

Safeguarding Policy¹

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Section 1 - Details of the Organisation

Minister Name: Mr James Taylor

Contact Telephone: 07872 326747

Email: minister@northstreetchurch.org

Protection Verifier Name: Mrs R Taylor

Contact Telephone: 07960 665 888

Email: s.f.guardns@gmail.com

Charity Number if registered: The church is an excepted charity

Insurance Company: Ansvar Insurance

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

Our mission statement is 'Building a Jesus-Centred Community'.

We are a church who meet collectively for worship on a Sunday at 10:30am.

The church's involvement falls into three categories:

1. the informal fellowship of people of different ages and capabilities in the worshipping community.
2. groups organised specifically for children, young people or adults.
3. groups organised by other agencies on the church premises.

Groups run by the church are:

| |
|--------------------------|
| Group Name |
| Discipleship Together |
| Pastoral Carers' Meeting |

Other groups using the church premises are:

| |
|--------------------------------|
| Group Name |
| B1 Leaders |
| MIND in Somerset* |
| Narcotics Anonymous (Saturday) |
| Pursuit* |
| Taunton Lip Reading Circle |
| Taunton Street Pastors |
| Taunton Youth for Christ* |
| The Wright Consultancy |
| Trull School of Dancing* |

The Church advises leaders of the groups above denoted by an asterisk that all work on its premises must meet the standards set down in this Safeguarding policy. They are advised to have sufficient insurance cover **appropriate** for the activity carried out on church premises. Leaders must sign an agreement that they will follow safeguarding and other relevant processes. See Appendix 1.

Our Commitment

The Minister and Elders 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.” We have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight, that are the only independent safeguarding charity offering organisations a complete safeguarding solution.

The Minister and Elders undertake 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.

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 to vulnerable people but if you are aware or witness or fail to protect someone and do not report it then that will increase the chances of the abuse continuing too. 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 as appendices to this policy.

Definitions and further definitions and signs and symptoms of children:

- See Appendix 4 - Statutory Definitions of Abuse.
- See Appendix 5 - Signs of possible abuse (Children and Young People)
- See Appendix 6 - Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Adults)
- See Appendix 7 - Signs of possible abuse (Adults)

Safer Recruitment

The Minister or Elders or Protection Verifier will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form.
- Those short listed have been interviewed.
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview and the panel was satisfied the principles were understood and any training needs were highlighted.

- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) for England and Wales has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified.
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant will complete 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 Minister and Elders are 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 (paid and voluntary, working with children and vulnerable adults) will receive foundation induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training delivered by Thirtyone:eight every 5 years. We undertake to carry out regular skills audits of our workforce in order to assess which training would be beneficial.

The Minister and Elders 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.

Under GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 we may share information without consent if, in our judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. We will base our judgement on the facts of the case.

Supervision of Volunteers – Codes of Conduct

The Minister and Elders are committed to supporting all workers and volunteers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers/volunteers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs. *See Appendix 1.*

Section 3 - Practice Guidelines

As a church 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. The full range of Practice Guidelines are to be found in the Thirtyoneeight Resources Library. The Policy appendices (a separate document) are relevant to our activities and include children's work, pastoral care, volunteers and online safety. These are taken from the above resources and cover:-

- See Appendix 8 - Praying with Children and Young People
- See Appendix 9 - Guidance on touch
- See Appendix 14 – Anti-Bullying Policy
- See Appendix 15 - Online safety guidance and parent/guardian consent form -

- See Section 5 - Pastoral Care and Appendix 1 Code of Conduct (both in this document)

At present we do not operate online activities for Children or Young People but have included online safety for future reference.' and these will be attached when completed.

Working in Partnership with Churches

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 are affiliated to the Congregational Federation and we hold a Safeguarding certificate. This was issued in April 2023 and is valid to 2027².

A nominated Safeguarding Checker visits the church and liaising with the Protection Verifier and National Safeguarding Officer of the CF to ensure agreed standards are maintained and a certificate to display on premise is presented.

This check covers:

- Premises e.g., Fire equipment and First Aid
- Practise e.g., risk assessment and security of the building
- Policy
- Safer recruitment

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. The other ways in which we have promoted Safeguarding include: displaying our Safeguarding Policy on the notice board and on the website; displaying safeguarding posters in public places; including footnotes on all of our correspondence stating that North Street Church has safeguarding practices in place. Safeguarding information is included in online communications. All online meetings have separate ID's and passwords and have waiting rooms that are monitored by a safeguarding host.

Section 4 - Responding to allegations of 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 and refer to flow charts (see appendices) for action if necessary.

1. Document the concern

Using the example proforma in Appendices 10 – Reporting a Concern Form, the worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

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

Name: Mrs R Taylor

Tel: 07960 665 888

² Certificate issue date added 23/08/2023

Email: s.f.guardns@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.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or, if the suspicion in any way involves the safeguarding lead, then the report should be made to:

Name: The Minister

Tel: 07872 326747

Email: minister@northstreetchurch.org

If the suspicions implicate any of the above listed, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

Local Social Services Tel:

or advice sought from

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

Tel: 0303 003 1111

- The named safeguarding contact above should contact the appropriate agency, or they may first ring the Thirtyone:eight helplines for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

Name of local authority: Somerset Social Services

Children's Social Services

Tel: 0300 123 2224 **Email:** childrens@somerset.gov.uk

Out of hours Tel: 0300 123 23 27

Website Address: www.beta.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/children/report-a-child-at-risk/

Adult Social Services

Tel: 0300 123 2224

Out of Hours Tel: 0300 123 28 27

Website Address: www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-an-adult-at-risk/

Police Protection Team Tel: 101

In an emergency:999

LADO: (Local Authority Designated Officer): Anthony Goble Tel: 0300 123 2244, Email: sdinputtersosomerset.gov.uk

- The named safeguarding person may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern and whether there was any action to protect i.e., Suspension.

- The Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident. Charity Regulator Tel: 0300 066 9197
- The Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- 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.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding lead, the absence of the Safeguarding lead should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.
- The Minister will support the Safeguarding Lead 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 or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight, although the Minister and Elders hope that members and staff of the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding lead has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Lead as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Minister and Elders demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Lead 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 Lead 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 or not 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 Lead 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 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 needs protection:

Suspicious 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 Lead 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 Lead 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 Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding 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 Lead 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

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Elders or Minister are 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 North Street Church.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending North Street 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 Minister or Elders or designated person 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, who they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties. Refer to:

Appendix 11 - Sex Offenders and Church Attendance

Appendix 12 - Contracts and Agreements

Appendix 13 – Someone I care about may be a sex offender

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by North Street Church and will be reviewed annually at the Annual General Meeting.

Signed by:

Position:

Signed by:

Position

Date:

A copy of this policy is also lodged with: Elders and Minister

APPENDIX 1

CODE OF CONDUCT

North Street Church behaviour code for working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).

The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The role of workers (staff and volunteers)

When working with children and young people or adults at risk of harm, you are acting in a position of trust for North Street Church. You will be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

Good Practice

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare
- Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged
- Listen carefully to those you are supporting
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures)
- Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary
- Work in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations
- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the safeguarding co-ordinator
- Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay taking action

Unacceptable Behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches [name of group/organisation] social media policy
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances

- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct

If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave North Street Church. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the safeguarding coordinator or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

Declaration

I agree to abide by the expectations outlined in this document and confirm that I have read the relevant policies that assist my work with vulnerable groups.

Name:

Signature:

Date: