regular. Any extra adults present must be recorded in the register.

If for any reason a parent needs to remain on site during an activity, Ministry Leaders should ensure that there is a part of the building where they can wait without accessing other parts of the building

which may bring them into contact with children. However, adults with no need to be in parts of the building when an activity is taking place should not enter these areas except in the case of an emergency or without the permission of the Ministry Leader.

Being alone

All Ministry Leaders and Helpers should avoid being alone with a child where there is no opportunity for them to be observed by others. If a “one to one” conversation becomes necessary with a child ensure that there is either another worker present in the room or that they can be completely observed (through a window or open door). Avoid being alone in a room with a child – especially if you cannot be fully observed

Conversation

Be ultra-cautious in your conversation & how you deal with children of the opposite sex – especially with older children. Avoid all sexual innuendo both when talking to the children and amongst the workers. When dealing with subjects of a “sexual nature” ensure that a worker of both sexes is present in a mixed group and that parents have been informed in advance. Discourage children (especially older ones) from behaviour of an overtly sexual nature, or which can be misinterpreted by others. Workers should refrain from overtly sexual behaviours and avoid developing “Special relationships” with individual children.

Where it is sought / requested / expected, confidentiality between workers and those Children and Vulnerable Adults in their charge should be honoured. However, any situation where it is evident that there is risk to life or serious harm to self or another (serious harm to include physical, mental, sexual, emotional and spiritual well-being) should not remain ‘confidential’ and should be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. It should be made clear to the Child or Vulnerable Adult that such disclosures may be passed on to one of the Safeguarding advocates (committee members).

Transport

It is preferable that any transportation of children in relation to a church ministry take place with a minimum of two DBS-checked adults in the vehicle. However, it is recognised that parental agreements may be made between workers and parents to transport their children to and from a ministry. Such agreements are regarded as private arrangements but should be detailed on the child’s registration and consent form. These arrangements will not apply for any transportation that takes place during a church ministry when a minimum of two DBS-checked adults must be present in each vehicle used for transportation.

Toileting

Taking a young child to the toilet can be an occasion when an accusation of abuse occurs or when a second member of staff has to be left alone with a group. Wherever possible ensure that children go to the toilets by themselves. If some children are unable to do this (due to age or special needs) then two helpers should accompany the child to the toilet. If this is not feasible the lone Helper should check to ensure the toilet is safe and then allow the child in, leaving the main door open. The Helper should stand back from the cubicle but be available to the child if necessary, the level of care being age/care needs appropriate.

Parents should be encouraged to take their children to the toilet before an activity starts, to avoid this situation as much as possible. It is advisable to let older children go to the toilet one at a time, to avoid bullying and other associated problems.

Keep the number of children using the toilet at anyone time to a minimum. Ministry leaders and helpers should use the disabled toilet to avoid lone contact with a child in the men's and women's toilets.

On occasions where there are other users in the building (e.g. Sunday services) Ministry Leaders should ensure that children use the toilets in the old hall rather than the toilets in the new hall as these will be accessed by a range of people.

Physical contact

Avoid physical contact wherever possible except in the interests of safety – then ensure another worker is present if possible. Avoid unnecessary touching & cuddling – both from workers and the children (especially the older children). Avoid sitting children on your knee or engaging in shows of affection which can be misinterpreted unless parents are present and this is invited by them. Any touch should be appropriate for the age of the child (e.g. appropriate contact with a baby/toddler will be very different from an older child or teenager).

Photographs

Photographs should be only taken with the express permission of parents/carers. Discourage children from taking pictures of one another. Images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought for and how the image will be stored if not destroyed. If the intention is to use an image on the internet this must be clearly stated and further permission must be acquired if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated.

Discipline

The aim of discipline is to ensure that the behaviour of one or more individuals within the group does not disrupt the enjoyment of the whole group. It can also be a means of ensuring safety for an individual and group. *It is more than chastisement and is a helpful part of forming positive character in children.*

Tips to aid good discipline

- Exercise of discipline needs to be undertaken in an attitude of prayerfulness and dependence upon God.
- Develop good relationships with the children – getting to know them individually, their personality, background & needs enables effective & appropriate discipline. This involves good communication with parents/carers.
- Avoid need for discipline, by ensuring activities are interesting, enjoyable & stimulating.
- Avoid comparing children with one another. Focus on the positive aspects of each child & concentrate on encouraging them & building them up.
- Personal conduct & example. This is important not only in your interactions with the children and their parents but also your co-workers!
- Provide simple, clear & easily understood rules. (May be helpful to encourage the children to write the rules!)
- Ensure all workers apply rules in a uniform manner.
- Discuss any sanctions & how they are to be implemented amongst the workers team.

- Avoid being too harsh / severe with any one child.
- Showing respect for children gains their respect.
- Avoid neglecting quieter children.
- Try to ensure that all children are treated equally – giving time.
- Focus on good & positive behaviours of a child – especially those who exhibit them less frequently!
- Be aware of bullying by other children
- Ask for help / advice from fellow workers, the Eldership as necessary

Exercising Discipline

- Be Consistent, Insistent & Persistent!
- Make sure all workers follow agreed rules & sanctions
- Respond in calm & controlled way.
- Avoid shouting – quietening your voice can often be an effective way of gaining children’s attention.
- Avoid putting a child down.
- No worker should physically smack a child.
- If threaten sanctions – ensure that you carry them out!

Possible sanctions

- If a child consistently misbehaves – report to their parents.
- Banning a child from an activity for a week or two can be a successful motivator to good behaviour.
- Separating children who are disruptive can be effective – anticipating can be a useful tool to avoid disruption.
- Taking a child to one side rather than constantly rebuking in front of a group. However, ensure that this is in keeping with the principles outlined above about lone working.
- Asking a child to take “time out” such as stopping their involvement in a game or activity for a short period, sitting away from the group.
- Stopping or removing usual rewards such as tuck shop & points.

Running occasional activities outside the church

Prior to any external activity a risk assessment should be undertaken by the Ministry Leader. The consent of parent/carers should also be confirmed in writing prior to the activity. Appropriate arrangements should be in place in respect to transportation that are in keeping with the use of cars.

Drivers should ensure that they have the right level of insurance cover that enables them to use their vehicle in such situations. On occasions where children's or youth meetings take place in a church members home there should be an awareness of who will be present in the home and DBS checks undertaken.

Online safety

Online safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices (e.g. mobile phones, tablets) and applications to communicate and access the internet.

The diversity and use of internet based 'Social Networking' sites, raises such numerous, varied and complex scenarios, that it would be near impossible to produce and implement a comprehensive policy document to cover all eventualities. Misuse of new technologies can present many risks to children and young people, such as cyber-bullying, grooming, privacy violation or exposure to harmful content (pornography, racism, etc).

Parents have the primary responsibility for setting the standards for their own child in accessing and using various online information and media. However, it is important that church workers act in a way that is consistent with the principles of this Safeguarding Policy and work in partnership with parents. The following guiding principles should be applied:

- The legality of the terms and conditions of Social Networking sites must be honoured at all times (including the minimum age limits). The implication is that if a Three Bridges Free Church staff member/volunteer is aware that a child under 13 yrs. is using a Social Networking site, they should not interact with them in this manner.
- Transparency, Openness and Accountability of interactions by Ministry Leaders/Helpers with Children and Vulnerable Adults in their charge is critical. Parental agreement should be obtained before entering into online communication with anyone between the age of 13-18. It is advised that logs be maintained of this agreement and any on-line conversations. Be mindful in all communications that you represent the church as a Ministry Leader or Helper (including Junior Helpers). All social media interaction between workers paid and voluntary and children under 18 shall be limited to monitored/administered groups which avoids personal one to one communication.
- Where it is sought / requested / expected, confidentiality between workers and those Children and Vulnerable Adults in their charge should be honoured. However, any situation where it is evident that there is risk to life or serious harm to self or another (serious harm to include physical, mental, sexual, emotional and spiritual well-being) should not remain 'confidential' and should be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. It should be made clear to the Child or Vulnerable Adult that such disclosures may be passed on to one of the Safeguarding advocates (committee members).

APPENDIX 5 -Children's & Youth Ministry Registration & Consent Forms

Three Bridges Free Church - Registration & Consent Form (Midweek)

Church Ministry: _____

Full name of child/young person: _____

Date of birth: _____ School Year _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Tel. Nos: _____

Address: _____

E-mail

Other contacts who may drop off/pick up

Name _____ Tel No: _____

Please give details of any regular medication or medical problems that we need to be aware of:

I give permission for _____ to take part in the normal activities of this group. I understand that separate permission will be sought for certain activities, including swimming, and on any outings. I understand that while involved he/she will be under the control and care of the group leader and/or other adults approved by the church/organisation leadership.

I do/do not give permission for photos to be taken of my child for publicity/church display purposes (please circle as preferred)

Signed (parent/guardian)

Print Name

Date

By filling in this form, you are consenting to Three Bridges Free Church holding your/your child's information. You can ask for your details to be removed at any time by informing any of the Ministry Team. We are collecting this information to provide appropriate pastoral care for your child(ren). We do not share your information with third parties unless the law requires us to do so. You have the right to request access to your personal data that we hold. For more information about this and other individual rights regarding personal data please see our Data Protection Policy which is available on request.

Three Bridges Free Church - Registration & Consent Form (Sundays)

Church Ministry: _____

Full name of child/young person: _____

Date of birth: _____

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Tel. Nos: _____

Other contacts who may drop off/pick up

Name: _____ Tel No: _____

Please give details of any regular medication or medical problems that we need to be aware of:

I give permission for _____ to take part in the normal activities of this group. I understand that while involved he/she will be under the control and care of the group leader and/or other adults approved by the church/organisation leadership.

I do/do not give permission for photos to be taken of my child for publicity/church display purposes (please circle as preferred)

Signed (parent/guardian)

Print Name

Date

By filling in this form, you are consenting to Three Bridges Free Church holding your/your child's information. You can ask for your details to be removed at any time by informing any of the Ministry Team. We are collecting this information to provide appropriate pastoral care for your child(ren). We do not share your information with third parties unless the law requires us to do so. You have the right to request access to your personal data that we hold. For more information about this and other individual rights regarding personal data please see our Data Protection Policy which is available on request.

APPENDIX 6 – C&Y MINISTRY EVENT REGISTER (Paper Back Up)

Children’s & Youth Ministry Event Register

	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date	Date
Child 1							
Child 2							
Child 3							
Child 4							
Child 5							
Child 6							
Child 7							
Child 8							
Child 9							
Child 10							
Names of Staff Present							
Any H&S Accidents? (if so, record in accident book)							
Any Safeguarding Incidents? (if so complete incident form)							

APPENDIX 7 – Incident Report Form

Safeguarding Policy - Incident Report Form

This form should be completed immediately after any incident. The staff member or volunteer should discuss with their ministry/activity leader what follow-up action is necessary. The completed form should also be reviewed by the church's Safeguarding Officer.

(Please complete the following boxes using block capitals)

Summary of the incident

When did it take place?

Day	Date	Time

Name of the ministry or activity:

Where did the incident take place?

Details of those involved in the incident:

Name	Address	Age (if known)

Who is normally responsible for the ministry or activity?

Name	Address	Phone number

Who was responsible for the ministry or activity at the time of the incident, if different from the above?

Name	Address	Phone number

Which other staff or volunteers were supervising the ministry or activity at the time of the incident?

Name	Address	Phone number

Who witnessed the incident? Usually only two witnesses are necessary

Name	Address	Phone Number	Age (if under 16)

Details of the incident

Sequence of events, actual words spoken, observations

--

Action taken

--

Details of person(s) contacted

Name	Address	Phone Number

Additional notes

--

Please ensure the following sections are completed and signed:

This form has been completed by

Name (please print)	Signature	Date

This form has been read and discussed by the ministry/activity leader

Name (please print)	Signature	Date

This form has been reviewed by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Name (please print)	Signature	Date