

Stockport Ecclesia Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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1. Policy Statement

Stockport Christadelphian Ecclesia is a community of Bible believers who choose to live their lives by following the teachings set out in the Bible, believing it to be the inspired word of God.

Stockport Ecclesia's objective is to teach and preach the Biblical Gospel to those who want to learn it. As part of this objective, we are committed to providing a safe environment for all, including vulnerable adults, young people and children. This reflects Bible teaching that we should love and care for each other and obey the laws of the land in which we live.

Stockport Ecclesia's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (this document) apply to all members of the ecclesia, as well as to any children, young people and visitors attending activities arranged by the Ecclesia.

This document replaces the previous document "Guidance and Background Information for Ecclesial Youth Activities March 2001 (Revised September 2014)"

Legislation and Sources of Information:

- Adoption and Children Act 2002 – Section 120
- Ann Craft Trust – Safeguarding Adults and Young People at Risk <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/>
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2019
- Information Commissioner's Office, 2021
- NSPCC Website: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/writing-a-safeguarding-policy-statement#heading-top>
- <http://www.safeguardingchildreninstockport.org.uk/>
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Care Act 2014
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2018 (Government Guidance)

Definitions

- The terms "Children" and "Young People" are used synonymously and include everyone under the age of 18
- "Children's Activities" refer to Sunday School, and any other event arranged for the young people and published in Stockport's Ecclesial Plan or the Sunday School Plan
- "Children's Activity Leaders" includes Sunday School Teachers and anyone who is leading an event for the young people
- "Parents" should be taken to include anyone in a position of parental responsibility

Responsibilities of all Members

We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all vulnerable adults, young people and children, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them. We will give equal priority to keeping all vulnerable adults, young people and children safe regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

The ecclesia will meet their commitments to keeping vulnerable adults, young people and children safe by

- Listening to vulnerable adults, young people and children and respecting them
- Appointing one or more Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) to take responsibility for safeguarding in the ecclesia
- Appointing a member of the Arranging Brethren to support the DSLs
- Writing detailed safeguarding procedures
- Ensuring all children's activity leaders have a current DBS Check
- Making sure all ecclesial members understand and follow the safeguarding policy and procedures

- Ensuring children, young people and their families know about the ecclesia's safeguarding and child protection policies and what to do if they have a concern
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns to the DSL, who will report them if necessary

Responsibilities of the Arranging Brethren

The Arranging Brethren are responsible for ensuring the ecclesia complies with relevant legislation and implements an effective Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedures. They must ensure these are available to all members of and visitors to the ecclesia. They must also ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses that are brought to their attention are resolved without delay.

They must ensure that the ecclesia promotes the well-being of vulnerable adults and children, ensures a safe environment, safe activities and has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse.

The Arranging Brethren will appoint one or more Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) who are responsible for Safeguarding issues, and they will support the DSLs in any action needed to fulfil their responsibilities. One member of the Arranging Brethren will be appointed to champion Safeguarding within the ecclesia and support the DSLs. This Arranging Brother may also take on the role of a DSL.

Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) and Arranging Brethren Safeguarding Lead

A DSL has the following responsibilities and should be supported in them by the Arranging Brethren Safeguarding Lead.

- To make sure Children's Activity Leaders are recruited appropriately and trained and to make sure training records are kept. They will ensure Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all Children's Activity Leaders are requested.
- Keep in contact with Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership when relevant
- Seek advice from the relevant support agencies when appropriate
- Receive safeguarding concerns raised by any child or adult and act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the ecclesia
- Refer suspected cases of abuse to the relevant agency or authority. The DSL / AB Safeguarding Lead is NOT the one who investigates concerns or determines outcomes, unless explicitly requested to do so following local authority advice
- Ensure confidentiality. Information will only be passed on a "need to know" basis.
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure records of referrals and concerns. Access to these records must be restricted for confidentiality reasons.
- Attend refresher training annually (face to face or online) to ensure they are aware of current requirements and best practise

Responsibilities of the DBS Checking Lead

The DBS Checking Lead has the following responsibilities and should be supported in them by the DSL and Arranging Brethren Safeguarding Lead. This role may be performed by a DSL.

- To perform Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all Children's Activity Leaders
- Ensure they are aware of current requirements regarding DBS checks
- To ensure all are registered with the Online Update service
- Complete an annual check of the update service and record these checks in a log

Responsibilities of the Sunday School Superintendent

The Sunday School Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that the arrangements made for Sunday School are compliant with this Safeguarding Policy, including

- Ensuring Registration forms are completed for all students, and kept in a secure location
- Ensuring attendance registers are kept
- Coordinating and publishing the Sunday School Plan
- Facilitating Training arrangements and supporting the DSLs in keeping training records

Responsibilities of Children's Activity Leaders and Assistants

- Read and make sure they understand the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Give consent to a DBS Screening and annual update checks (Leaders only)

- Maintain a safe environment
- Record information provided by a child, using the child's own words, and not asking leading questions. Conversations should not be recorded electronically.
- Understand that they should not promise confidentiality to a child, or to anyone making a disclosure about a child
- Report their concerns to a DSL if they suspect anyone has caused harm to a child or has behaved inappropriately in a way that shows they may be unsuitable to work with children
- Understand how to avoid allegations of abuse against themselves (See section on Safe Behaviour)
- Ensure Children are not left with an assistant who has not been DBS checked

Responsibilities of Parents (or a Delegated Adult)

A plan of Sunday School events is published and displayed on the noticeboard in the meeting room. Outside of these times, Parents are responsible for their children during all other ecclesial activities as well as before and after Sunday School. They are responsible for ensuring that children are supervised if playing outside at the meeting room.

Contact Details

Contact Details for DSLs can be found in Appendix 2

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 - If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, you can contact NSPCC's professional counsellors for help, advice and support.

Childline: 0800 1111 – If you are 18 or under, Childline offers free, confidential advice and support whatever your worry, whenever you need help.

Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership: To report child abuse or neglect, call 0161 217 6028 – Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 5pm, Friday from 8.30am to 4.30pm or 0161 718 2118 – evenings and weekends

Stockport Council (Safeguarding) - Contact Stockport Safeguarding to report adults being abused on 0161 217 6029, Monday to Thursday from 8:30am to 5pm and Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Out of normal office hours, call 0161 718 2118 <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/safeguarding-adults#>

Hourglass – is a charity running an Elder Abuse Helpline 24/7 - 0808 808 8141

Christadelphian Support Network: The CSN operates a helpline with trained advisors who may be able to connect you to an appropriate professional within the Christadelphian Community.

Website: <https://www.chsn.org.uk/>

Helpline: 0800 9545 099 – Select Option 1

Policy Acceptance

This policy was accepted at the Arranging Brethren on .

It is available to all members of the Ecclesia and is posted on the general notice board and the Sunday School notice board, in both English and Farsi. It is published (with contact details removed) on the ecclesial website: <https://stockportchristadelphians.org.uk/about-us/>

2. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over who is in a vulnerable situation or relationship. They may have difficulty making their wishes or feelings known. They may need or already receive community care services such as a care package or support worker or they may be heavily dependent on one or more family members or friends. They may be unable or have no means of dealing with intimidation, false accusations, humiliation, coaxing, coercion or may feel that someone is trying to take control over their activities. They may be confused. They may be having problems with personal hygiene. They may find it difficult to form healthy and steady boundaries and pushing or challenging their boundaries can become damaging to that individual. They may find it difficult to express their concerns or feelings which can lead to misunderstandings of their situation.

An adult at risk of abuse may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health. This would include problems with mobility or with eyesight or hearing
- have a learning disability
- suffer from drug or alcohol problems
- be frail

For further information about Adult Safeguarding, please refer to Appendix 1

Self Determination

One important difference between safeguarding adults and safeguarding children is an adult's right to self-determination. Adults may choose not to act at all to protect themselves, and it is only in extreme circumstances that the law intervenes. This will often only happen when an adult is assessed to lack capacity in that area, or where the concerns may extend to children, such as when they are living in the same household.

This can make the matter of safeguarding adults even more complex. It is not solely focused on creating an appropriate process and system to safeguard. It also needs to consider the importance of creating a culture that embraces the adults themselves, informing and consulting them on all decisions affecting them.

The Process of Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

The process of safeguarding vulnerable adults is:

- To respond quickly to ensure effective response to any form of harm, neglect or abuse that has or is taking place
- To consult with the vulnerable adult, as far as possible to explain a proposed course of action
- Put in place a plan to assist and protect the adult
- Make sure regular monitoring takes place when concerns have been raised.

Avoiding Allegation of Abuse

How can I help a vulnerable adult but reduce the risk of being accused of abuse?

- Always be sensitive to their needs and treat them courteously
- It is important to seek their permission before managing or taking control of their situation
- Unless they are your close friend or family member or they rely on you for personal or professional care, try to have someone else with you when spending time with them, especially for long periods
- If they need help with financial matters or dealing with property try to get their agreement to involve someone else such as a member of their family or a member of staff at their bank, building society or solicitor's office

Reporting Concerns about Abuse

- In an emergency or if someone is in immediate danger call 999
- To report a crime (non-emergency) call 101
- Otherwise, speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or if they are unavailable, the Arranging Brethren Safeguarding Lead
- Contact Stockport Safeguarding on 0161 217 6029, Monday to Thursday from 8:30am to 5pm and Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Out of normal office hours, call 0161 718 2118 <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/safeguarding-adults#>
- Hourglass - Elder Abuse Helpline: 0808 808 8141

3. Responding to a Disclosure from a Child

Having taken all possible precautions within the ecclesia for the children's safety, it needs to be acknowledged that children and young people may be significantly harmed within their homes, their schools, the community or even within the ecclesia.

Abuse may take the following forms:

Neglect: 'Neglect is 'the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.'

Neglect may include:

- Lack of nourishment/shelter
- Lack of medical attention when needed
- Inappropriate clothing
- Absence of boundaries and limits in terms of the child's action and behaviour

Physical: Physical abuse 'may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.' Injury is caused non-accidentally either maliciously or as a result of over chastisement.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Multiple bruises in clusters or of uniform shape
- Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt
- Pinch, grab, grip, or bite marks
- Improbable excuses given for unexplained injuries
- Fear of parents being contacted

Physical abuse may include:

- Extreme, inappropriate physical chastisement
- Deliberate, malicious injuries
- Restraining the child inappropriately
- Leaving a child unsupervised, which results in accidents causing harm

Sexual: 'Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.'

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse (0-5 years)

Children may:

- Become insecure or cling to a parent/guardian in a fearful way
- Show extreme fear of a person
- Seem bothered or worried but won't give a reason

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse (5-18 years)

Children may:

- Appear to have secrets they cannot talk about, or ask you if you will keep a secret if they tell you something
- Say that a friend has a problem
- Act in an inappropriate way towards other children or adults

Sexual abuse may include

- Access to pornographic materials
- Being involved in sexual activities with adults
- Being touched or talked to in sexually explicit ways, directly or indirectly
- Being spoken to about sex in ways that are inappropriate for the child, and which seek to gratify the needs of others

Emotional: 'Emotional abuse' is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.' This can be where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years. Also, where children witness domestic violence.

Possible signs of emotional abuse:

- Air of detachment, social isolation, depression, withdrawn, lack of trust of others
- Fear of parents being contacted

Emotional abuse may include:

- Persistent ridicule, rejection, or humiliation
- Living in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation
- Not being allowed any contact with other children
- Imposition of inappropriate expectations
- Low warmth, high criticism
- Being bullied or made a scapegoat

Disclosures of Abuse

It can be very hard for children or young people to speak out about abuse. Often, they fear there may be negative consequences if they tell anyone what's happening to them.

It's vital that children and young people can speak out and that whoever they tell takes them seriously and acts on what they've been told. Children and young people may disclose abuse in a variety of ways, including:

- Directly – making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them
- Indirectly – making ambiguous verbal statements which suggest something is wrong
- Behaviourally – displaying behaviour that signals something is wrong (this may or may not be deliberate)
- Non-verbally – writing letters, drawing pictures, or trying to communicate in other ways.

Abuse is only one possibility to be considered. The child may also be experiencing the results of different events such as bereavement or family illness.

If a child tells you they are experiencing abuse, it's important to reassure them that they've done the right thing in telling you. Make sure they know that abuse is never their fault.

Never talk to the alleged perpetrator about the disclosure. This could make things a lot worse for the child.

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child. You will need to share these with a DSL. Include:

- the child's details (name, age, address)
- what the child said or did that gave you cause for concern (if the child made a verbal disclosure, write down their exact words)
- any information the child has given you about the alleged abuser

Never promise a child that you will keep the things they're telling you a secret. If age-appropriate, explain that you need to share what they've told you with someone who will be able to help.

Don't delay reporting your concerns or any disclosures of abuse. Even if you are worried or unsure, speak with a DSL or seek advice from the NSPCC or Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership.

If there are any allegations of abuse, either made by a child or a third party, then the matter should be reported to an official agency such as Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership or the NSPCC, by the person who received the information. If these agencies are not available and the allegation is of a criminal nature, it should be reported to the police.

You do not need to have evidence; it is enough to have reasonable cause for concern.

If it is obvious that the child's parents are not involved, then they should be contacted, but otherwise the allegations should not be mentioned to anyone else. Abuse is often carried out by close relatives and is often difficult to prove.

Great care must be taken when deciding not to pass concerns on to an official agency. The natural tendency is to avoid difficult situations.

If the law has not been broken and it has been determined that there is no safeguarding issue to be addressed, it may still be appropriate to seek help or support, either from brothers and sisters in the ecclesia, or from the Christadelphian Support Network. (Helpline 0800 9545 099 – Select Option 1)

If in doubt, always ask for advice from the NCPCC or Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership.

4. Retention, Storage and Destruction of Child Protection Records

According to Data Protection principles, we will ensure records containing personal information are:

- adequate, relevant, and not excessive for the purpose for which they are held
- accurate and up to date
- only kept for as long as is necessary (Information Commissioner's Office, 2021)

To keep information secure we will keep files containing sensitive or confidential data secure and allow access on a 'need to know' basis. Electronic files will be password protected and stored on computers with protection against hackers and viruses.

We will keep a log of who has accessed which safeguarding record files and when.

Files will be kept until the child is 25. (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2019).

5. Records relating to concerns about an adult

We will keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults volunteering with children.

We will keep the records until both the alleged perpetrator and victim are deceased. This applies even if allegations are proved to be unfounded. There are some situations where records need a longer retention period, and we will consult current guidelines before destroying records.

When the retention period is finished, confidential records will be incinerated or shredded in the presence of a member of the ecclesia. At the same time any electronic versions of the record will be deleted.

Reference point for further information: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1442/child-protection-records-retention-and-storage-guidelines.pdf>

6. Bullying Statement

We are committed to preventing bullying from happening between children and young people who are a part of our organisation or take part in our activities.

We will make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need.

When responding to incidents or allegations of bullying we will:

- Listen to all the children involved to establish what has happened
- Record details of the incident and any actions taken
- Inform a DSL
- Inform parents and carers (unless doing so would put a child at further risk of harm)
- Provide support to the child/children being bullied, children who witnessed the bullying and the child/children who has been accused of bullying
- Ask the child/children who have been bullied what they would like to happen next
- Consider appropriate action and support for children that have carried out bullying

- Continue to monitor the situation even if the situation has been resolved

7. Safer Recruitment

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting all children and young people by implementing robust safer recruitment practices.

Anyone taking the role of a Children’s Activity Leader or Assistant will be assessed for

- Their ability to fulfil the role
- Any past experience
- Background information or references
- Leaders will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service Check
- New leaders will be given the opportunity to shadow an experienced leader before becoming a leader themselves

8. Behaviour Code for Young People and Children

Our behaviour code for children and young people is included with the registration form, and is as follows

You should:

- ✓ be supportive and kind to others
- ✓ be friendly
- ✓ listen to others
- ✓ be helpful
- ✓ treat everyone with respect
- ✓ take responsibility for your own behaviour
- ✓ talk to **Anna Bland (Designated Safeguarding Lead)** about anything that worries or concerns you
- ✓ follow this code of behaviour and other rules (including the law)

You shouldn’t:

- ❖ be disrespectful to anyone else
- ❖ bully other people (online or offline)
- ❖ behave in a way that could be intimidating
- ❖ be abusive towards anyone

9. What to do if you have concerns about a Children’s Activity Leader

Any allegation or concern that a Children’s Activity Leader has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly, regardless of where the alleged incident took place.

Concerns or allegations against a Children’s Activity Leader must be reported to a DSL or if they are not available, the AB Safeguarding Lead. This must be done immediately and without informing the person who is the subject of the allegation.

You should not attempt to investigate the matter, but instead should gather the facts of the case and keep written records.

Allegations may be that a Children’s Activity Leader – or anyone else - has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

The DSL or the AB Safeguarding Lead (or if they are unavailable, the person receiving the information) must report this immediately to the relevant agencies (for example the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000**, Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership or the police).

Liaise with Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership and the police to ensure that you are responding appropriately.

If someone resigns from their post or refuses to cooperate with the process, this must not prevent an allegation being followed up.

You should make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of all parties while an allegation or concern is being investigated. Make sure everyone involved in the investigation understands this.

It's important to keep a clear and comprehensive summary of:

- all allegations that have been made
- details of how allegations have been followed up and investigated
- decisions made about the allegation and actions taken

If an allegation is found to be substantiated, then a Lessons Learned exercise should be carried out to assess improvements that should be made in future. (Confidentiality should still be respected in this exercise)

Inappropriate behaviour displayed by Children's Activity Leaders or Assistants must be reported to a DSL or if unavailable the AB Safeguarding Lead.

Inappropriate behaviour might include inappropriate sexual comments; excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibilities; or inappropriate sharing of images.

The DSL or AB Safeguarding Lead will take advice from an appropriate professional (for example the NSPCC helpline or Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership) within 24 hours of any inappropriate behaviour, allegations, or suspicions of abuse.

Should they indicate that there is sufficient cause for concern, the matter must be treated as a child protection referral.

When deciding whether to make a referral, following an allegation or suspicion of abuse the DSL or AB Safeguarding Lead should not make their own decision over what appear to be borderline cases, but rather the doubts and concerns should be discussed with the NSPCC helpline or Stockport Safeguarding Children Partnership. This may be done tentatively and without giving names in the first instance. What appears minor at first can later be revealed to be much more serious, and an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation.

Children's Activity Leaders must not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse.

Confidentiality is of extreme importance. Information should be restricted to the one reporting, the DSLs and the AB Safeguarding Lead. The reputation of the one accused must be protected in case the accusation turns out to be false or without foundation. This confidentiality must not be breached by sharing information with anyone else, for example other Arranging Brethren, other Children's Activity Leaders or family members.

10. What to do if there are concerns about a young person or child

Sometimes you might see a child behaving inappropriately and decide to talk to them about this immediately, in order to manage the behaviour. Remember that they may not realise their behaviour is unacceptable. Talk to them calmly and explain why their behaviour is unsuitable and what they can do to improve it.

It's important to keep accurate and detailed notes on any concerns you have about a child's behaviour. You should share this record with the person responsible for the supervision of the child and the DSL / AB Safeguarding Lead.

If you aren't sure whether you need to have a child protection response, you can contact the NSPCC helpline. The NSPCC provide trained professionals who will talk through your concerns with you, give you expert advice and take action to protect the child as appropriate. This may include making a referral to the local authority.

11. Safe Activities and Events

Leaders

All Children's Activities will have a Leader appointed for the session. Ratios of adults to children are shown below. If parents are not to be present, then Leaders should arrive before children and remain until after the children have left.

Best practise adult to child ratios are below, taken from NSPCC guidance. These should be adhered to.

0 - 2 years - one adult to three children

2 - 3 years - one adult to four children

4 - 8 years - one adult to six children

9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children

13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

Attendance Registers

An Attendance register will be kept for each event, including the adults present. Attendance records are kept in a locked cabinet, or password protected spreadsheet, with access granted to Children's Activity Leaders as required.

Safeguarding training for new Leaders and Assistants

Induction training will be provided for all new Leaders and regular Assistants, by a DSL or Sunday School Superintendent. This will cover:

- What is meant by abuse and how it can be identified
- Their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and bullying
- How to record and report any concerns to a DSL
- What to do if a disclosure is made
- Safe practices to protect Children's Activity Leaders and Assistants from the possibility of false allegations
- How to risk assess activities
- First Aid responsibilities & training
- Photography of children

Refresher Safeguarding Training

Refresher Training for Children's Activity Leaders and Assistants will be arranged annually, with full training every 3 years.

DSL Training

The DSLs and AB Safeguarding Lead will attend refresher training annually and full training every 3 years to ensure they are aware of current regulations, requirements, guidelines, and best practice.

Registration Forms

Registration forms will be held for each child and updated annually or when details change. These will include the following information

- Child's name and Date of Birth
- Emergency contact details – names, addresses, telephone numbers
- medical conditions, allergies, disabilities or other vulnerabilities of the child or young person
- Option to give permission for photos and videos to be taken
- Parent's signature

- Information for parents and carers about how this form will be stored and used
- Behaviour Code for Young People and Children
- Statement: What you can expect from us

These will be stored securely (in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018), in a locked cabinet and / or password protected document.

If trips away from the ecclesial hall are planned, a consent form will be circulated, including a full programme of events, to be signed by parents.

Emergency Evacuation procedures

Evacuation routes are displayed on noticeboards upstairs and downstairs, and regularly communicated to all attendees, including children and young people.

There are two staircases to the first floor, offering alternative escape routes. There are two exits from the building – The main door and a fire door from the boiler room.

A Safe Environment

Ecclesial premises, its equipment and environment are to be checked regularly to help ensure the health and safety of all its users including children.

An annual risk assessment will be carried out and processes adopted to reduce risk of harm.

A Health and Safety audit for the ecclesial premises will be carried out annually. Buildings and equipment will be assessed for safety, especially regarding fire, and maintained in a safe condition. Firefighting equipment is available but should only be used by an adult who is competent to do so. The safe evacuation of the building should be the immediate priority.

During ecclesial activities where food preparation and hot drinks are being prepared, the kitchen (behind the serving area) is out of bounds to children, less than 12 years of age.

During Sunday or other full ecclesial activities, no running around in the hall is allowed, unless a planned activity.

Children under 12 should be supervised if playing outside the hall. This is the responsibility of parents outside of organised activities.

First Aid

A first aid box is kept on the wall in the kitchen. All accidents must be recorded in the accident book, which is kept with the first aid box.

A list of trained first aiders is available on the noticeboards upstairs and downstairs

In the event of anyone having an accident or becoming unwell at Youth Activities the following will happen:

- If the parents/guardians are on site, alert them, otherwise the Sunday School Superintendent or Youth Activity Leader will use the Emergency Contact Details to call the parent without delay.
- Someone must check the Child / Young Person's Registration Form for any allergies or medical conditions
- If appropriate, First Aid may be administered, considering any allergies or medical conditions. If medication is given, this should be recorded on a medication form and given to the parents, ensuring clear communication.
- If the child or Young Person requires urgent medical assistance, call 999 and ask for the ambulance service.
- If there is no parent/guardian present, then a suitable person must accompany a child or young person to hospital, taking the Child / Young Person's Registration Form with them if possible.

Public Liability Insurance

The ecclesia holds a Public Liability Insurance policy, which is available in the boiler room. Further details are available from the AB's.

Telephone

A landline is available for calls in an emergency and is located outside the kitchen door, at the bottom of the stairs. (Telephone Number 0161 429 8688)

Risk Assessments

A generic risk assessment will be made for children's activities at the hall and reviewed annually.

If Children's Activities are arranged in another location, a separate risk assessment will be conducted.

Incident Forms

An incident form should be completed if there are incidents or near misses. The form should then be handed to a DSL and action taken to prevent similar incidents happening in future.

Safe Transportation

When children are transported to, from or during youth activities in vehicles driven by a member of the ecclesia, the driver must ensure that the vehicle has a valid MOT certificate (if applicable), that it is roadworthy, that the driver holds a valid full driving licence for that class of vehicle and is suitably insured.

Seat belts must be worn by all passengers. Children must normally use a child car seat until they are 12 years old or 135 centimetres tall, whichever comes first.

Children over 12 or more than 135cm tall must wear a seat belt. The number of passengers must not exceed the number of seats or seat belts available.

Members of the ecclesia should not normally carry a child to, from or during a youth activity alone in a vehicle but where this is unavoidable, the driver should be DBS checked and the child must be seated in the rear of the vehicle and the child's parents/guardians must be made aware of this arrangement. Wherever possible another adult should occupy the front passenger seat. Drivers must always aim to drive safely.

12. Safe Behaviour

There are occasions when physical contact with a child may be proper or necessary, for example to administer first aid, or where the child or young person is in distress and needs comforting. Children should give their consent for any physical contact.

There may be some children for whom touching is particularly unwelcome. For example, some children may be particularly sensitive to physical contact because of their cultural background or because they have been abused. Physical contact with children becomes increasingly open to question as they reach and go through adolescence. Youth Leaders and Sunday School Teachers should also bear in mind that even innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can sometimes be misconstrued.

Take special care if children need to be helped to the toilet and encourage them to be independent where possible. In most circumstances the disabled toilet may be more appropriate and should be used. Remaining children should not be left alone in the care of someone who is not DBS checked.

Any apparently sexualised behaviour exhibited by younger children should be discouraged in a sensitive, low-key manner, e.g. by tone of voice, facial expression and physical distance. Such behaviour may be indicative of abuse and should be discussed with a DSL.

Reasonable force is permissible only if it is necessary in order to prevent a child from doing one of the following:

- Committing any offence (or, for a child under the age of criminal responsibility, what would be an offence for an older child)
- Causing personal injury to any person (including the child themselves)

- Causing damage to the property of any person.

Following any incident where a child has been distressed or restrained, or where unusual physical contact has occurred, a DSL should be informed as soon as possible, and a written record made of the incident.

Under no circumstances should any Children's Activity Leader or Assistant use any physical discipline with any child.

Leaders or volunteers must not arrange to meet alone with a child without the agreement of their parent.

Prescribed medicines and non-prescription medicines such as paracetamol are not to be administered to children by Children's Activity Leaders or Assistants, unless in an emergency, when requested by parents, or when required in detailed record forms. Emergency medication such as EpiPen's, Emerade or JEXTS must only be administered by a trained Activity Leader or First Aider who is qualified to do so and if the written consent of a parent/guardian for the administration of such medication has been received.

Youth Leaders should try to avoid having conversations with children in private. Where this is necessary, the conversation should, if possible, take place in a room with visual access, or with the door open, or in a room or area likely to be visited by other people, and another adult should be aware that this is taking place.

Children showing signs of distress or anxiety in a one-to-one situation should be treated sensitively. If possible, another adult should be summoned, or an offer made to the child to return to a more open situation such as returning to the group.

13. Photos & Videos

Our objective is to protect children and young people who take part in Stockport ecclesia's activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken. We will ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people.

Stockport Ecclesia will not take photos or video of children and young people without the consent of their parents. This consent will be requested on the Registration Form.

Images will be stored securely (on a password protected device) and are for use within the ecclesia, to share successes and achievements of the children and young people and provide a record of our activities.

Photos may be distributed on our ecclesial WhatsApp groups (ecclesial members only) or displayed in the meeting room. They may also be sent to the families of the children involved. Members should not forward photos or videos of children outside of the ecclesia.

Photos and video are not to be shared online (websites, social media etc,) without specific written permission.

14. Keeping Children Safe Online

Sunday School Lessons or other events may happen on Zoom in some situations. Meetings are password protected to prevent inappropriate people joining them.

Parents are advised to supervise children when they are using Zoom or any other video conferencing tools.

The meeting organiser should ensure the children or young people are recognised when they enter the meeting. Meeting details and passwords are not to be shared publicly.

Zoom meetings are not to be recorded without the permission of the children and their parents.

Appendix 1 – Safeguarding Adults Information

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or financial or it may involve not looking after someone properly, taking money or property without informed consent, misusing it or committing fraud.

It may include poor care practices, bullying or humiliating, or not allowing contact with family or friends. It often involves criminal acts.

It may be manging or taking control of someone without their permission

Abuse can be a single act, or it may continue over time and may take many different forms. It can be unintentional or deliberate but, in all cases, it will result in harm to the victim that affects their wellbeing or security. Individuals may suffer more than one kind of abuse.

An abuser may be:

- A partner, family member, friend or neighbour.
- A carer, volunteer, staff member or another service user.
- A stranger.

Abuse could happen anywhere and at any time including:

- In the victim's own home or someone else's.
- In a day centre, care home or hospital.
- At work or in a college or school.
- In a public place, including any ecclesial or other meeting room.

The Principles of Adult Safeguarding

The Care Act sets out the following principles that should underpin the safeguarding of adults.

Empowerment

People are supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.

"I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process, and this directly informs what happens."

Prevention

It is better to act before harm occurs.

"I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is. I know how to recognise the signs, and I know what I can do to seek help."

Proportionality

The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

"I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, and they will only get involved as much as is necessary."

Protection

Support and representation for those in greatest need.

"I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I can take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want."

Partnership

Services offer local solutions through working closely with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse.

"I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me."

Accountability

Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

"I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they."

Appendix 2 – Designated Safeguarding Lead Contact Details

Appendix last issued Date: 25th July 2023

Details available at the church