

SOUL CHURCH & SOUL FOUNDATION

Safeguarding Policy & Safeguarding Transport Framework

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1. ORGANISATION DETAILS

Field	Details
Name	SOUL Church Ltd & SOUL Foundation (SOUL)
Address	Heartsease Lane, Norwich, Norfolk
Telephone	01603 488880
Email	safeguardingteam@soulchurch.com
Senior Elders	Jon and Chantel Norman
Safeguarding Trustee	Joe McKinney – Joe.mckinney@soulchurch.com
Voluntary Safeguarding Officer	Emily Palmer – safeguarding2@soulchurch.com
Additional Safeguarding Officers	Susan Horsley, Matthew Blount
Safeguarding Memberships	Thirtyone:eight

* SOUL includes all services and ministries at Heartsease Lane and other ministry locations (e.g. Fun days, Camps, Connect groups).

2. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Board of Trustees of SOUL Church has overarching responsibility for safeguarding. This includes ensuring compliance with statutory duties, charity regulator requirements, and fostering a safeguarding culture where policies are embedded in day-to-day behaviour.

We adopt the ten safeguarding standards from **Thirtyone:eight** and commit to:

- Trustees and leaders leading by example.
- Safe recruitment and training of staff and volunteers.
- Accountability structures and codes of conduct.
- Open communication, transparency, and safeguarding oversight.

3. SAFETY, PROTECTION AND MISSION STATEMENT

SOUL is committed to the protection, safety, and wellbeing of all children, young people, and adults at risk. We:

- Prevent abuse wherever possible.
- Promote a culture of love, encouragement, care, healing and justice.
- Uphold all relevant UK legislation and local safeguarding board guidance.

4. AIMS

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure every child and vulnerable adult is safe and protected from harm.
- Give clear direction to staff, volunteers, visitors, and parents.
- Promote welfare and respond to concerns without delay.
- Provide informed pastoral care to survivors of abuse.

5. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all children, vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

- **Child:** Anyone under 18 years old.
- **Adult at risk:** Anyone aged 18 or over who has care and support needs, is at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect, and may be unable to protect themselves.

We adopt the core principles of prevention, early intervention, protection, and support.

6. ETHOS

SOUL will maintain an ethos where everyone feels secure, listened to, and able to share concerns. All staff and volunteers are trained to adopt the attitude that **“it could happen here.”**

7. PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

a) Understanding Abuse and Neglect

We recognise physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect, and the contextual safeguarding concerns that can arise in our areas of ministry and our community (*Full definitions in Appendix 1 & 2*).

b) Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are considered to be in positions of trust. We recognise that both employed staff and volunteers assume this position when serving in roles that support these individuals.

While we adhere strictly to safer recruitment practices, we also acknowledge and follow the guidance set by the Local Authority regarding the management of allegations against individuals in positions of trust. This includes making appropriate referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for concerns relating to children and young people, and to Safeguarding Adults Data Sharing for concerns involving vulnerable adults.

We are committed to fully cooperating with the LADO and other relevant safeguarding authorities. This includes acting on their advice following an assessment, or, where responsibility is discharged back to us, conducting our own risk assessments and repeating relevant employment checks as necessary ([Norfolk LSCP Allegations Guidance](#)).

c) Safer Recruitment

We ensure we adhere to the principles of safer recruitment as recommended by [ThirtyOne:Eight](#) for churches, as well as the [NSCP Safer Recruitment Guidance](#) and NSAB guidance which draws on statutory frameworks (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act, Equality Act, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act), requiring:

- Application forms, references, interviews, and DBS checks for all working/volunteering with children or adults at risk.
- Criminal declaration forms, qualification checks, and mandatory safeguarding induction.
- Probationary periods with line management/head of department support and additional safeguarding oversight when required.

d) Safeguarding Training Requirements

- **All employed staff:** Induction + basic training, refreshed annually.
- **Volunteers (Children / Adults at Risk):** Induction + basic training, refreshed at minimum every 3 years.
- **Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs):** Advanced safeguarding training every 2 years.
- **Trustees:** Specialist safeguarding training every 3 years.
- Additional bespoke training is provided to specific ministry areas to continually upskill team members.
- SOUL reserves the right to take employment action or cease volunteer activities for non-engagement with minimum training expectations.

e) Practice Guidelines & Codes of Conduct

All staff/volunteers are issued with codes of conduct and must maintain professional boundaries. Good practice guidelines exist for all SOUL ministries and activities.

8. GENERAL PROCEDURES

All new staff and volunteers receive a safeguarding induction, policy copy, and training. Parents are informed of safeguarding duties via registration processes and displayed information in children's areas. Policy is publicly available on our website.

a) Safer Staff and Volunteers

Recruitment procedures apply to all roles. We reserve the right to repeat background/employment checks for any staff or volunteer if concerns arise regarding conduct or if an allegation is made. Individuals may be temporarily suspended or reassigned as a precautionary measure while risk assessments are conducted.

b) Grounds for Mandatory Refusal

Anyone on statutory barred lists will be refused immediately. SOUL reserves the right to deny access to unsafe individuals in consultation with statutory authorities.

c) Records and Confidentiality

Safeguarding concerns must be recorded promptly and securely. Discussions must take place in private spaces (such as enclosed office spaces) to ensure privacy. Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis (relevant and proportionate). While data protection principles are upheld, safeguarding and public safety override confidentiality when significant risk is identified.

d) Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding Team

Ensures training delivery, annual policy updates, timely statutory reporting, staff guidance, secure record keeping, external agency liaison, and embedding safeguarding culture.

Team: Joe McKinney (Board Trustee), Emily Palmer (Voluntary Safeguarding Officer), Susan Horsley & Matthew Blount (Alternate DSOs).

Leadership Team: Provides line management to Heads of Department and acts as an escalation point for complex/repeated concerns, collaborating with the Safeguarding Team and Lead Pastors.

Head of Department: Ensures recruitment and training compliance across their ministry, monitors identification and reporting of concerns, and fosters a strong local safeguarding culture.

Employed Staff: Apply training, uphold policy, report concerns to line managers/Heads of Department, and recognise individual duties to report directly to Local Authority if immediate statutory action is required.

Volunteers: Follow safeguarding procedures, complete required training, and report all concerns to line managers or team leads immediately.

e) Procedures for Handling Disclosures

Action Steps for Disclosures

1. **Stay calm, listen attentively, avoid leading questions, and do NOT promise confidentiality.**
2. Record the disclosure as close to verbatim as possible immediately.
3. Pass information immediately to Line Manager / DSO to agree on next steps.
4. Liaise with Safeguarding Team to update records. Do not delay reporting if harm is identified!

f) Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Allegations must be reported to the LADO within 24 hours. Staff must not investigate independently but gather factual details for the LADO. Allegations against Safeguarding Officers must be reported directly to LADO by an alternate Officer or Directional Lead Staff Member.

9. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

SOUL expects all partner organisations (including those hiring premises) to maintain safeguarding policies meeting our standards. Visiting organisations and guest speakers engaging with children/vulnerable adults will be vetted and risk-assessed prior to events.

10. WELLBEING SUPPORT AND PASTORAL CARE

SOUL offers pastoral care to those in need, including abuse survivors. Pastoral care personnel are trained to handle disclosures of past or present harm and follow safeguarding escalation pathways appropriately.

11. POLICY REVIEW AND ADOPTION

This policy is reviewed annually and updated in accordance with local and national safeguarding guidance.

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Definitions and Key Terms of Abuse

Based on the Children Act 1989 & 2004 and Care Act 2014 statutory frameworks.

Safeguarding Definitions

Safeguarding Children: Action taken to promote welfare and protect children from harm (maltreatment, impairment of health/development, ensuring safe care).

Safeguarding Adults: Protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect (applies to adults with care/support needs who cannot protect themselves).

Types of Abuse (Children)

- **Physical Abuse:** Deliberate physical harm (hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating).
- **Emotional Abuse:** Ongoing emotional maltreatment severely impacting development (criticism, rejection, domestic abuse exposure).

- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or enticing child into sexual activities (contact or non-contact like inappropriate material exposure).
- **Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet basic physical/psychological needs (food, shelter, supervision, medical care).

Types of Abuse (Adults)

- **Physical Abuse:** Assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint.
- **Domestic Abuse:** Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; coercive control; honour-based violence.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Unwanted sexual activity, rape, indecent exposure, harassment, sexual exploitation.
- **Psychological/Emotional Abuse:** Threats, humiliation, blaming, coercion, harassment, isolation.
- **Financial or Material Abuse:** Theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion regarding finances/property.
- **Modern Slavery:** Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude.
- **Discriminatory Abuse:** Harassment or slurs based on protected characteristics (age, disability, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation).
- **Organisational/Institutional Abuse:** Poor care practices or neglect within care settings or organisations.
- **Neglect & Acts of Omission:** Ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs; withholding necessities.
- **Self-Neglect:** Neglecting personal hygiene, health, surroundings, or severe hoarding.

Additional Key Terms

Position of Trust: Role where an adult has power/influence over a child or vulnerable adult (care, education, faith).

Disclosure: Sharing of experience of past or present abuse by a child or adult.

Significant Harm: Threshold for statutory intervention in child protection.

Capacity: Under Mental Capacity Act 2005, adults are presumed to have capacity unless proven otherwise.

Appendix 2: Specific Safeguarding Issues

1. **Contextual Safeguarding:** Recognition that young people face risks outside the home (peer groups, online, youth groups). Requires holistic awareness across church activities.
2. **Child Exploitation (CSE & CCE):** Sexual exploitation (manipulation into sexual activity for goods/status) and Criminal exploitation (coercion into county lines/theft). Leaders must spot sudden changes, unexplained items, or secrecy.
3. **Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking:** Exploitation through forced labour/servitude. Indicators include restricted movement, fear, physical abuse signs, overcrowded housing. *Partnership with Hope For Justice.*
4. **Domestic Abuse:** Handling disclosures with extreme care, avoiding pressure toward reconciliation, no joint counselling in abusive situations. Signposting to NIDAS/Police.
5. **Religious or Spiritual Abuse:** Misuse of spiritual authority/power to control or harm (scriptural justification for control, spiritual shaming, exorcisms/deliverance used coercively). Safeguarding duties always override theological practices.
6. **Prevent, Radicalisation, and Terrorism:** Duty under Counter-Terrorism Act 2015 to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideologies and online grooming.

Appendix 3: Key Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

Category	Legislation / Guidance Document
Children	• Children Act 1989 & 2004 • Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018, updated 2023) • Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) • Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) Procedures
Adults	• Care Act 2014 • Mental Capacity Act 2005 • Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board (NSAB) Procedures
Cross-Sectional	• Prevent Duty (Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015) • Modern Slavery Act 2015 • Domestic Abuse Act 2021
Charity & Faith	• Charity Commission – Safeguarding Duties for Charity Trustees • Charity Commission – Safeguarding in Faith-Based Charities • Thirtyone:eight & Church of England Safeguarding Resources

Appendix 4: Key Safeguarding Contact Numbers – Norfolk

Children's Advice & Duty Service (CADS)

 **0344 800 8020**

Mon-Fri 8am-8pm. Report child safety or wellbeing concerns. Connects to Emergency Duty Team out-of-hours.

Norfolk Adult Safeguarding

 **0344 800 8020**

Report concerns for adults at risk of abuse/neglect. (Select adult option when prompted).

Thirtyone:Eight Helpline

 **0303 003 1111**

Option 2 for 24/7 independent advice for churches and faith organisations (www.thirtyoneeight.org).

Emergency & Non-Emergency Police

 **Emergency: 999 | Non-Emergency: 101**

Use 999 for immediate danger or risk to life. Use 101 for Norfolk Police non-urgent reports.

Appendix 5: Safeguarding Transport Policy Framework

1. Purpose, Supervision & Ratios

Applies strictly to all drivers, chaperones, and leaders transporting passengers on church activities.

- **Two-Adult Rule:** Minimum of two vetted adults (1 Driver + 1 Passenger Assistant/Chaperone) present during transport activities.
- **Isolation Prevention:** No child or vulnerable adult may ever be transported alone with a single adult (emergency exceptions must be immediately reported to Safeguarding Team).
- **Ratios:** Appropriate adult-to-passenger ratios based on group age and specific needs.

2. Operational Roles

Designated Driver: Valid clean UK driving licence for vehicle class; vehicle must be roadworthy, taxed, insured for church use, with valid MOT; focus purely on safe driving.

Passenger Assistant (PA) / Chaperone: Actively supervises passengers, assists boarding/disembarking, manages doors and navigation, monitors journey updates with coordinators/parents.

3. Consent, Risk & Safety Logistics

- **Parental Consent:** Formal written consent required detailing routes, schedules, vehicle info, and assigned adult names.
- **Risk Assessments:** Signed off prior to departure covering route, weather, breakdowns, medical needs, and contingencies.
- **Seatbelts & Restraints:** Mandatory seatbelt compliance and age/height-appropriate booster seats per UK law.
- **Communication:** Dedicated transport group chats used strictly for professional journey updates.

4. Insurance & Conduct Standards

SOUL insures its vehicles for church use. External agencies using premises/transport must make their own insurance/liability arrangements. Strict conduct boundaries apply; suspension during allegation investigations is non-prejudicial.

Policy Sign-Off & Adoption

This document undergoes formal annual evaluation and re-adoption by the Leadership Team and Board of Trustees.

For the Leadership Team:

Signature & Designation

Date: _____

For the Board of Trustees (Safeguarding):

Signature & Designation

Date: _____

DOCUMENT CONTROL & APPROVAL RECORD

Doc. Ref	Issue No.	Issue Date	Description	Owner	Approved
SC/HR/SAFE	8	1/9/26	Safeguarding Policy	E Palmer	J McKinney