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Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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Version History

September 2025	- Added summary posters for quick reference. - Updated how to contact the LADO due to WSCC procedure change - Added EYFS safeguarding requirements from Sep 2025 update, including; - Clarification around safer recruitment procedure and staff training - Following up child absences - Safeguarding training criteria and delivery - Children's privacy during nappy changing and toileting - Added sections on Contextual Safeguarding, Child-on-Child Abuse, SEND, Registration and Collection, Missing Persons, Physical Interventions, Body Map Template. - Added wording on mental capacity and consent for adults-at-risk - Clarified wording in several sections.
August 2024	Added the Code of Conduct, Anti-bullying, and Online Safety procedures into this document.
October 2023	Updated named contact for Playcentre Wickbourne



SAFEGUARDING IS A PRIORITY HERE

Who to contact about safety & wellbeing concerns



Designated Safeguarding Lead

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You can see our safeguarding policy
and report any concerns online at
arunchurch.com/safeguarding

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Who to contact about safety & wellbeing concerns



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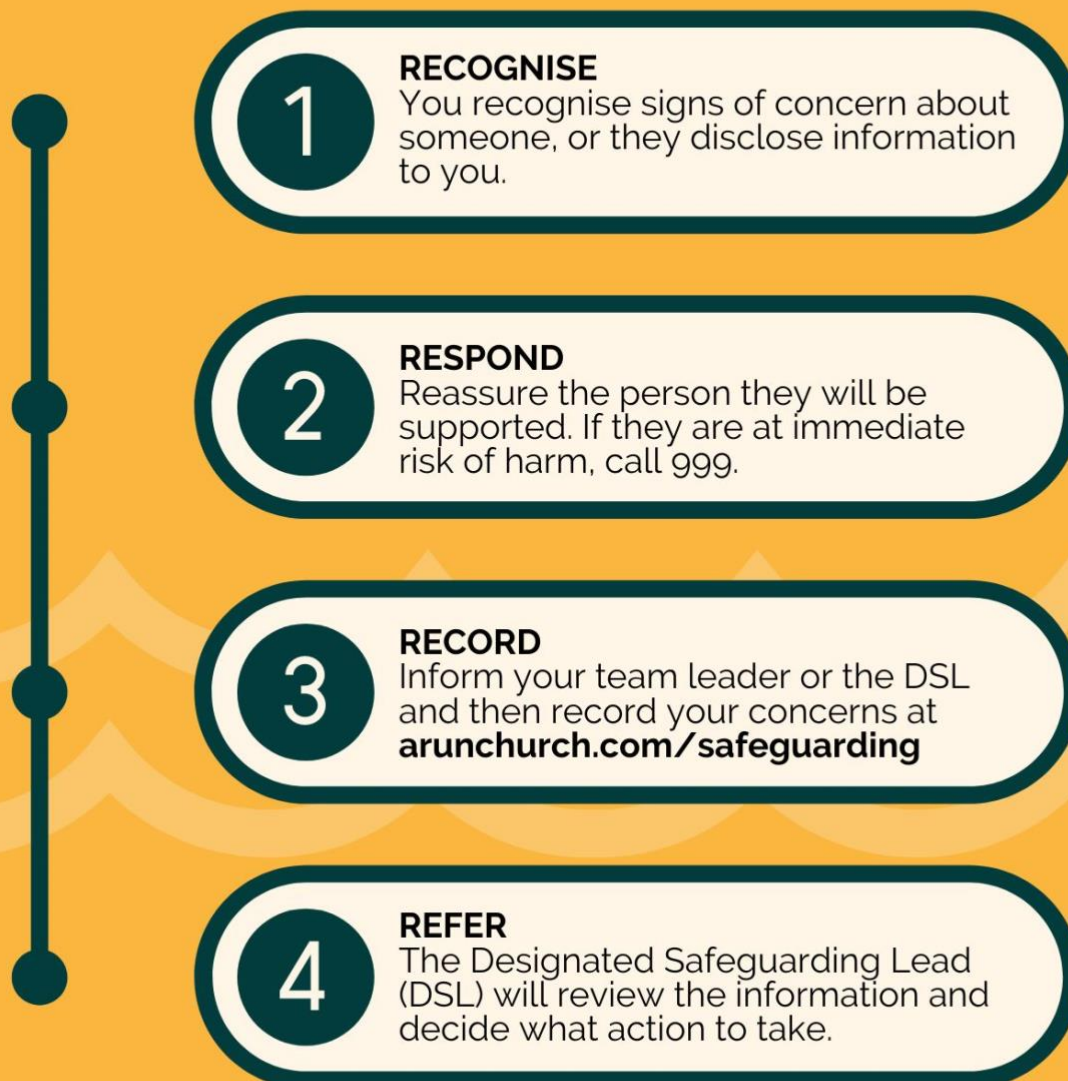
You can see our safeguarding policy
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SAFEGUARDING FLOW CHART

Are you concerned about someones' safety or wellbeing?



You can see our safeguarding policy and report any concerns online at arunchurch.com/safeguarding

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Safeguarding Policy

About Arun Church

Arun Church is a vibrant organisation that is passionate about serving God and changing our community for the better. We run many initiatives including CAP Debt Help, Arun Youth Projects, Playcentres, Refresh coffee shop and social activities in addition to our Sunday services. Our offices are at the Wickbourne Centre which is owned by the Church. We meet on Sundays at The Littlehampton Academy and we also run a Playcentre at 102-104 The Street, Rustington.

At Arun Church our vision is to see lives transformed through Jesus, **bringing life to everyone, everywhere, everyday**. We understand that not everyone will share our faith or the motivation behind what we do, however we do expect everyone working or volunteering with us to align with our aim of seeing lives transformed, making a difference to the people and community around us.

The following values guide our organisation in our day-to-day conduct, our decision-making, and, where appropriate, in our recruitment.

- **God First:** we take our cue from the life of Jesus outlined in the Bible, and our decisions and actions are informed by His example. We ask employees that do not have a Christian faith to work in a way consistent with this (e.g. showing compassion, serving others, being non-judgmental)
- **Passionate:** we are motivated by excellence and a desire to make a difference
- **Brave:** we are not afraid to take risks or to fail, but we try
- **Generous:** we freely give our resources to enable others
- **Together:** we support and value each other, celebrating teamwork

Equality Statement

As a church we are committed to equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively across all of our activities. We serve and respect all people regardless of their gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, religion, age, sexual orientation or physical and mental capability. We aim to have a workforce that represents a variety of backgrounds and cultures and can provide the relevant knowledge, abilities and skills for our Company with compatible values, behaviours and attitudes. We also recognise that people hold different values and beliefs to our own and we acknowledge the freedom of people to hold and to express these respectfully and freely within the limits of the UK law. We will never impose our Christian faith on others, but allow spaces to explore belief and values in a respectful environment. We form partnerships with other churches, voluntary groups, statutory agencies and local government where appropriate to provide the best service for our community.

Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to anyone responsible for the care and welfare of children, young people or adults-at-risk, including staff and volunteers within Arun Church, Arun Church: Wickbourne Centre, Arun Creative Ltd., Refresh Trading Ltd., and all who participate in our activities. The term 'Company' is used in this document and represents all four companies within the Arun Church group.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children, young people and adults-at-risk from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services.
- to provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

In order to fulfil our responsibilities, all members of staff must read this safeguarding policy and sign to say they have read it, understood the content, and will abide by the principles to act immediately on concerns about a child or adult-at-risk's welfare. We also share this document with all volunteers, and it is publicly available to everyone online at arunchurch.com/safeguarding.

Legal Framework and Guidance

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

We accept the [UN Universal Declaration 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 agree 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 accept the principles laid out by the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014, and work within current government and local authority guidelines. As a registered childcare provider, we are committed to fulfilling the requirements of the [Prevent duty](#) (anti-radicalisation and extremism).

Relevant documents include:

National

- [The Children Act 2004](#)
- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [The Children and Social Work Act 2017](#)
- [The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015](#)
- [The United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1992](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003](#)
- [The Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(section 16-position of trust\)](#)
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework 2025](#)

Local

- [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#)
- [West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership \(WSSCP\)](#)
- [West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board \(WSSAB\)](#)
- [West Sussex Continuum of Need/Threshold guidance](#)
- [West Sussex Adults Safeguarding Thresholds](#)

We also recognise our role in the [Earliest Help System](#) as part of a local strategic partnership.

Related Documents

This safeguarding policy should be read and understood alongside our other organisational policies, procedures, guidance, and related documents including:

- Code of Conduct for children & young people
- Complaints Policy
- Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Policy
- Employee Disciplinary & Grievance Policy
- Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- IT and Communications Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy,
- Privacy Notice
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Safer Recruitment & Induction Policy

These documents are available alternately on our website (at arunchurch.com/policies), in our Employee Handbooks, and the company intranet, and are linked to throughout this document.

Our Safeguarding Commitment

Arun Church, Arun Church: Wickbourne Centre, Refresh Trading Ltd and Arun Creative (the 'Company') including activities such as Playcentres, CAP Debt Help, and Arun Youth Projects, aim to adopt the highest possible standards and take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of children and adults-at-risk, and to prevent their abuse. We are committed to listening to the voices of children and young people, ensuring their views are heard, respected, and considered in all safeguarding decisions.

We believe:

- no child, young person or adult-at-risk should experience abuse of any kind.
- all people should be valued, safe, and free to enjoy all aspects of participation in the life of the church.

We recognise:

- that children, young people and adults-at-risk can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

- that we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults-at-risk, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- that abuse can happen anywhere but creating an open and transparent culture of safeguarding and clear communication is key to preventing abuse here.
- that working in partnership with children, young people, adults-at-risk, and their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting people's welfare.
- that some children and adults-at-risk are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues and that extra safeguards may be needed to keep them safe from abuse.

How we seek to keep children and adults-at-risk safe

There are three main elements that enable us to fulfil our legal responsibilities to identify people who may be in need of early help, or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, harm:

1) Prevention

We have a whole organisation approach to safeguarding and well-being that seeks to foster good communication and stop abuse from occurring.

- We establish and maintain a culture where children and adults-at-risk feel protected; encouraged to talk and are listened to. They know how to get support if they experience bullying or discrimination.
- People understand the importance of challenging inappropriate and abusive behaviours and not allowing them to become normalised.
- We build good relationships with other agencies to ensure early and appropriate referrals for support and intervention before risks escalate.
- We have robust Safer Recruitment practices in place for staff and volunteers including training.

2) Response

We have well defined systems in place that help us identify and report cases, or suspected cases, or abuse. These are publicly available to all at

arunchurch.com/safeguarding

- We will follow the latest safeguarding procedures endorsed by our local authority.
- We have fully trained DSL(s) and deputies in place. They attend regular training and are given appropriate time to perform the role.
- We cooperate with parents and carers, seeking consent in accordance with local authority procedures.
- We ensure records are made in an appropriate, timely way and retained securely.

3) Support

We keep a focus on the individual, exploring their needs, wishes and feelings while dealing with safeguarding concerns.

- Children, young people and adults-at-risk who present with risky behaviour will experience positive support from staff and volunteers.
- We recognise that those who have been abused may present with challenging behaviour or have complex emotional responses. We will aim to promote a positive, supportive, and safe environment where they can feel valued.

- We identify and liaise with other agencies who can provide specialist support such as local authority officers, mental health services, counselling, crisis support and advocacy services.
- We keep appropriate records and notify the local authority if there are further concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, but there are specific roles within the organisation that have particular duties in keeping people safe:

Trustees

The board of **Trustees** have independent authority and legal responsibility for the Company. They are responsible for providing good governance and oversight of the organisation which helps prevent abuse and means we can respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise. Along with the church Leadership Team, the trustees have a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours which make up the culture of the organisation.

There is a **nominated trustee with safeguarding responsibility** who helps to oversee the organisation's response to concerns raised.

Leadership Team

The church **leadership team** oversee the vision, direction and operations of the organisation, which includes the management of staff and volunteers. Along with the trustees, the church Leadership Team, have a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours which make up the culture of the organisation.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is appointed to ensure that appropriate arrangements for keeping children and adults-at-risk safe are in place, and to always promote the safety and welfare of people. They oversee and review safeguarding practices, and take the lead in coordinating the response to concerns raised.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL is assisted by a team of **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs)** who are appointed to manage the arrangements for keeping children and adults-at-risk safe in particular areas of the organisation. They work closely with the DSL and share some responsibilities for coordinating the response to concerns raised.

Staff and volunteers

All **staff and volunteers** are responsible for outworking the safeguarding arrangements and following the processes to keep children and adults-at-risk safe. They often work closely with children and adults-at-risk and most likely to become aware of any concerns before anyone else. It is their duty to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.

Principal Safeguarding Procedures

Definitions

The following are key terms used in this document.

- **Safeguarding** is a term that describes the actions used to keep children and adults-at-risk safe from abuse.
- **Child, Children** and **Young People** refer to those under the age of 18 as defined by the Children Act 2004.
- **Child Protection** is defined in the Children Act 1989 (s.47) as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Under statutory guidance and legislation, action must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
- An **adult-at-risk** is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. These were previously referred to as vulnerable adults and although that term is used at times, the Care Act 2014 refers to adults with care and support needs

Procedure for dealing with concerns

The following steps outline the Company process for dealing with concerns of abuse. They are set out under headings known as the 4 R's of Safeguarding:

1. Recognise
2. Respond
3. Record
4. Refer

Following steps 1-3 are the responsibility of the individual who raises the concern. Step 4 is usually the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs).

The safeguarding flow chart (Appendix A) outlines the process for what happens if you have a concern over the safety and wellbeing of someone. The flow chart (or the summary version on Page 6) should be printed out and available in all premises and settings where the Company operates and made known to all staff and volunteers.

1) Recognise

Concerns of abuse are usually highlighted in two ways:

1. By spotting the signs or indicators of abuse - these are things that a person sees or hears, or things that another person tells them.
2. When a person makes a disclosure of abuse - this is when a person tells someone about their experience of abuse or comes to them for help.

The ability to recognise signs or behaviour that may indicate abuse is of fundamental importance in keeping people safe. All staff and volunteers will receive training on safeguarding and should be able to recognise the possible signs of abuse.

Categories of Abuse

The main categories of abuse are physical, emotional, sexual and neglect which are outlined below.

- **Physical Abuse:** A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional Abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child-on-child abuse) and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.
- **Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is

born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

In addition to these main categories of abuse, there are numerous other types and sub-categories of abuse. More comprehensive information on types of abuse is [available from the NSPCC on their website](#) and in the paragraphs below.

- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes, often through gangs which includes peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship so the sexual activity may appear consensual. This is called grooming and is a type of abuse. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can also occur through the use of technology.
- **County Lines** is a form of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). It refers to gangs using children and vulnerable adults to move, hold, and sell drugs across the UK. It's known as county lines because children travel across counties and use dedicated mobile phone 'lines' to supply drugs. Children might start because they get money or gifts. It could also happen because of a sexual or violent relationship with someone who's manipulating them. Involvement in county lines can happen to any child regardless of age, gender, or class, and it happens everywhere. Although children might break the law while involved in county lines, it's a form of child criminal exploitation.
- **Bullying & Cyberbullying** is intentional behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone. A person can be bullied online and offline at the same time.
- **Domestic abuse** is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people who are or have been in a relationship. It can also happen between adults related to one another. It can seriously harm children and young people, and experiencing domestic abuse is child abuse.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names. FGM is a form of child abuse. It's dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK.
- **Grooming** is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be [sexually abused](#), [exploited](#) or [trafficked](#). Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long

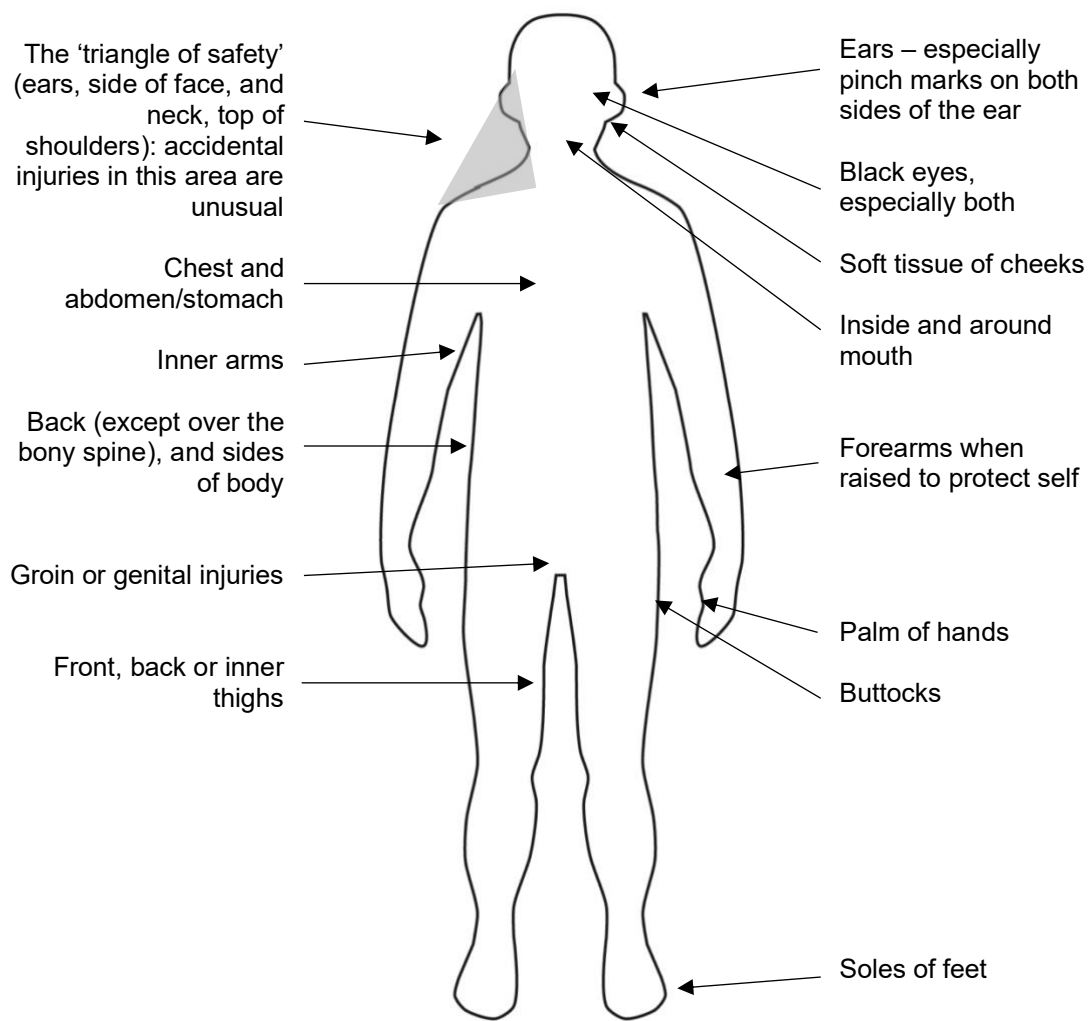
period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

- **Radicalisation** is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It is a form of harm. The process of radicalisation may involve; being [groomed](#) online or in person, exploitation, including [sexual exploitation](#), psychological manipulation, exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information, the risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts. It happens gradually so children and young people who are affected may not realise what it is that they are being drawn into.
- **Trafficking** is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for; [sexual exploitation](#), benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking and childcare, forced labour in factories or agriculture, committing crimes, like begging, theft, working on cannabis farms or moving drugs. Trafficked children experience many types of [abuse and neglect](#). Traffickers use [physical](#), [sexual](#) and [emotional abuse](#) as a form of control. Children and young people are also likely to be physically and emotionally [neglected](#) and may be [sexually exploited](#).

Common signs to be aware of

Abuse can be complex and hidden, but there are some common signs that there may be something concerning happening in a person's life. You should be looking out for:

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn or seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacking social skills and having few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent or carer
- knowledge of adult issues in children inappropriate for their age or ability
- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which fully cover their body
- physical injuries that are likely to be non-accidental, including:
 - Injuries to both sides of the body,
 - Injuries to soft tissue,
 - Injuries with particular patterns such as clusters of bruises on the upper arm, outside of the thigh or on the body, or that carry the imprint of an implement or hand.
 - Bruises which have 'petechiae' (dots of blood under the skin) around them, which are found more commonly in children who have been abused than in those injured accidentally.
 - Any injury that doesn't fit the given explanation,
 - Delays in presentation – injuries that seem to have occurred previously,
 - Untreated injuries,
 - Injuries in the following locations:



Remember, signs of abuse can often have other explanations. But it is important that you still respond and report any concerns you notice, even if it turns out there is a good explanation. More information on spotting signs of abuse is [available from the NSPCC here](#).

2) Respond

Responding to Concerns

No sign of abuse should ever be ignored. The welfare of the child or adult-at-risk is paramount. Statements about, or allegations of abuse, or neglect made by children or adults-at-risk, must always be taken seriously.

If you identify any signs or indicators of abuse about a person, you should record it by following the process outlined in the next section. If appropriate, you could ask them some open questions that may help them share any concerns if they want to (e.g. You seem a bit quiet today, can you tell me about it?). If the person decides not to talk then their decision should be respected, but any concerns should still be recorded.

If you believe a person is in immediate risk of harm, call 999 and follow their instructions. You should then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the earliest opportunity.

Dealing with disclosures

When a person tells someone directly about their experience of abuse, or comes to them for help, this is called making a disclosure. The initial response to a disclosure of abuse can have a lasting impact so it is important to respond well. When a person has built up their courage to make a disclosure, or circumstances mean that this is what has happened, it is likely the person has reached a point of desperation so the need for them to be taken seriously is vital. The person they share their concerns with may be the only person that they feel safe to speak to, and it may be the only time they ever tell someone.

Listening to the experiences of children and adults-at-risk and allowing them space to express their voice is a key part of responding well to safeguarding concerns.

How to respond to a disclosure of abuse

- Encourage the person to express their views, feelings, and experiences in ways that are appropriate to their age and level of understanding.
- Listen actively and sensitively, ensuring you do so without judgement or interruption.
- Make sure they know who they can talk to and understand how to raise any concerns.
- Take seriously everything they say, even if their accounts seem unlikely or difficult to believe.
- Avoid silencing or dismissing their views and never make fun of what they say or how they communicate.
- Consider their wishes and feelings when deciding what action to take but always ensure the statutory duties in this process are followed.
- Reassure the person that they are not to blame for what has happened to them and that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Tell them that the information they share will be taken seriously.
- Avoid physical reassurance or comfort as much as possible. If physical reassurance is needed and appropriate, always ask their consent first (e.g. a hug, or an arm around the shoulder).

- Explain what you intend to do next and don't delay in taking action.
- Ensure the immediate safety of the person and seek medical help if needed, advising the medical professionals of any concerns.

In addition:

- Do not promise to keep what they have shared confidential but explain you may have to share it with others on a 'need to know' basis only.
- Do not ask too many questions, but clarify what has been said to make sure you have understood correctly.
- Do not ask them why they have not told someone before.
- Do not tell them not to tell anyone else.
- Do not try to investigate the matter yourself.
- Do not discuss with Parents/Carers until after you have recorded your concerns and have received advice about what should happen next.

Things to consider

Usually, a child will seek support and disclose to someone they trust. It will save the child having to repeat a disclosure if they have support from the person they initially disclosed to. Under no circumstances should an alleged victim (child or adult) be required to meet or face their abuser.

A person may not disclose all the information at once. If they give further information at another time, this same process should be gone through. It is possible that information might be disclosed about someone in another organisation or about a person unknown to you. The need to respond appropriately is the same.

In the case of severe sexual assault such as rape, which may have happened recently (i.e. in the last few days), the police should be contacted. Do not touch or tamper with any evidence, such as clothing, and dissuade the person from cleansing themselves.

The victim's wishes and feelings should be considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide, although statutory duties should always be followed.

3) Record

This section outlines the process for how to record all safeguarding concerns. Arun Church uses an electronic database for managing safeguarding concerns, called MyConcern.

Recording a concern

Anyone can record a concern directly onto the MyConcern system to bring it to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL). This can be done by completing the online form at www.arunchurch.com/safeguarding and it allows for anonymous reporting if needed.

However, staff or volunteers should usually share any concerns directly to their Team leader or manager who will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL). A list of key safeguarding contacts is available at the end of this document, and posters are displayed in all premises where the company operates.

ALL concerns, even minor ones, must be recorded and should never be ignored. All staff and volunteers have a personal responsibility to act and should never assume someone else will take action instead.

Remember, **if you believe a person is in immediate risk of harm, call 999 and follow their instructions.**

If a concern or allegations involves the Designated Safeguarding Lead, you should directly contact the Trustee with safeguarding responsibilities (key safeguarding contacts are available at the end of this document).

How to Record a concern

Once a concern has been shared with the appropriate person, it must be recorded in the MyConcern safeguarding system within 24 hours (if it was not done directly). The person who raised the concern is usually the most appropriate person to record it, and this can be done by completing the online form at www.arunchurch.com/safeguarding.

The online public form can be accessed by anyone and will ask for the following information which must be completed:

- **Concern date and time** (when you became aware of it)
- **Concern Summary** (a headline or title saying what the concern is about)
- **Details of Concern.** This should include:
 - The individual's name, full address, date of birth (if known)
 - the date and time of any incident that occurred (if different to the date/time you became aware).
 - An exact record of any conversation or disclosure (in their own words) including what was seen, heard and what was said.
 - Names of any third-party present.
 - Location of any injuries including their colour and shape. This should also be drawn onto a body map template (see below).
- **Your Name and Contact Details.** This is optional to allow people to report anonymously.

When recording a concern, it is important to:

- Be clear and accurate recording what was said in the individual's own words.
- Be objective and professional, being clear if you give your own opinion.
- Include any contact details i.e. telephone numbers, email addresses where possible.
- Document what actions were taken to safeguard the individual(s) at the time.

It may be appropriate for a Team leader or manager, DSL or DDSL to help with recording the concern in order to ask the right questions and get the most factual description. By default, it is preferred that concerns are recorded directly into the MyConcern system to avoid copies of sensitive information being saved and shared. However, if concerns are shared in a different manner, once saved in MyConcern, any previous copies of the concern should be destroyed or permanently deleted from other electronic systems including email.

When staff login to the MyConcern system using their account, they will be asked for extra information when logging a concern. In addition to the points above, staff will also be asked:

- **Name(s) of Person(s)** – add each person individually with Name, and Date of Birth or estimated age.
- **Send Concern to** (whom to notify within the DSL team)
- **Origin of Concern** (how you heard about it from a pre-defined list)
- **Location of incident** (select from a pre-defined list)
- **Action Taken** (any steps or measures that have already occurred, e.g. speaking to parents, phoning police, etc).
- **Attachment** (upload any photos, documents or evidence. This could include a written statement from a witness, body maps, photos of injuries, etc).

More information for staff on how to use the MyConcern system can be found at the following links:

- [Basic User](#)
- [Trusted User](#)

Staff with access to the MyConcern system must update the concern with any new information as soon as possible by logging into the system, navigating to the concern and adding to the chronology. This includes any communications with the individual or professionals, any evidence gathered, any actions taken, or any outcomes.

Body maps are used to accurately record visible injuries or marks on a child or adult at risk. They support safeguarding records by providing a clear visual reference and must be completed objectively, dated, and stored securely in line with data protection requirements outlined in this document. Body maps can be drawn within the MyConcern system by staff with access, and should always be saved there when a concern is recorded. If the person recording the concern is unable to access the system, a paper body map template should be used. An example body map template can be found at the end of this document.

What Happens Next

The DSL or DDSL will be notified when a concern is logged in MyConcern. They will review the concern and make a decision on the most appropriate action. They may need to contact the person who reported the concern for more information. The action taken will be one of the following two options:

1. **Monitor & Follow-Up** – keep an eye on the situation, asking the team to report additional concerns. The DSL may need to find out more information which might involve discussing the concern with the individual, parent/carer or other professionals as appropriate in order to establish facts. It may also include taking professional advice from appropriate safeguarding services such as ThirtyOne:Eight or the NSPCC. This is an appropriate action when the concern is minor and does not meet the threshold for risk of harm, or where the level of concern is inconclusive and may meet the threshold for risk of harm. The DSL or DDSL will set actions and deadlines for follow-up.
2. **Make a Referral** – If the concern, or a pattern of multiple concerns, meets the threshold for risk of harm, the DSL or DDSL will make a referral to the appropriate authorities in order to get appropriate help or support for those involved.

4) Refer

A referral is usually the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs). A referral will be made to the statutory services when the DSL or DDSL considers there is a **risk of harm**.

A person's risk of harm may not be permanent and may change depending on their circumstances. They may be at risk for a limited time only due to temporary changes or life events (e.g. through an illness from which they later recover). Risk may also be increased by a range of interconnected factors which may mean they are unable to protect or safeguard themselves or their own interests, or which give opportunities for others to neglect, exploit or abuse them.

Although there is no absolute criteria for determining whether or not harm is “significant”, the DSL and DDSL will make a judgement about the possible risk of harm based on the [West Sussex Continuum of Need Thresholds Guidance](#) or the Adults’ [Safeguarding Thresholds Guidance](#). The DSL and DDSL should consider making referrals not just when the risk of harm is urgent, but also when there is a longer-term risk of harm that intervention from early help services could improve.

Harm for children

Harm for children is defined as the “ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child” (Section 31, [Children Act 1989](#); Article 2). Harm can also be determined “significant” by “comparing a child’s health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child”.

Harm for adults-at-risk

Harm for adults-at-risk is defined as all harmful conduct and/or:

- behaviour that causes physical or psychological harm for example harassment and intimidation, causing fear, alarm or distress
- unlawful conduct which adversely affects property, rights or interests such as theft, fraud or extortion,
- behaviour that causes self-harm and self-neglect

An adult may be at risk of harm if they have additional care and support needs whether the local authority is meeting those needs or not, or if they are engaged in or are likely to engage in activities which may cause self-harm. Where an adult lacks the mental capacity to protect themselves or others from abuse, it may be necessary to take action on their behalf. Care is needed to not label a particular group of people or person as inherently vulnerable because of their personal characteristic as this can be disempowering.

Both The Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 place a statutory duty on organisations to consider and assess an adult’s capacity to make decisions, and to obtain valid consent before undertaking any safeguarding intervention. In safeguarding adults-at-risk, it is essential to explicitly assess mental capacity in each case, ensuring that individuals are empowered to participate in decisions about their safety and that any actions taken are in their best interests when they lack capacity. Clear documentation of capacity assessments and consent is required to meet legal and ethical obligations, supporting the rights, autonomy, and dignity of adults at risk.

Referrals for Sexting: nude & semi-nude image sharing

A considered and detailed process should be followed when deciding whether to make a child protection referral about an incident of nude image sharing. A referral should be made if:

- the incident involves an adult
- there is reason to believe that a child or young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, if they have a learning disability). More [information on Sextortion here](#).
- what you know about the image(s) suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- the image(s) involves sexual acts and any child in the image(s) is under 13
- you have reason to believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm due to the sharing of the image, for example if they are presenting as suicidal or self-harming.

Making a Referral

Making a referral to the statutory services is usually the responsibility of the DSL or DDSL. This allows for consistency in the process and for the DSL to build relationships with the referral agencies. However, staff and volunteers also have the right to share their concerns directly with the Integrated Front Door (IFD), Adult Social Care or the Police without affecting their terms of employment or role (see the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy at arunchurch.com/polices).

To make a referral, the DSL or DDSL will contact one or more of the following:

- **Integrated Front Door/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):**
The Integrated Front Door (IFD) is the only public contact point for Early Help and Children's Social Care. The IFD for West Sussex Children Services ensures that all enquiries and referrals are triaged upon receipt and directed to the appropriate service to support with the query, providing a seamless process with children receiving a service proportionate to their needs in a timely way. The team comprises of qualified Early Help specialists, qualified Social Care specialists, qualified managers, Customer Service Centre Agents and social care referral advisors.
Referrals from professionals should usually be made via the [online referral form](#).
You can also call **01403 229900** (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm) for advice and support, or **033 022 26664** for emergencies out of office hours, weekends and bank holidays.
- **Adult's Social Care:**
Referrals from professionals should usually be made via the [online referral form](#).
The general public can also call **01243 642121** (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm) to discuss concerns, or **033 022 27007** for emergencies out of office hours, weekends and bank holidays.
- **Sussex Police (non-emergency):**
Where there are concerns that a criminal offence may have been committed, professionals should call **101** or [submit a report online](#). The Police work closely with the Integrated Front Door and a referral to one, may also trigger a referral to the other.

All referrals must be confirmed in writing by the referrer within 24 working hours (if not directly submitted online). The helpdesk advisors are responsible for making initial assessment as to the nature of the referral, and with a social services manager decide whether an investigation should take place.

The DSL or DDSL should always save and upload a copy of the referral to the appropriate record in the MyConcern system, outlining the date, time and outcome of the referral.

In addition to these main referral routes, the DSL or DDSL may choose to report specific types of concern to specialist agencies, but will liaise with the above agencies first. This may include:

- **CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command)** if there are concerns a child has been groomed or sexually abused online. Reports can be made [via their website](#).
- **Prevent/Counter Terrorism** if there are extremist or radicalisation concerns. Reports can be made to the police anti-terrorism hotline on [0800 789 321](#) or suspicious activity can be reported via the [Action Counters Terrorism website](#).

Supporting those affected by Abuse

Arun Church is committed to offering pastoral care and support to all those who have been affected by abuse and have contact with this organisation, working with statutory agencies as appropriate.

We adopt a survivor-centred approach that prioritises the needs of victims or survivors. While disclosing abuse is difficult for victims and survivors, they may feel more supported if someone from the organisation regularly checks on them. Therefore, after a disclosure the DSL or DDSL should arrange for someone to offer pastoral care and check on the victim's wellbeing (with their own or their parent/carer's agreement). This should be arranged with them, so they are comfortable with the nominated person knowing about the disclosure (if they weren't initially involved), and in contacting them.

Usually, in addition to this initial pastoral care, the DSL will identify and liaise with other agencies who can provide specialist support such as local authority officers, mental health services, counselling, crisis support and advocacy services. Sometimes victims and survivors may be uncertain of what support they need or even whether they should engage with any support being offered. In this instance, the nominated person should commit to keep listening and supporting the individual until such a time as they can decide.

Further Safeguarding Procedures

Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers including Low-Level Concerns

If a complaint or allegation of abuse or harm is made against a member of staff or volunteer that works with children or adults-at-risk, it will immediately be brought to the attention of the DSL. Following any allegation, the Company will seek to:

1. Look after the welfare of the alleged victims and others involved in the allegation,
2. Investigate and support the person subject to the allegation while the investigation is ongoing.

The DSL and DDSs will need to assess whether the allegation meets the harms threshold. The harms threshold is met if it is alleged that the person has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child/adult-at-risk, or may have harmed a child/adult-at-risk; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/adult-at-risk; and/or
- behaved towards one or more children/adults-at-risk in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to them; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children or adults-at-risk.

This means the behaviour in question might indicate that a person would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in their present position, or in any capacity with children or adults-at-risk. If the DSL has any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about staff or volunteers meets the harm threshold, they should consult with the LADO.

Allegations that meet the harms threshold

Where the concerns or allegation against an individual meets the harms threshold above, the DSL will contact the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours by using the [Online referral form](#) or calling **0330 222 3339**.

It is the LADO's responsibility to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and adults-at-risk, and they will advise the DSL of the next steps which may also include contacting:

- **Ofsted** for concerns relating to a childcare setting:
0300 123 1231 or
<https://www.report-childcare-incident.service.gov.uk/serious-incident/childcare/update-incident/> within 14 days,
- **Police** for concerns of a criminal offence.

On the advice of the LADO, the Company's Disciplinary Procedure may be followed, and we will ensure that we cooperate fully with an investigation. The individual may need to be suspended from their role during this time. The alleged victim(s) and/or the Parent/Carers of the alleged victim(s) will be supported and informed of progress in the investigation. The LADO will decide if the allegations are Substantiated, Malicious, False, Unsubstantiated or Unfounded. Depending on the outcome of the investigation and the decision of the LADO, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) referral may also be triggered.

If the allegations are unclear, or if the DSL becomes aware that there may have been already been allegations made against an individual via a third party, the DSL can contact the LADO by using the [request for information form](#).

Allegations that do not meet the harms threshold (Low-Level concerns)

Where the concerns or allegation against an individual do NOT meet the harms threshold, it is considered a 'low-level concern'. This does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' – that a person working with children or adults-at-risk may have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Company's code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct elsewhere; but does not meet the harm threshold; or is otherwise not serious enough to merit a referral to the LADO. The DSL will review the information in the allegation and determine if the alleged behaviour is appropriate and consistent with both the law and the Company's code of conduct, making appropriate records of any conversations, evidence, actions, their decision and the rationale for the outcome. When reviewing the concern, the DSL should also consider any other low-level concerns that have previously been shared about the same individual, and whether the pattern of behaviour may meet the harm threshold. If so, they should be referred to the LADO under the 'allegations that meet the harms threshold' above.

The evaluation of low-level concerns can also be undertaken in consultation with the LADO. This process allows for concerns to be evaluated objectively and to ascertain whether or not similar concerns may have been raised by a previous employer but not met the threshold for investigation. Where the LADO is consulted on matters which do not reach the threshold of an allegation, the consultations will be recorded. Where an individual's details are identified and recorded, the employer should advise the adult that the LADO was consulted.

If the DSL finds that the alleged behaviour is consistent with the law and the Company's code of conduct and does **not** constitute a low-level concern, they should speak separately to both the individual the allegation is about and the person who raised the concern, explaining the outcome. The DSL should also consider whether any Company documents or guidance (such as the code of conduct) need updating for clarity, or if there is further training that would help individuals judge appropriate behaviours more consistently.

If the DSL finds that the alleged behaviour **does** constitute a low-level concern, the DSL will carry out a limited internal investigation to find out further information. This will be done discreetly and on a need-to-know basis. As most low-level concerns by their very nature are likely to be minor, some will not give rise to any ongoing concern and, accordingly, will not require any further action. Others may be most appropriately dealt with by means of management guidance and/or training. In many cases, a low-level concern will simply require a conversation with the individual the allegation is about. Any such conversation should include being clear with the individual as to why their behaviour is inappropriate, problematic or concerning, what change is required in their behaviour, enquiring what, if any, support they might need in order to achieve and maintain that, and being clear about the consequences if they fail to reach the required standard or repeat the behaviour in question.

Some low-level concerns may also raise issues of misconduct or poor performance which are unrelated to safeguarding. The DSL should also consider whether this is the case – by referring to the Company’s disciplinary and/or capability procedure and taking advice from HR on a named or no-names basis where necessary. Where a low-level concern does trigger the Company’s disciplinary, capability, grievance, whistleblowing or other procedures, these will be followed.

Anti-Bullying

The ability to recognise signs or behaviour that may indicate bullying is of fundamental importance in keeping people safe. All staff and volunteers will receive training on safeguarding and should be able to recognise the possible signs of bullying.

Signs and indicators

Indicators that a child, young person or adult-at-risk could be experiencing bullying or cyberbullying include:

- being reluctant to go to school or other specific locations
- being distressed or anxious
- losing confidence and becoming withdrawn
- having problems eating and/or sleeping
- having unexplained injuries
- changes in appearance
- changes in performance and/or behaviour at school.

Staff and volunteers may notice that a child, young person or adult-at-risk isn't spending time with their usual group of friends, has become isolated or that other people's behaviour towards that child, young person or adult-at-risk has changed.

What to do if you are being bullied

If you are being bullied, you should never keep it to yourself. Tell someone you trust. This could be your team leader or manager, a teacher, another helper at Arun Church or someone else. If you are a child or young person, you could also talk to your parent or carer. You may prefer to tell another child or young person first and ask them to help you tell an adult.

If the bullying is happening at any activities run by Arun Church, we will seek to address it directly using the process outlined below. If it's happening somewhere else (at school, for example, or near your home), we will get other people involved to help stop it happening there.

Responding to bullying

No sign of bullying should ever be ignored. The welfare of a child or adult-at-risk is paramount. Statements about, or allegations of bullying made by children or adults-at-risk, must always be taken seriously.

If you believe a person is in immediate risk of harm, call 999 and follow their instructions. You should then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the earliest opportunity.

If you identify signs or indicators of bullying

You should record it by following the process outlined in the 'Record' section above. If appropriate, you could ask the victim some open questions that may help them share any concerns if they want to (e.g. You seem a bit quiet today, can you tell me about it?). If the person decides not to talk, then their decision should be respected, but your concerns must still be recorded.

If you observe bullying directly

You must act assertively to put a stop to it or ask your team leader or manager to help you do so. If the situation is calm, and it is appropriate at the time, talk to those involved in the bullying about acceptable behaviour and our code of conduct. You could ask those who have been bullied what they would like to happen next, and consider appropriate sanctions for those that have carried out bullying. If you've not already done so, report the incident to your team leader or manager, and record it by following the process outlined in the 'Record' section above.

If a person makes a disclosure of bullying

- **If you are a child or young person** and someone tells you that they are being bullied, don't try to deal with it yourself. Talk to the person about getting help from an adult. Try to persuade them to explain the situation to their team leader or manager or another helper at Arun Church. If they won't do this, the best way to help is to explain that you will have to tell an adult yourself -- and then go ahead and tell someone.
- **If you are an adult** and a child, young person or adult-at-risk tells you that they are being bullied, take them seriously. Listen to their full account of what is going on and complete a report as soon as possible by following the process outlined in the 'Record' section above.

Responding to online bullying and cyberbullying:

In addition to the process above, when dealing with incidents of online or cyberbullying, you should:

- make sure children know not to retaliate online or reply to any bullying messages
- make sure children understand how they can take steps to prevent online bullying from happening again, for example by changing their contact details, blocking contacts or leaving a chat room
- ask if they have shared the bullying content with anyone else (if so, who).

If you discover that bullying content has been circulated online, you should talk to the DSL or DDSL and take action to contain it:

- if appropriate, ask the person responsible to remove the content
- report the content to the website or app you've seen it on, asking them to remove it
- See the section on 'Online Abuse' below for more information

What Happens Next

Unless the incident is very minor and can be dealt with informally in the moment, a team leader or manager will contact the victim's parents/carers as soon as possible and within one working day. If possible, a meeting between the victim(s), the team leader or manager and the parents/carers should be arranged. At the meeting, the bullying incident should be discussed and the details of a draft plan drawn up to address the situation, taking into account any suggestions made by the victim(s) involved and their parents/carers.

The team leader or manager, having spoken to the person who has been bullied and their parent/carers, should also speak to the bully (or bullies) and obtain their account of what has happened or is happening. This should be noted in writing and the parents/carers of the bully (or bullies) should also be informed. The bully and their parents/carers should be

asked for their views on what should be done to put a stop to any further bullying and to repair the damage that has been done.

The following areas should be covered:

- details of any apology that has been or should be offered by the bully (or bullies)
- details of any support for the person who has been bullied (e.g. use of buddy scheme, extra input from the team leader or manager, referral to another service, etc).
- details of any consequences for the bully, in addition to making an apology, with reference to the Company code of conduct
- details of any support for the bully, with reference to the code of conduct
- details of any further discussions or work to be done with others in the group, including children who may have observed or encouraged the bullying
- details of any changes in how the organisation may handle issues of bullying in future.

The written plan should be shared with all parties and should be reviewed regularly. If meetings cannot take place between parties, then a plan should be written based on the available information.

If the bullying is taking place in another environment (e.g. school) the team leader or manager should ask what support the victim and their parent/carer would like, in order to engage with whoever the responsible agencies might be. The team leader or manager should aim to work in partnership with both the victim, their parent/carer, and any other people who may be involved.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse, sometimes referred to as peer-on-peer abuse, encompasses any situation where a child or young person is harmed, bullied, or exploited by another child or group of children. This form of abuse can manifest as physical, emotional, sexual, or online abuse, and can occur in various environments such as schools, neighbourhoods, online communities, and youth settings.

All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be taken seriously. Staff must act promptly to ensure the safety of all involved, separate the children if necessary, and seek immediate advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

The process for dealing with child-on-child abuse is the same as the Responding to Bullying process outlined in the Anti-Bullying section above.

Where inappropriate sexual activity takes place between two children, or where a young person is in a position of power over another or has responsibility for them (e.g. in a babysitting arrangement), it should be responded to in the same way as if they were an adult. If an investigation subsequently takes place, the perpetrator is also likely to be regarded as a victim due to the possibility that they have unmet needs or may have been abused themselves. Therefore, both the victim and perpetrator(s) should be offered support as outlined in the Refer section above.

Code of Conduct for working with children and adults-at-risk

The purpose and scope of the Code of Conduct

This code of conduct (or behaviour code) outlines the behaviours and conduct that Arun Church expects from all staff and volunteers. This includes anyone who is undertaking duties for the organisation, whether paid or unpaid. Employed staff should also refer to the 'Behaviour At Work' section in the Employee Handbook.

This code exists to help us provide a positive environment for all, and to protect children, young people and adults-at-risk from abuse. Arun Church is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in our activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow this code of conduct, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

The role of staff and volunteers

In your role at Arun Church, you are acting in a position of trust. You have a duty of care towards the children, young people and adults we work with. We expect you to always display appropriate behaviour. This includes behaviour that takes place outside our organisation and online. You are seen as a role model by others, and you therefore represent Arun Church.

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children, young people and adults-at-risk
- providing a safe environment for children, young people and adults-at-risk
- ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and acting when appropriate
- following our principles, policies and procedures outlined in this document including safeguarding, whistleblowing and online safety
- always operating within the law
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of this behaviour code to your team leader or manager
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, including behaviour online, by following the procedures in this document - this includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age

Appropriate behaviour

Appropriate behaviour is the attitude and actions that we expect everyone to demonstrate. When working with children, young people and adults-at-risk, **you should**:

- always act in ways that promote the values of the church; God First, Passionate, Brave, Generous, Together.
- building positive relationships based on openness, honesty, trust and respect, and being kind to others.
- listen to and respect children, young people and adults-at-risk
- value and seek contributions from children, young people and adults-at-risk, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a person's right to personal privacy as far as possible - if you need to break confidentiality to follow safeguarding procedures, it is important to explain this to the child, young person or adult-at-risk at the earliest opportunity.

- be patient with others
- be cautious when discussing sensitive issues
- ensure your contact is appropriate and relevant to the activity you are involved in
- ensure there is more than one adult present during activities - if a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or can be heard by other adults (see guidance on Levels of Supervision and Working One-to-One)
- only provide personal care in an emergency and make sure there is more than one adult present, if possible, unless it has been agreed that the provision of personal care is part of your role and you have been trained to do this safely (e.g. nappy changing in the pre-school).
- treat people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children, young people and adults-at-risk have individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge and report any discrimination and prejudice
- encourage people to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Inappropriate behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour is any action that could be considered unsuitable or improper. When working with children, young people and adults-at-risk, you **must not**:

- allow any concerns or allegations to go unreported
- showing favouritism to particular groups or individuals
- take unnecessary risks or putting others in danger
- smoke or vape, use alcohol or illegal substances at or near work or in work uniform
- develop intense, overfamiliar or improper relationships
- make unsuitable or unreasonable promises
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive, including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle others, even as a joke
- make hurtful sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures.
- let people have your personal contact details (such as mobile number, email or postal address) or have private contact with them via a personal social media account. See guidance on Online Safety for further information.

Upholding this code of conduct

You should always follow this code of conduct and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you. If you have behaved inappropriately or allegations are made about your conduct, you may will be subject to our disciplinary procedures outlined in the Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers section. This includes 'low-level' concerns that do not meet the harms threshold. If you become aware of any breaches of this code by others, you must report them to your team leader or manager. If necessary, you should follow our whistleblowing and safeguarding procedures outlined in this document.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All concerns recorded by the Company will remain confidential, be stored securely in the MyConcern database, and shared on a need-to-know basis in line with the Company's Privacy Statement available at www.arunchurch.com/privacy. Access is afforded only to a limited number of individuals such as the DSL or DDSL.

Information Sharing

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) supports the sharing of relevant information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Similarly, the statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) establishes that:

- effective sharing of information is essential for early identification of need, assessment, and service provision to keep children safe.
- Staff and volunteers should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess, and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children.
- Information sharing is also essential for the identification of patterns of behaviour when a child is at risk of going missing or has gone missing, including being missing from education.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults-at-risk.

Consent

It is not necessary to seek consent to share information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of a child, provided that there is a lawful basis to process any personal information required. The legal bases that may be appropriate for sharing data in these circumstances could be “legal obligation” or “public task”, which includes the performance of a task in the public interest or the exercise of official authority.

However, while it is not legally necessary to seek consent to share information for the purposes of safeguarding, wherever possible concerns about an individual should be discussed with them, their parents/carers or immediate family, and agreement sought for a referral **unless** this might:

- Place the individual at risk of significant harm e.g. by the behavioural response it prompts or by leading to an unreasonable delay.
- Lead to the risk of losing evidential material.
- In cases where fabricated or induced illness is suspected.

When making a referral it will be asked if the person or a parent/carer has given their consent, so this should be recorded and confirmed in the referral. A decision **not** to seek consent before making a referral must also be recorded and reasons given when making the referral.

Retention of Records

Safeguarding records relating to children will be kept until the child turns 25 (seven years after they reach the school leaving age) (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2016). In certain cases, records may be kept for longer periods of time, but must be clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

All records of an adult's behaviour around children (including low-level concerns and those which are subsequently deemed by the DSL to not constitute a low-level concern), will be retained in the MyConcern safeguarding system for ten years or until they reach the age of 65 - whichever is longer (IRMS, 2016; Department for Education (DfE), 2020). This makes it easier to address further issues and spot any patterns of inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour.

If a low-level concern involving issues of misconduct or poor performance triggers a disciplinary, capability, grievance, whistleblowing or other such procedure, a copy of the concern will be retained on the staff member's personnel file for seven years following the end of employment, in addition to the MyConcern database.

Again, in certain cases records may be kept for longer periods of time, but must be clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period. Longer-term retention is usually justifiable where a record may be necessary for an employment claim, or a claim brought by a service user.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding recognises that young people can be vulnerable to harm, abuse, or exploitation outside their family environment - in places such as school, neighbourhoods, peer groups, and online communities. The Company is committed to identifying and responding to these wider influences, understanding that risk does not exist in isolation, and that effective safeguarding requires engagement with the contexts in which young people live their lives.

We ensure that our policies, procedures, and interventions consider both individual and environmental factors that may impact a child's safety and well-being. Staff receive training to recognise contextual risks, and we work in partnership with families, schools, local authorities, and other agencies to provide coordinated support and protection.

Relevant legislation underpinning our approach includes, but is not limited to:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004: Establishes the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018: Sets out statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023: Provides statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding and child protection.

All staff are expected to be familiar with these frameworks and to apply contextual safeguarding principles in all aspects of their work.

Escalation Procedures

If you believe that a safeguarding concern is not being taken seriously or is not being dealt with in a timely or appropriate manner, you should seek to escalate your concern. Initially, this should be with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If your concern is not satisfied, then you should contact the Trustee with safeguarding responsibility.

Inter-Agency Professional Challenge

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency is either not safe or not in the best interests of a child or adult-at-risk. If you disagree with the progress or outcome of actions taken by other professionals, you should first:

- Always follow these procedures.
- Utilise supervision to discuss concern with your manager/team leader.
- Plan your approach.
- Look at your record keeping and make sure you have provided the evidence to meet the criteria for abuse or neglect.
- Check and reference against the local authority threshold documents.
- Use standardised and actuarial approaches.
- Review and update any risk assessments appropriate to the concern.
- Review and update the case chronology (usually in MyConcern).
- Involve the family.
- Develop understanding around barriers to interagency collaboration.
- Remain focused on the child.
- Discuss your concerns directly with the line team leader of the social worker.
- Have self-confidence.
- Share your expectations.

In the event of a continued difference of opinion, the [West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership Escalation Policy](#) and the [Sussex Safeguarding Adults Escalation and Resolution Protocol](#) provide the means to raise concerns about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- Encouraging professional curiosity
- Avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- Resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- Identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

In the event of a professional disagreement with another agency, you should inform the DSL or DDSL of the situation and work through the appropriate Escalation Policy together.

Health & Safety

The company has a separate Health & Safety policy and various processes in place for ensuring that physical environments are safe and secure, protecting people from harm or the risk of harm. This includes conducting Risk Assessments, Hazard reporting, Accident recording and Near Miss recording. We also have appropriate insurance in place for the organisation relevant to the nature of our activities.

Where we hire or rent our premises to other organisations, we aim to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children and vulnerable adults safe including that they have their own safeguarding policy that matches the standards in this document.

Levels of Supervision

The Company will always ensure the appropriate level of supervision for people in our care adhering to specific requirements where necessary. Supervision levels will vary depending on the age, gender, behaviour and abilities within the group. They will also vary depending on:

- the nature and duration of activities
- the competence and experience of staff involved
- the requirements of location, accommodation or organisation
- any special medical needs
- any specialist equipment needed.

Adult to child ratios in childcare

For our childcare settings, we follow the staff to child ratios set out by Ofsted in the [Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#). With regard to specific criteria around staff qualifications, the usual ratios at our pre-schools are:

- 1 adult to 3 children aged 0-2.
- 1 adult to 5 children aged 2.
- 1 adult to 8 children aged 3 and over.

We are also mindful that in our childcare settings:

- staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.
- children must usually be within both sight and hearing of staff and always within at least either sight or hearing.
- only those aged 17 or over may be included in ratios (and staff under 17 should be supervised at all times).
- students on long term placements, volunteers and staff working as apprentices may be included in the ratios if they are old enough and we are satisfied that they are competent and responsible.

Adult to child ratios in other activities

For other activities, the [NSPCC Guidance on appropriate levels of supervision for children and young people](#) will be used. Supervision levels will vary depending on children's age, gender, behaviour and abilities but will usually be a minimum of:

- 1 adult to 3 children for 0-2 years
- 1 adult to 4 children for 2-3 years
- 1 adult to 6 children for 4-8 years
- 1 adult to 8 children for 9-12 years
- 1 adult to 10 children for 13-18 years

At least two adults will be present, even with smaller groups. Depending on the needs and abilities of the children, and the nature of the activity, more adults than the minimum may be needed. This will be determined by a risk assessment of the activity.

If young people are helping to supervise younger children, only people aged 18 or over will be included as adults in calculating adult to child ratios.

Missing Person Procedure

If a child or adult-at-risk is found to be missing during any activity run by the Company, staff will immediately follow this procedure, which prioritises the safety and swift recovery of the person. The response will be adapted to suit the age of the person, the specific risks of the venue or activity, and any individual needs. All incidents will be recorded and reviewed to support ongoing improvement in safeguarding practices.

Standard Missing Person Procedure

In the event that a person is identified as missing, the following best practice steps will be taken to prioritise the child's safety and ensure a swift, coordinated response:

- Upon discovering a person is missing, staff must remain calm, conduct a quick head count, and confirm the absence by checking attendance registers and speaking with staff and children present.
- Staff and volunteers will immediately search the premises and any safe surrounding areas, paying particular attention to exits, hiding places, and locations known to be of interest to the person. All available adults will be assigned to search specific zones to avoid duplication and ensure comprehensive coverage.
- The Team Leader will be informed as soon as possible and will coordinate the ongoing search and response. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) will also be alerted.
- The person's parents or carers will be contacted without delay, informed of the situation, and kept updated throughout the process.
- If the person is not found within a short period (usually 10 minutes, or sooner if there are known vulnerabilities or environmental risks), the police will be notified by calling 999. Information provided should include the person's name, description, clothing, last known location, and any medical or individual needs.
- A detailed written record will be kept throughout the incident, noting times, actions taken, people involved, and outcomes.
- Once the person is found and safe, a full debrief will take place with all relevant parties, including staff, parents, and, where appropriate, the child or adult-at-risk. The incident will be reviewed to identify any lessons learned and to improve future safeguarding practices.
- Emotional support will be offered to the person, family, and staff, as needed, and additional measures will be put in place to prevent recurrence.

Nappy Changing and Toileting

Other than in our childcare settings, staff and volunteers do not routinely provide personal care or hygiene assistance for children. This is usually the responsibility of parents and carers, but we aim to use venues with dedicated changing areas and children's toilet facilities wherever possible.

In our childcare settings, we provide individual privacy for each child in small cubicles, whilst also allowing staff to have oversight for safety. This allows us to balance the child's privacy with our safeguarding responsibility to ensure their dignity is respected at all times.

Online Abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, using technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones, games consoles and other internet-enabled devices.

Children and young people may experience several types of abuse online, including:

- [bullying or cyberbullying](#) – see the 'Anti-Bullying' section above for more info
- [emotional abuse](#) (including emotional blackmail)
- harassment, stalking or other threatening behaviour
- sexting - when people share a sexual message and/or a naked or semi-naked image, video or text message with another person. Someone may consent to sending a nude image of themselves but they can also be forced, tricked or coerced into sharing images by others online. Those involved in a sexting incident might have:
 - shared an image of themselves
 - asked for an image from someone else
 - received an unsolicited image
 - shared an image of someone else

Whether someone shares an image consensually or not, they have no control over how other people might use or share it. They may experience bullying or isolation if the image is shared around peer groups. Perpetrators of abuse may circulate a nude image more widely and use this to blackmail or groom them for further sexual abuse.

- [sexual abuse](#)
- [sexual exploitation](#).

Children and young people may also be exposed to online harms, such as inappropriate behaviours or content online. Online abuse can happen anywhere that allows digital communication, such as:

- social media
- text messages and messaging apps
- email and private messaging
- online chats
- comments on video or livestreaming sites
- chat in games, including voice chat
- immersive technologies such as virtual and augmented reality

Perpetrators seek to exploit digital technology to initiate, maintain and escalate abuse. They may also groom children, young people and adults-at-risk online, using online platforms to build a trusting relationship with the intention of abusing a child or young person. Perpetrators will often try to engage with young people across a variety of online platforms. They may also encourage children to move conversations to platforms that use end-to-end encryption. This means only the sender and recipient can see the content of messages which makes it harder to identify threats to child safety.

Online abuse may:

- be part of abuse that's also happening face-to-face such as bullying or an abusive relationship
- happen only online
- start online then develop into contact abuse.

Children, young people and adults-at-risk can be at risk of online abuse from people they know offline, or from people they have only known online. Children may have a false sense of safety online, which means they're more likely to talk to strangers. Perpetrators may also create anonymous profiles or pretend to be another child. This means children and young people may not realise who they're speaking to.

Victims can also experience further abuse, or be revictimised, if abusive content is recorded, uploaded or shared by others online – whether the original abuse happened online or offline.

Signs and indicators of Online Abuse

Many of the signs that someone is being abused online are the same as those outlined in our Recognise section above. Signs vary and will depend on the individual child or young person, and the type of harm they are experiencing. Someone who is experiencing online abuse may also:

- **become more secretive about their devices or who they are talking to:** It's normal for children and young people to want more privacy as they get older. But if this is accompanied by unusual or strong emotional reactions, there may be something wrong. For example, young people may hide their screen when someone approaches or share less information than normal about what they do online. They might behave agitated, anxious or fearful if someone picks up or wants to use their phone or other device.
- **appear isolated or withdrawn from their usual friendships and activities, or have new friends:** You may notice that a child or young person is spending less time with their existing friends. Or they may be spending a lot of time with a new friend, but offer very little information about who they are or what they are doing. They might go out for long periods, start missing school or cancelling other activities that they used to enjoy.
- **spend more (or suddenly less) time online:** Children and young people may start spending increasing time online, perhaps staying up late, when they hadn't done previously. They might spend more time talking with new online friends. Or they might stop using their phone or other devices with no explanation.

Although any child or young person can experience online abuse or harm, research suggests there are some factors that can make children and young people more vulnerable to abuse. These factors include things like:

- age
- gender
- being LGBTQ+
- loneliness or social isolation
- living in care
- special educational needs or disability
- mental health problems
- previous experiences of abuse.

Responding to Online Abuse

Someone might tell you that they've been involved in abusive activity online, or you might hear or see something that is concerning. For example, you might notice a child's behaviour has changed or you might overhear a conversation that indicates something is wrong.

If you are concerned, never wait for someone to tell you directly that they have been involved in online abuse. The process for responding to online abuse is the same as for other safeguarding concerns. You should follow the instructions in the Record section above.

The DSL or DDSL will take the lead on responding to incidents of online abuse and they will liaise with agencies such as the police or children's social care as outlined in the Refer section above. The main purpose of referring to other agencies is for safeguarding and child protection. We will avoid criminalising young people unnecessarily.

If you believe a person is in immediate risk of harm, call 999 and follow their instructions. You should then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at the earliest opportunity.

Supporting those who have experienced online abuse

It's essential that those who experienced online abuse receive ongoing support. If you're talking to someone who has been involved in online abuse, it's important to remain calm, reassuring and non-judgmental. Give them time to talk and check that you understand what they have said. Find out what's happened, how they are feeling and what support they need.

Once a concern has been recorded and the DSL or DDSL is aware, parents and carers should usually be contacted, unless doing so might pose a risk to the person. It may also be appropriate to make a referral to a counselling service or therapeutic support in line with the 'Supporting those affected by Abuse' section above.

If you are concerned or upset about anything you see on the internet or any messages that you receive, you can talk to your team leader or line manager.

Reporting online child abuse images

It's against the law to produce or share images of child abuse, even if the image was self-created. This includes sharing images and videos over social media. If you see a child abuse image or video online, including self-generated nude or semi-nude images, or if someone reports the existence of an image or video to you, you should let the DSL and DDSL know by using the process outlined in the Record section above. When you record the concern, it will be important to know:

- if it's an image, video or message
- who sent it
- who is featured in it
- if there were any adults involved
- if it's on an organisational or personal device
- if it has been shared elsewhere.

Never copy, print or share sexual images of a child or young person. Do not comment, like or share the video or image, as this will distribute it further. Some images and videos may appear old but it's still important to report them, you may be able to help prevent the video being shared further.

The DSL or DDSL may advise one or more of the following actions:

- reporting the image to the website or app you've seen it on
- making a referral to child protection services
- reporting concerns to the police
- reporting images involving sexual abuse to the [Internet Watch Foundation \(IWF\)](#) who will take steps to get it removed from the internet.

You should only ever search devices under instruction from the DSL or DDSL and if the child is at immediate risk of harm. If a device needs to be given to the police you should:

- confiscate the device and call the police
- disconnect it from WiFi and data if possible
- turn off the device (to avoid images being removed remotely via a cloud storage service)
- store the device somewhere secure, such as in a locked cupboard or safe, until it is handed to the police.

Online Safety

Online safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate and access the Internet; often referred to as Information and Communications Technology. The following section outlines Arun Church's expectations for keeping people safe online. In addition to this procedure, employees should also refer to the IT and Communications, and Social Media sections in the Employee Handbook.

We seek to keep people safe online by:

- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our Code of Conduct
- supporting and encouraging children, young people and adults-at-risk to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult, child or young person
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- ensuring personal information about everyone involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

General Principles

When using the internet, social media, online gaming, email and mobile communication devices, all staff and volunteers should:

- seek to maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and their children, young people and adults-at-risk.
- always use an appropriate tone that is friendly, but not over-familiar or personal.
- Communicate as if you are in public, even if you are contacting one person. You should always assume that all your communications may be seen by other people at some point.
- be clear and explicit about information that you need to share; don't abbreviate or short-cut your communications, or send long, confusing narratives.
- If you are unsure what is appropriate, talk with your team leader or manager.

Communicating with children, young people and adults-at-risk online

- You must only communicate with children, young people and adults-at-risk directly if the church holds consent to do so from their parent or carer, or they are at an age where they can give their own consent (usually 17-18 years old). Consent should always be recorded in the church software systems (e.g. ChurchSuite). If children, young people and adults-at-risk want the church to have their mobile phone numbers, e-mail addresses or similar, and to

receive communications from the church, you should seek to gain consent from the parent or carer and record it.

- Where consent is given, communication with children, young people and adults-at-risk should usually take place between the hours of 9am-5pm. When working with children outside normal office hours, workers should seek advice from their team leader or manager about appropriate communication, but there should be no communication after 9pm.
- You must only make contact with children, young people and adults-at-risk for reasons related to the work of the organisation, and where possible only use equipment provided by the church.
- Email should only be used to communicate specific information. (e.g. times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- When communicating with children, young people and adults-at-risk, be cautious and mindful to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Use of video calling (FaceTime, WhatsApp, Teams, Zoom, etc) and web cameras via the internet is generally not permitted for use with children, young people and adults-at-risk. Workers should not use this method on a one-to-one basis. Video calling is only considered appropriate if a project or group uses a web camera in a group environment for project purposes and has clear aims and objectives for its use.
- Use of social media accounts to privately message children, young people and adults-at-risk is not allowed. See the 'Confidentiality and personal information' and 'social media' sections below.

Confidentiality and personal information online

- Communicating via email and text messaging should be done through the church software systems by default (e.g. ChurchSuite) as this keeps a record of the communication.
- Where other methods are used for communication with children, young people and adults-at-risk (e.g. via WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), workers must:
 - a. ensure that more than one person is in the chat,
 - b. or, if that is not appropriate and/or the chat is instigated by the child or young person, devices and chats should be regularly reviewed by a team leader / line manager.
 - c. or, screenshots of conversations should be saved to company systems and stored confidentially.
- Keeping records of communications must always be balanced with a person's right to confidentiality, unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed. Therefore, you should let children, young people and adults-at-risk know in advance that their messages to you may be shared with designated people within the organisation.
- Only give out contact details that are within the public domain of the church (i.e. mobile telephone numbers and email addresses that are owned by the church).
- Do not let children, young people and adults-at-risk have your personal contact details (such as mobile number, email or postal address, usernames or gamertags) or have private contact with them via a personal social media account.
 - a. Where a service user is already known to you outside of your role for Arun Church (e.g. your own child or a close family friend), you should talk to your team leader or manager about setting acceptable boundaries for your communication with them. This may include setting limits of when and how often you communicate (e.g. between 9am and 5pm) or being willing to show copies of messages to the team leader/manager on occasion to be accountable. These examples are not exhaustive.

Personal Social Media Use

- Staff and volunteers must ensure their social media privacy settings are at the highest levels of security in order to restrict children, young people and adults-at-risk being able to see any personal information.
- All interactions on company social media accounts, groups or forums will be monitored and recorded for safeguarding purposes
- Any social media interaction between workers, paid or voluntary, and children, young people or adults-at-risk must be limited to monitored/administrated groups or forums. No-one should privately message children, young people and adults-at-risk (see the C and personal information section above).
- Any private messages received from children, young people and adults-at-risk must be recorded for safeguarding purposes.
- Any text or other media posted online is subject to the acceptable use policy (below)
- All users of social media platforms must be above the minimum age limit for that platform (e.g. 13 for Facebook)
- All company social media accounts will provide links to statutory authorities such as CEOP, to enable people to report online abuse.

Acceptable Use of Internet

Where access to the internet is provided on company devices or on personal devices using the company WIFI, we exercise our right to monitor usage; which includes access to websites, interception and deletion of inappropriate or criminal material or unlawfully copied text, video, images or sound.

- WIFI Access will be subject to acceptance of our terms and conditions, or via a secure password.
- You are responsible for your behaviour when using the internet, including social media platforms, games and apps. This includes the resources you access and the language you use.
- You will not deliberately browse, download or upload material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If you accidentally come across any such material, you must report it immediately to the team leader or line manager
- You will not send or share material that could be considered threatening, bullying, offensive or illegal.
- You will not give out any personal information online, such as your name, phone number or address.
- You will not reveal your passwords to anyone.
- You will not access online services using another person's login details.
- You will not arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone you meet online unless you have discussed this with and are accompanied by a trusted adult.

A breach of the Acceptable Use terms above may result in:

- A temporary or permanent ban on company internet use.
- A temporary or permanent ban from the company event or activity.
- Disciplinary action outlined in the Disciplinary Procedure section of the Employee Handbook, or the Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers section above (including 'low-level' concerns that do not meet the harms threshold).A referral to other agencies including the police or local authority where applicable.

Physical Intervention

Physical intervention is the use of physical contact by staff or volunteers. It is only ever used by the Company to keep children safe, prevent harm, or protect property. It is never used as a form of punishment. Physical intervention may be used only when absolutely necessary, for example:

- To prevent a child from harming themselves or others.
- To prevent serious damage to property.
- To prevent a child from running into danger (e.g., leaving the premises).

How Physical Intervention Is used

- Staff will use the minimum force necessary for the shortest time possible.
- Staff will use approved, safe techniques (e.g., gently holding a child's arm or guiding them away from danger).
- Physical intervention will be carried out by trained staff, wherever possible.
- Staff will always try to use de-escalation and distraction techniques first.

Whenever physical intervention is used, the incident will be recorded as soon as possible, including:

- Person's name
- Date and time
- Reason for intervention
- Description of what happened
- Staff involved
- Any injuries or distress observed

Parents/carers will be informed on the same day and invited to discuss the incident, and all incidents are reported to the Team Leader or Manager.

If a child or staff member is injured, normal accident reporting procedures will be followed.

If there are concerns about the use of physical intervention, these will also be reported following the safeguarding policy outlined above.

All incidents are reviewed regularly to ensure best practice and to identify any patterns or training needs.

Prolonged Absences

If a child or adult-at-risk is absent from an activity for a prolonged period (usually 3 to 5 sessions depending on frequency of sessions) without prior notification, the company will follow up by contacting the person's parents or carers to check on their welfare and offer any necessary support.

Emergency contact details will be followed up should parents or primary carers be unreachable. A record of the absence and any reasons given will be recorded on file for the individual.

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the Company's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) policy is available to staff in the Employee Handbook, and to everyone on our website (www.arunchurch.com/policies). It outlines the procedure to follow if you believe that unsafe practice is occurring, has occurred, or may occur.

Registration & Collection Procedure

All activities for children and for known adults-at-risk where the parent/carer is not present, will have a registration process where they are signed into and out of the activity. The specific process will look different depending on ages, abilities and venue. For example, the registration process for a pre-school will be different to a youth club. However, the following principles apply for all activities:

Registration Procedure

- Every child and known adult-at-risk attending an activity must be registered at the point of arrival by a parent, carer, or authorised adult.
- Registration records will include the person's full name, emergency contact details, any relevant medical information, and the name of the person responsible for collecting them.
- Where possible, we will provide opportunities for parent/carers to register children and known adults-at-risk in advance
- All registration information will be kept secure and confidential in accordance with data protection legislation.

Collection/Sign-Out Procedure

- Children aged 11 and under, and known adults-at-risk must be signed out of activities by a parent, carer, or authorised adult whose details were provided at registration, unless written consent has been given by the parent/carer that the person can leave on their own.
- Children aged 11 and over (of Secondary school age) will usually be allowed to leave on their own, unless otherwise stated by their parent/carer, or the environment is considered unsafe (e.g later at night).
- Staff will verify the identity of the collecting adult before allowing the person to leave, using the information provided at registration.
- If a different person is collecting the child or known adult-at-risk, written or clearly communicated authorisation by the parent/carer is required.
- No person will be permitted to leave the premises unaccompanied unless prior written consent is given by the parent/carer and deemed appropriate according to age and circumstances.

Registers will be checked at regular intervals during activities to ensure all children are accounted for. In case of emergency, registers will be used to confirm the presence and whereabouts of every person.

We maintain comprehensive records of all scheduled activities, ensuring that staff and volunteers provide a summary or debrief at the conclusion of each session. This practice supports our commitment to reflective improvement, transparent safeguarding, and continuous learning across the organisation.

Safeguarding Reviews & Learning

As part of the Company's commitment to best practice in safeguarding, we have systems in place for the regular review of our safeguarding practices in order to learn from incidents and implement any changes or recommendations. These systems include:

- **Review of policy:** This safeguarding policy and procedure is reviewed annually as a minimum, and updated as soon as possible following any changes to named staff or national and local guidance.
- **Safeguarding audits:** Completed annually to identify strengths and weaknesses in our safeguarding arrangements and ensure our compliance with legal safeguarding obligations.
- **Case reviews:** The DSL and DDSs meet monthly to review open concerns. This review includes identifying any updates and planning next steps on each concern.
- **Meeting Agendas:** Safeguarding is a standing agenda item in most of our recurring meetings including Leadership, Trustees, Team leaders (Department Heads), Weekly Staff Team, 1-1 supervision and activity debriefs, ensuring the topic is discussed regularly.
- **Data Monitoring:** Reports on anonymised safeguarding data are provided to trustees on a quarterly basis. This report includes categories and statistics on the reported safeguarding concerns and the types of actions taken, but there is no identifiable personal information shared. These reports help the trustees to identify any trends, themes, or cause for concern and to manage the organisation's resources appropriately.

Oversight and Monitoring

The Leadership Team and board of Trustees have the responsibility for the company's response to safeguarding, and for submitting Serious Incident Reports to the Charity Commission if needed.

The trustees are not normally involved in individual cases, and do not have access to the MyConcern system where details are stored. If a concern is raised that has serious implications for the organisation, the **nominated trustee with safeguarding responsibility** will be informed at the earliest opportunity to help coordinate the response. The leadership team and trustees will be informed and updated on serious cases by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or nominated trustee with safeguarding responsibility.

Safer Recruitment

The Company follows Safer Recruitment procedures to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers. The full list of checks is outlined in the company's Recruitment & Induction Policies. Measures include:

- Ensuring our commitment to safeguarding is made clear in role adverts and that safeguarding checks will be made on applicants.
- Ensuring all adults both paid and voluntary are aware that work with children is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974,
- Having a written job description and person specification for all paid roles that outlines any safeguarding responsibilities of the role.
- Asking candidates to complete a formal application rather than accepting a CV.
- Having a shortlisting and interview process.
- Obtaining two references (with one from the current/most recent employer), two pieces of identification, and original copies of any necessary qualifications from candidates.
- Completing Right to Work checks for employees.
- Requesting applicants complete a self-declaration of any criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- Complete disclosure and barring (DBS) checks for each member of staff or volunteer working with children, young people or adults-at-risk in line with DBS and other official guidelines. Anyone who does not meet the criteria for a vetting and barring check (e.g. under 16's), will always be supervised by appropriately checked adults.
- Requiring evidence of any qualifications and membership of professional bodies
- Completing childcare disqualification checks for applicants working in or managing early years or school settings.
- Completing charity disqualification checks for trustees and senior managers.
- Requiring everyone to undertake relevant safeguarding induction training within 6 weeks of their start date.
- Completing regular reviews, session debriefs, and 1:1 supervision with staff.
- A rolling programme of DBS re-checking every 3 years and Update Service checks annually.

Induction, training, supervision and support

All staff and volunteers should be able to recognise the possible signs of abuse including emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, and neglect, and to know how to report any concerns. Therefore, each person is made aware of our code of conduct and the safeguarding procedures in this document and must complete appropriate safeguarding training within 6 weeks of their start date, and annually thereafter.

The level and depth of safeguarding training will depend upon the role and responsibility of the individual. We use a variety of training providers and methods including individual and group learning through in-person, eLearning, and webinars.

- **Basic** – for those with infrequent and supervised contact with children and/or adults-at-risk. This is usually delivered in-house, covering signs of abuse and how to report concerns.
- **Intermediate** – for those with more regular and/or unsupervised contact with children and/or adults-at-risk. This may be an in-person or eLearning course with CPD Accreditation that covers everything at the Basic level, plus information about key legislation and duties.
- **Advanced** – for those with Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) responsibilities. This may be an in-person, eLearning course or

webinar with CPD Accreditation that covers everything at the Intermediate level, plus additional information about DSL responsibilities. This training is required every 2 years.

Completed safeguarding training certificates are kept on file for each person, with a central training log maintained for all staff and volunteers. Additional training is also be offered depending on the requirements role, which could include Food Hygiene, Paediatric First Aid, Lone Working, etc.

All employees must complete a probationary period in the role, will have regular one-to-one supervision with their line manager, and regular team meetings. Safeguarding is embedded in practice across the organisation as a standing agenda item in supervision and team meetings, with regular discussion and updates. Volunteers are also expected to take part in debrief sessions after an activity, where they can feedback any thoughts and gain support when needed. This allows for monitoring of ongoing suitability of staff and volunteers, with everyone required to complete annual declarations.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for every child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Children with SEND are at greater risk of neglect, exploitation, and bullying due to barriers in communication, social interaction, and understanding, as well as dependence on adults for care and advocacy. Their increased vulnerability demands vigilant safeguarding practices and tailored support to ensure their protection and well-being.

Our staff and volunteers do not routinely provide personal care or hygiene assistance for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). However, we recognise that some children may require additional support. In such cases, we work closely with parents/carers and relevant professionals to develop individual care plans that uphold the child's dignity, privacy, and preferences. All arrangements are clearly documented, risk assessed and followed in accordance with safeguarding and health and safety guidelines.

We ensure that our procedures are adapted to meet the unique needs of children with SEND. Where needed, additional training is provided for staff to ensure we remain responsive to the evolving needs and best interests of children with SEND, fostering an atmosphere of respect, protection, and empowerment.

Our childcare settings have statutory duties under the EYFS including a nominated Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Please see the specific Playcentre policies for more details, available in the settings and on our website at www.arunchurch.com/playcentres.

Use of Electronic Recording Devices

General Principles

The Company has an IT and Communications Policy in the Employee Handbook which outlines expectations for staff in the use of electronic recording devices. The same principles apply to all volunteers, trustees and others working on behalf of the organisation which are outlined for clarity here:

- The use of any device to photograph, film or record fellow employees, customers, clients, visitors, or any member of the public without their consent may breach an individual's right to privacy and could, in certain circumstances, constitute harassment.
- You are not permitted under any circumstances to use any electronic device for the taking, recording, or sharing of images, video and/or audio.

Therefore, staff and volunteers should not have unrestricted access to their mobile phones, tablets or other recording devices during sessions with children or adults-at-risk. The same principles also apply to service users. Posters outlining these expectations should be displayed in all venues the company uses.

Where possible, devices should be left in bags/coats outside of the room, or in a designated storage area provided (e.g. a box on a shelf out of reach of service users). If this is not possible, devices must be kept in pockets and not used. If someone needs to use their device during an activity, they should speak to their manager or team leader and ask permission to step outside of the room in order to use it. Managers or team leaders should likewise explain to their team if/when they need to step outside to use their device.

At public or open events run by the company, attendees such as parents/carers may wish to take images of their own children, but should not take images of other children. Posters outlining these expectations should be displayed to the public.

Legitimate Usage

In certain circumstances, it may be permitted for someone from the organisation to use an electronic device to take images, video or sound recordings of an activity. Legitimate reasons might include recording observations on a child's progress in a childcare setting, documenting an activity for monitoring purposes, or taking images for promotion and marketing.

Where recording for a legitimate purpose is identified by a manager or team leader, the following process should be followed to ensure all parties are clear on the limits and expectations:

- The person taking the recording must be identified by the manager or team leader and have their permission to do so.
- The Manager or team leader should let other staff and volunteers know that recording is happening, by whom and for what purpose.
- Both the manager/team leader and the person recording must ensure that the appropriate media consent is held by the Company for the people being recorded, by checking against written records (see 'Consent for photographic images and videos online' below).

- Devices used for recordings should usually be owned by the company and under the company control, or in the case of contracted professionals, owned by the company/contractor doing the recording.
- Use of personal electronic devices should be avoided. In exceptional circumstances where a personal device is needed to be used for recording, additional steps should be taken to ensure the appropriate usage:
 - the manager/team leader or other senior staff member, should supervise the recording to ensure that recordings are limited, for the correct purpose, and not shared.
 - Recordings should be transferred to company owned devices/storage at the earliest opportunity and deleted from any personal devices immediately. This should also be supervised by the manager/team leader or other senior staff member.

If someone has any concerns over the improper use of electronic recording devices, they should speak to their manager or team leader in the first instance.

Consent for photographic images and videos taken by the organisation

- Permission will be sought before any images are taken or displayed, usually at registration for an activity or service. Permissions will be recorded in the appropriate software systems such as ChurchSuite or Tapestry. See our Data Privacy Statement (available at www.arunchurch.com/privacy) for more information.
- Images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought. 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.
- Photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will endeavour to prevent children from being easily identified.
- Children's full names will not be used in association with their photographs.
- Use of images will reflect diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance and where children are involved, permission should be sought in line with the photographic guidelines.

Working in Partnership

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

We therefore have clear guidelines with regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. 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 Safeguarding policy that matches our 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.

Working with other organisations at our activities

When staff, volunteers or contractors from another organisation plan to attend an activity run by the Company, we will seek to obtain the following information to verify the suitability of the individual(s) and service:

- Written confirmation that the employer has completed relevant safer recruitment checks such as:
 - An identity check
 - Right to Work checks (if a paid role)
 - A relevant level of DBS certificate
 - Appropriate qualifications
- If the individual is registered with the DBS Update Service, we will perform an online check.
- A copy of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy
- A copy of the organisation's insurance and risk assessment (if needed for the activity).

If any of the requested information is not available or is inadequate, then we will work with the organisation to seek a suitable resolution (such as risk assessing the activity and putting measures in place to reduce opportunity of harm). In the event that appropriate safeguarding assurances are not received, we will review or cancel the planned event/activity.

Working with other organisations at their activities

When staff or volunteers represent the company at an activity or event run by another organisation, we will seek to comply with their requests for information about our staff and service as far as possible. This might include similar measures such as:

- Written confirmation that we have completed relevant safer recruitment checks such as:
 - An identity check
 - Right to Work checks (if a paid role)
 - A relevant level of DBS certificate
 - Appropriate qualifications
- A copy of our Safeguarding Policy
- A copy of our public liability insurance and any risk assessments (if needed for the activity).

In both the above scenarios, we will also seek to establish clear practice guidelines with the other organisation for reporting safeguarding concerns, accidents, incidents, near misses, etc.

Where a safeguarding concern or accident is reported by a Company representative through the other organisation's processes, a report will also be made through Arun Church's own systems. This ensures we have a basic record of the incident and can follow-up with the other organisation.

Arun Church reserves the right to suspend or terminate partnerships if safeguarding standards are not met.

Working One to One

Working one to one, where a member of staff or volunteer is alone with a child or adult-at-risk, should usually be avoided. However, it may sometimes be necessary for an individual to meet one to one to allow the child or adult-at-risk to talk openly about sensitive issues. Possible scenarios can include; a conversation during a group activity where more privacy is needed, or a pre-arranged meeting for mentoring.

For details on managing general lone working, staff should refer to the Lone Working policy in the Safety Policy & Safety Arrangements Handbook.

For the protection of children and adults, the settings chosen and behaviours adopted for one-to-one working must be carefully considered. The following points outline criteria on how to safely work one-to-one with a child or adult-at-risk:

- Staff and volunteers will choose public areas such as cafes, instead of secluded or remote meeting places, to meet a child, young person or adult-at-risk, and only with the knowledge and prior consent of a manager or team leader and, where possible and when it would not breach confidentiality with the service user, their parent/carers. The location should be somewhere the child, young person or adult-at-risk is comfortable in.
- Staff and volunteers will have appropriate background knowledge of the young person in advance of the session, including their personal risk assessment, and any medical information. This information is used to plan for a session with a young person, in the choices made, consent sought and preparation for meeting the young person's needs throughout the session. If longer or high-risk activities are planned, this is shared in advance with the relevant manager, and advice followed.
- Sessions should not be for extensive lengths of time and will usually last an hour or less. Longer sessions or greater regularity must be agreed with a manager and recorded in advance.
- When lone working, staff and volunteers ensure they always have a charged mobile phone with them, that an appropriate person (i.e. colleague or manager) knows where they are and for how long, and they have the contact details of designated staff, managers, and the main office.
- When working one-to-one, the staff or volunteer should ensure the child, young person or adult-at-risk is positioned closest to the door/exit so they can retreat if necessary. If staff or volunteers place themselves between the child, young person or adult-at-risk and the door, this could cause the individual to feel trapped and lead to heightened behaviour or aggression.
- All lone working activities undertaken must be age-appropriate and meet requirements outlined in the Health & Safety Policy. Any exceptions to this must be agreed and risk assessed in advance with the Senior Manager. It is the responsibility of staff / volunteers to ensure that they and the young person have appropriate clothing, food, drink or equipment for any activities undertaken. Any incidents or accidents must be reported in accordance with our Health & Safety Policy.
- Staff / volunteers will not engage in lone work if either party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If the young person appears to be under the influence during the session, the adult ends it immediately and ensures the young person is safely returned home in the most appropriate manner.

- If a child or young person becomes distressed or angry in a lone working situation, this must immediately be reported to the Senior Manager, who will take appropriate risk assessment action.
- If the young person behaves inappropriately in a way likely to expose themselves, staff, volunteers or third parties to offence or harm, the adult must inform a designated member of staff immediately by phone and take their instructions.
- If during a lone working session a child or young person makes any allegations about the adult present or another volunteer or staff member, the adult must ensure the young person is safely returned home in the most appropriate manner and then immediately inform the Senior Manager.
- It is sometimes necessary to collect or return a young person to their home. No home visits should be made other than strictly necessary. Visits are never without prior arrangement with the family and are always confirmed in writing for clarity.
- If a vehicle is intended to be used for a one-to-one session, then the Company Driving for Work Policy should be followed. This includes rules around appropriate work insurance.
- Where visits are arranged to a home, staff and volunteers must never remain alone with the young person in their home (someone else should always be present in the building) or visit private areas such as a bedroom.
- The Company must assess and mitigate any risk to staff or volunteers of visiting the young person's home prior to such an arrangement being made.

Working with offenders

From time to time, someone who poses a risk to children or adults-at-risk may want to attend activities run by the company. Some people who may pose a risk might look to engage because they are wanting support to address their behaviour and want to engage positively with the activities and services we offer, including young people in the criminal justice system who already attend our activities. However, we recognise that there are others who are motivated by seeking contact with children, young people or adults-at-risk in order to abuse them. These realities need to be carefully balanced in a non-judgemental way.

Managing Risks

When the company becomes aware that someone who poses a risk to children or adults-at-risk is attending, or wants to attend any of our activities, we will follow the steps below to manage the associated risks. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future.

1. Support and accountability group.

A small group of people will be formed by the DSL or DDSLs (ideally including people with some professional expertise e.g. with the police or social work) who are interested in supporting but also monitoring the person of concern. The group can help the person be held accountable for their thinking and behaviour and develop a range of appropriate close relationships with other adults which can help them maintain an offence-free lifestyle. The group will:

- Being involved in writing the contract and agreement with the person.
- Regularly meet with them to check they are adhering to the boundaries set by the contract
- Monitor and discreetly supervise the person to make sure they are not engaging with vulnerable people (e.g. Meet the person in advance of them attending an activity, sit with them or accompanying them to activities).
- Challenge any risky or wrong thinking and behaviour.
- Support the person in finding suitable employment or to seek any professional or specialist support.
- Provide pastoral care and support to anyone they may be living with.
- Provide a closed group where they can engage in the activities of the church (e.g. a prayer, Bible study and support).
- Liaise with the police and probation services

2. Assess the risk for each activity.

The group will review all activities run by the Company which the individual might be eligible to attend (e.g. Sunday church service). The risk for each activity will be assessed and documented. Where the company cannot support the person to attend or take part in our activities because of the risk, we may consider offering some closed activities specifically for that person if resources allow.

3. Meet with the person who may pose a risk.

The person will be invited to attend a meeting with the group. If they are on the Sex Offenders or Violent and Sex Offenders Register, their police liaison officer will also be invited. The group will go through all the activities and state which ones the

person may and may not attend or take part in. They will also set the boundaries for their expected behaviour and conduct, and the appropriate supervision arrangements for each activity, including any support the group can offer.

4. Sign a contract or agreement.

If the person is willing to accept these conditions, then they will be written up as a contract or agreement and signed by the person and all members of the group. A copy will be kept on file by the organisation and shared with statutory agencies such as the Police or probation service, if they are involved.

If the offender refuses to sign an agreement, or continually breaches the agreement after it is signed, they will be asked to leave and stop attending in future.

5. Conduct Regular review meetings.

A regular meeting will be set up with the person and members of the group to review how the terms of the contract or agreement have been kept, whether there have been any breaches (if so any statutory authorities must be informed), and whether the terms of the contract need to be changed. These will be weekly for the first month, then at least bi-monthly after that unless the offence was committed a long time ago and the contract is working smoothly.

If it is discovered that the offender has joined another organisation where others may be at risk, the DSL will contact that other organisation and advise them to contact the police and probation service for further information.

Any contract, agreement, or records relating to an offender or someone who may pose risk, are stored and processed carefully in line with the Confidentiality and Information Sharing section above.

Employment of ex-offenders

The company has a Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy which is designed to assess a person's suitability for positions of trust in the organisation with regard to any previous convictions under The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. These measures form part of our Safer Recruitment practices and include asking about previous convictions, a self-declaration, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and risk assessments.

Arun Church Safeguarding Flow Chart

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Arun Church is:

- Jon Jolly

jon.jolly@arunchurch.com

07713 639690

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) are:

- Joanne Gisbey (Pastoral Care)
- Mikey Vickery-Brown (Kids & Youth)
- Matt Pollard (Arun Youth Projects)
- Wendy Groussin (Playcentre Rustington)
- Poppy Jupp (Playcentre Wickbourne)

joanne.gisbey@arunchurch.com

01903 782744

mikey.vickery-brown@arunchurch.com

07834 223001

matt.pollard@arunchurch.com

07863 101786

wendy.grousson@arunchurch.com

01903 850984

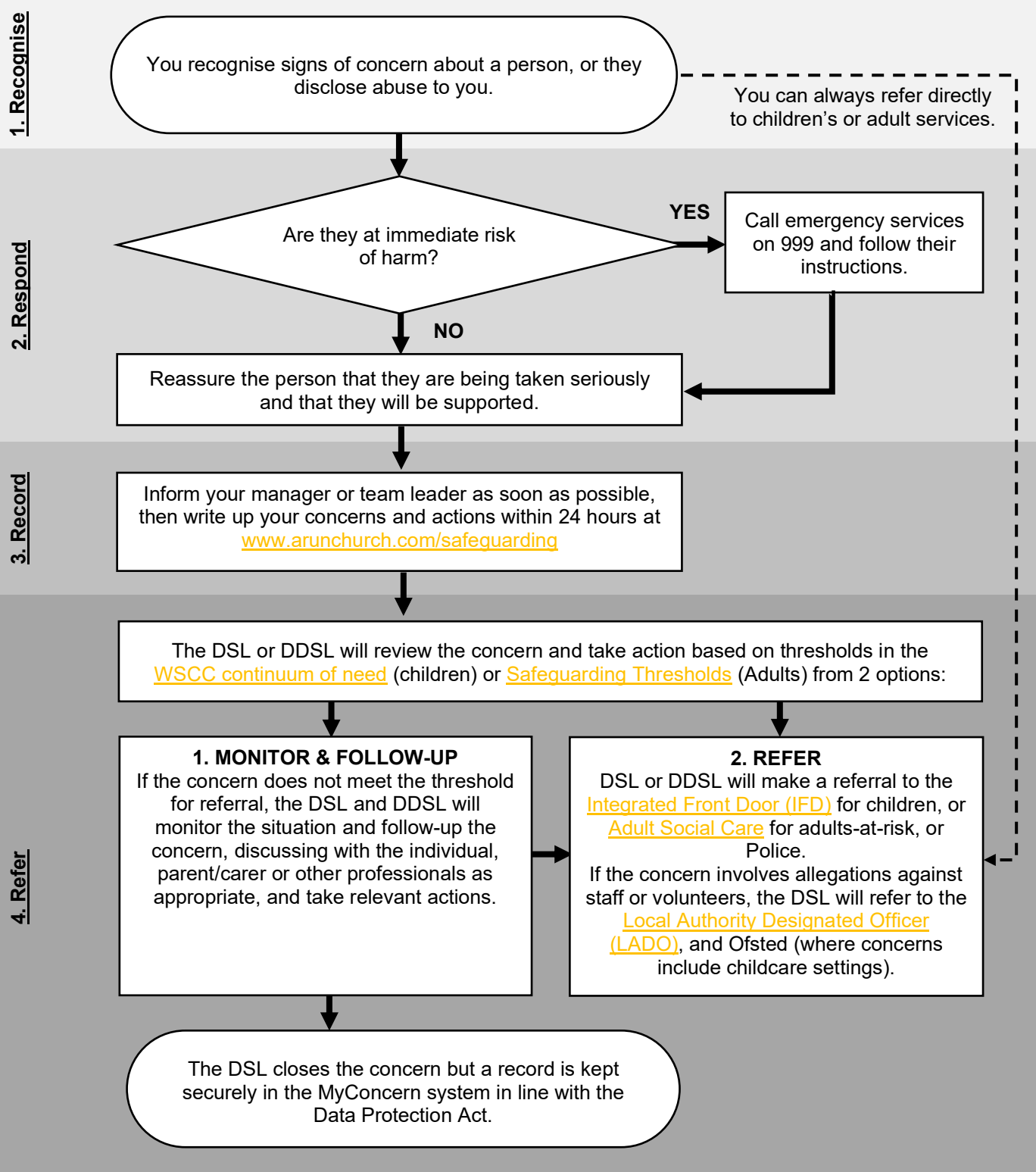
poppy.jupp@arunchurch.com

01903 867582

The church trustee with safeguarding responsibility is:

- Andy Gill

andy.gill@arunchurch.com



Key Contacts for Safeguarding

	Name	Phone Number	Email Address / Link
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Jon Jolly	07713 639690	jon.jolly@arunchurch.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Pastoral Care	Jo Gisbey	01903 782744	Joanne.gisbey@arunchurch.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Kids & Youth	Mikey Vickery-Brown	07453 615233	Mikey.vickery-brown@arunchurch.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Arun Youth Projects	Matt Pollard	07863 101786	Matt.pollard@arunchurch.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Playcentre Rustington	Wendy Groussin	01903 850984	Wendy.groussin@arunchurch.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Playcentre Wickbourne	Poppy Jupp	01903 867582	Poppy.jupp@arunchurch.com
Nominated Trustee for Safeguarding	Andy Gill		Andy.gill@arunchurch.com
Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)	Miriam Williams Donna Tomlinson	0330 2226450	LADO Referral Link
Local Authority Safeguarding Team:	Integrated Front Door (IFD)	01403 229900	IFD Referral Link
Local Authority Out of Hours		0330 2226664	
Safeguarding Advice Line	ThirtyOne:Eight	0303 003 11 11	www.thirtyoneeight.org
Other Support	NSPCC	0808 8005000	www.nspcc.org.uk

Body Map Template

Body maps should be used to record any physical injuries observed. Please draw the injuries on the body outline below. Where possible, staff should complete the online body map in [MyConcern software](#) when a concern is recorded.

Name of child/adult-at-risk: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Date of recording: _____ Name of observer: _____

Observations: _____

