

regeneration

Safer Church policy

Safeguarding policy for Sunday gatherings and ministries
working with under 18s

1 Policy intent

1.1

regeneration Church must ensure that it promotes the welfare and safety of children and young people.

1.2

Throughout this policy, where references are made to “children and young people”, this means “those under the age of 18”.

1.3

Trustees are committed to ensuring that regeneration Church:

- Provides a safe environment for children and young people
- Identifies children and young people who are victims of abuse
- Takes appropriate action to see that such children and young people are kept safe from harm

1.4

The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people.

1.5

Each new individual working or volunteering with children or young people will be given a copy of the “safer church” policy, which will be discussed with them in detail. Copies of the policy will also be available on our website.

1.6

In pursuit of these aims, regeneration Church will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for them.
- providing procedures for reporting concerns (see sections 8 to 10 and Appendix A)
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
- Following a safer recruitment of staff and volunteers

2 Good practice procedures

2.1

Members will have digital access to regeneration Church's Safer Church policy. Volunteers serving on children and young people's teams will be requested each year to confirm that they have read and understood our safeguarding policy and practice.

2.2

The Leadership Team is responsible for leading the production of a risk assessment for Sunday services and residential trips. The ministry leads are then responsible for making sure the space and activities are safe and suitable for children and young people.

2.3

Each activity (Sunday gathering, Wildfire, etc.) must keep a secure, digital attendance register. The information should include the first and last name of under-18s and those volunteering on the team.

2.4

regeneration Church must have the parental consent of all under-18s joining a Sunday gathering, residential weekend away, or day trip from parents and/or legal guardians or carers. Generally, no child should be permitted to attend Little regen (Sunday church for under-12s) for more than four weeks without written parental consent.

2.5

As a good practice, we will have at least two adults working with or supervising children and young people during children's church on Sunday.

In the cases where regeneration is taking a group of under 18s to a residential or festival without parents present, we recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

- one adult to four children, 4-8 years
- one adult to six children, 9-12 years
- one adult to eight children 13-18 years
- one adult to ten children toilet ratios. We will inform ministry team leaders and volunteers to take a comfort break together with one responsible adult while the other adult(s) supervises the remaining children and keeps a head count

2.6

As a general rule volunteers and staff are not tasked with giving under 18s a lift. However, in the instances where a lift is required (for example taking an under 18 to youth conference, event or church weekend away) a parental consent form will need to be completed and signed.

3 Responsibilities

3.1

Designated Safeguarding Leads

regeneration Church will nominate Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) with special responsibility for child protection issues. They will undertake appropriate training and review the church's safeguarding policy and practice. They are likely to be a senior member of staff – preferably a trustee or long-term member of the wider church with expertise and experience in safeguarding.

At the annual review, trustees met to discuss this policy and confirm that Tom Blandford is the joint Designated Safeguarding Lead for regeneration Church for the next year.

The trustees of regeneration Church will receive an annual summary from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) responsible for child protection, which reviews how the duties have been discharged.

Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) will receive appropriate training and should keep up to date with developments and legislative changes in child protection. It is an essential duty for DSLs to raise awareness within regeneration Church of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and promote a safe environment for them.

Designated Safeguarding Leads(s) will be the main contact point for Child Protection issues and will have contact details for relevant organisations available for employees and volunteers. This list will usually include contact details of relevant individuals and provisions such as the NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000 and the local police child protection unit, LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding), the Disclosure and Barring Service referral unit and where appropriate CAS.

3.2

DBS Lead Recruiters

The Leadership team have assigned two members to be the primary contact with our safeguarding provider, Thirtyone:eight. Alicia Edmund and James Poch will lead on the admin side of ensuring all volunteers working with under-18s have an up-to-date DBS form.

They, along with trustees, are also jointly responsible for ensuring that exempted questions are asked on relevant volunteer and employment application forms in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and any other applicable legislation.

3.3

Organise training for volunteers

Staff and volunteers working with children will receive adequate training to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the organisation's procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every three years.

4 Definitions

regeneration Church recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

i

Physical abuse

Physical abuse causes harm to a child's person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring.

ii

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It will result in severe impairment of the child's health or development.

iii

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the child is irrelevant.

iv

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child's or young person's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self-worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

v

Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines abuse as physical or sexual abuse; violent or threatening behaviour; controlling or coercive behaviour; economic abuse; psychological, emotional or other abuse between individuals who are "personally connected". The Act also recognises children and young people can be victims of domestic abuse.

vi

Peer-on-peer abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of digital harassment, physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and coercive control between individuals under the age of 18. It is a rising issue across the UK and is a unique risk to children and young people.

vii

Discriminatory abuse

Discrimination abuse, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, recognises any form of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment on the grounds of a person's protected characteristic – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

5 Regulated activity and eligibility for DBS criminal record checks

5.1

Under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, an individual working unsupervised with children is considered to be engaged in regulated Activity and must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which will involve a check of the children's barred list, to perform their duties.

5.2

However, in the context of Sunday service volunteers working with under-18s in a supervised role are not considered to be engaged in regulated activity but should still have an enhanced DBS disclosure check only and not include a check of the children's barred list.

5.3

Note that applications for a DBS enhanced check can only be submitted where the applicant is aged 16 or over at the time of making the application.

6 Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

6.1

The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 both make it mandatory to refer anyone known to pose a threat of harm to a child or vulnerable people to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This means that the designated staff member responsible for safeguarding must not knowingly employ anyone who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults, including anyone who is believed to have committed a

relevant conduct while on the job or who has a record of such conduct.

6.2

regeneration Church has a legal duty to refer an employee or volunteer who poses a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults to the DBS, failure to do so can result in a fine and/or up to 5 years imprisonment. There must be sufficient and solid evidence that the employee or volunteer poses a risk of harm before they can be referred to the DBS. The DBS will not consider evidence based on rumour or unsubstantiated reports. The employer should also inform the police and other relevant authorities if they believe a relevant conduct has occurred.

6.3

Referral forms can be downloaded from the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

6.4

Relevant conduct' under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 – In addition, regeneration Church accepts the following definitions of relevant conduct under Schedule 3 of the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 concerning the barring of those who pose a risk of harm to children.

7 The DBS's barring process

7.1

Whenever new relevant information (such as a conviction or caution) becomes known, the information will be sent to the DBS. The DBS will consider this information and other information known on the individual and decide whether it indicates that the individual poses a risk of harm to vulnerable groups. If so, the DBS will commence its barring process and issue a disclosure certificate with the barring information to the applicant.

7.2

The designated member should advise the applicant of staff to make a representation to the DBS regarding the barring information. The DBS will assess the barring information and representation and decide whether to bar the applicant. If there is sufficient barring evidence, the applicant will be placed on either the **Children's Barred List**, the **Vulnerable Adults Barred List**, or both depending on the offence. The applicant must then be removed from regulated activity.

7.3

The applicant has the right of appeal to a tribunal and must be advised of this right. Serious offences committed against vulnerable people will lead to automatic barring, and the applicant will have no right to make representations or appeal against a barring decision.

8 Dealing with disclosure of abuse and procedure for reporting concerns

8.1

If a child or young person tells a volunteer or staff about possible abuse then the individual should:

- Listen carefully, take notes, reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you, and pass information on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Tom Blandford
- Do not ask leading questions
- Do not put words into the child's mouth
- Inform the child that you must pass the information on, but that only those who need to know about it will be told. Also, inform them of whom you will report the matter to
- Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said

If the safeguarding concern is concerning a DSL, then the LADO and regeneration Chair of Trustees should be informed immediately.

9 Reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff

9.1

The following procedures apply to all, including staff, trustees, and volunteers. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

9.2

Designated Safeguarding Lead and where necessary will investigate any report, they will contact relevant services.

10 Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse

10.1

In the instances where an allegation has been made against an appointed DSL, then the Chair of regeneration should be the point of contact and seek advice from the safeguarding provider or LADO.

10.2

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the person designated for emergencies 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
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions
- Explain to parents and/or legal guardians what has happened
- Encourage the parent/carer to seek help for lesser concerns, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm
- Seek and consider 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

10.3

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the person designated for emergencies will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families, or the Police Child Protection Team direct, Havering LADO
- Seek and follow the advice given by CCPAS 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

Useful contact numbers

NSPCC helpline	0808 800 5000
Havering Council LADO	01708 434 653
Thirtyone: eight helpline	0303 003 1111
"Frank" Drugs helpline	0300 123 6600
NHS Sexual Health helpline	0800 567 123

11 Safer recruitment and selection procedure

11.1

regeneration Church will follow safer recruitment and selection procedures. These should be reviewed regularly in order to ensure that they take account of the following:

- Individuals need to be attending regeneration Church for three months before being considered to serve on the children and young people's team
- All voluntary and paid roles working with children and young people will have a role description
- For voluntary roles that involve leading under 18s sessions, it will require individuals to have two completed character reference forms. One internal, trustee or leadership member and one external for example teacher, work colleague, but not family member
- All volunteers and staff will hold a DBS form with regeneration Church
- In the instances where a volunteer has a DBS issued less than six months old, they can be rostered to serve in the children's ministry whilst their regeneration DBS form is being processed with Thirtyone:eight
- 16 - 18 year olds who help out with children's ministry during a Sunday service or youth event external to Sunday gathering are known as "junior leaders." They are there to support small activities (for example, helping with crafts, playing games, or reading stories) and are not responsible for enforcing risk assessments nor have supervised the supervision of any under 18. For all intents and purposes, they are to be counted in the children's ratio
- Paid vacancies at regeneration Church could be advertised widely in order to ensure a broad spectrum of applicants
- In the case of paid employment, trustees must verify previous employment history

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13 Adoption of this policy

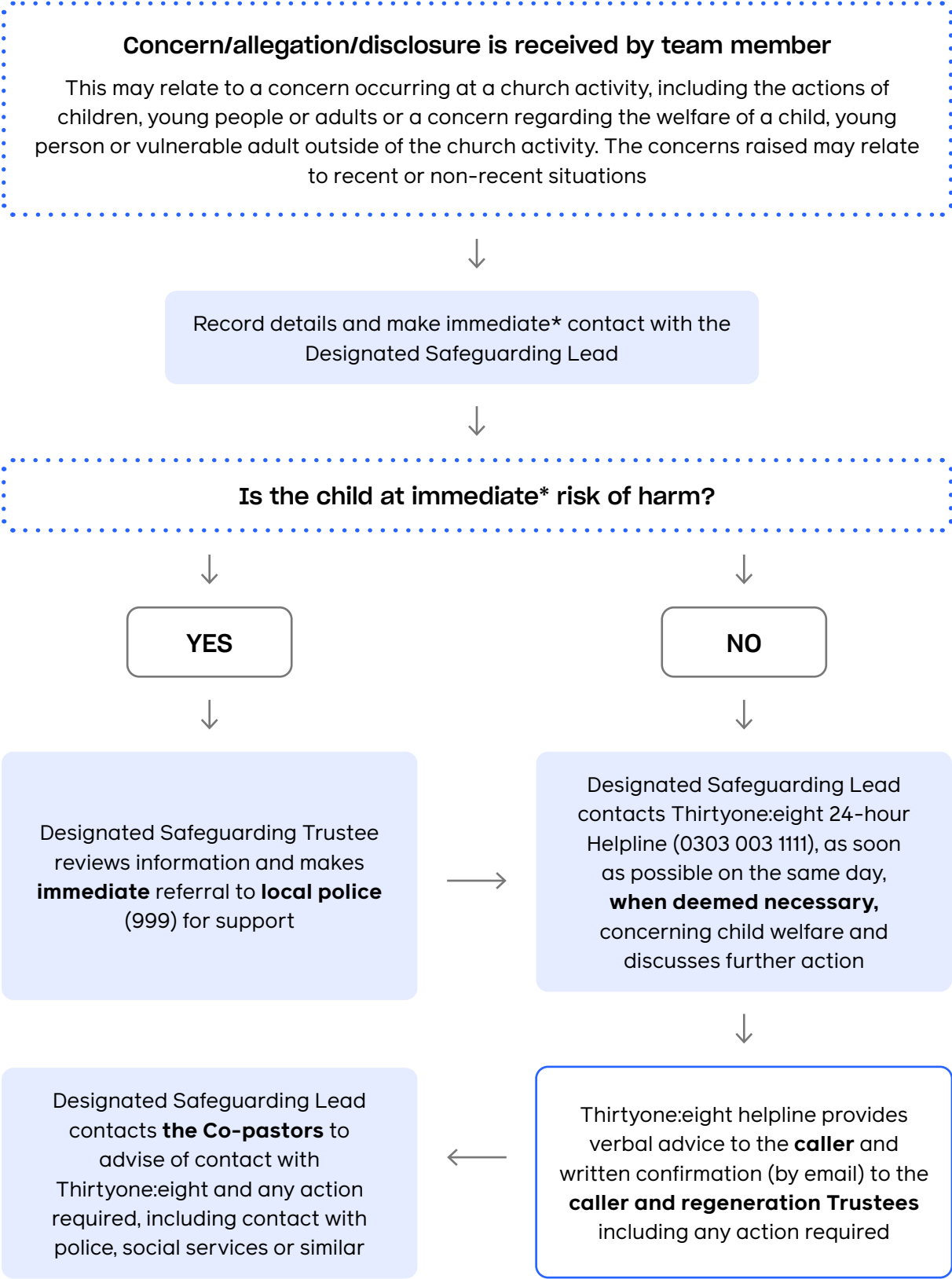
13.1

The trustees of regeneration Church formally accepted this policy at the trustees meeting held on Thursday 12 March 2026.

13.2

This next review of this policy will occur before the end of March 2027.

Appendix A Flowchart for reporting concerns



*Immediate is used to describe any situation where if the child were to remain in their current environment there would be an ongoing risk of harm (i.e. posed by another person with whom they have contact). This also applies if a child were to leave or be taken from the environment by a person who may cause them harm.