



Bearfield Church Safeguarding Policy Updated March 2024

Section 1

Details of the place of worship

Name of Place of Worship: Bearfield Church

Address: Huntingdon Street, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1RE

Website contact: www.bearfield.org/contact

General Email address: admin@bearfield.org

Senior Leader Name: Dave Parr

Senior Leader Contact Telephone / Email: dave@bearfield.org

Safeguarding Coordinator Name: William Butler

Safeguarding Coordinator Contact Email: bradfordbutler@hotmail.co.uk

Charity Number: 1136765

Company Number: 07254525

Regulators: Charity Commissioners

Insurance Company: Congregational and General Insurance PLC

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

Sunday services

Children's and youth groups

Youth mentoring

Pastoral visits and support

Coffee mornings

Toddler groups



Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight.

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

Scope of policy with respect to Children’s and Youth work

Bearfield Church is only responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children for the stated duration of the youth or children’s work session. Outside of those times the safety and wellbeing of the child is the parents’ responsibility. Parents are free to make special arrangements with regard to the care of their child outside those times. Such private agreements are the responsibility of the parents, between the parent(s) and the other party. It is not the responsibility of Bearfield church or its staff or volunteers to look after children in their church role outside of the stated session times (although they can be the ‘other party’ if mutually agreed.) If a session ends earlier than planned, Bearfield



Bearfield Church
Huntingdon Street
Bradford-on-Avon
Wiltshire
BA15 1RE

Church is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the child until the stated end of the youth or children's work session.



Section 2

Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

Safer recruitment

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

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview



- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs, see Appendix 1.



Section 3

Practice Guidelines

As a place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers, see Appendix 1, we refer to the guidance in the ten safeguarding standards on the thirtyone:eight website and provide a Children and Youth Work Leaflet to all workers.

Unaccompanied children of primary school age where this is no parental consent

The parent/carer must agree with an adult to act in loco-parentis for their children for the period of the event, service or activity where the parent/carer is absent.

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 in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. 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 policy that meets thirtyone:eight's safeguarding 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. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.



Section 4

Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

Documenting a concern

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

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

Name: William Butler (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator")

Tel: 07866 013193

Email: bradfordbutler@hotmail.co.uk

The above is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:

Name: Rebecca Squire (hereafter the "Deputy"), also Safeguarding Trustee

Tel: 07875 435331

Email: bexsmith79@hotmail.com

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

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

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

Name of local authority: Wiltshire Council

Children's Social Services

Tel: 0300 456 0108

Out of hours Tel: 0300 456 0100

Website Address: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/children-young-people-contact



Adult Social Services

Tel: 0300 456 0111

Out of hours Tel: 0300 456 0100

Website Address: adults.wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership: www.wiltshirescb.org.uk

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
 - Chair or trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.



Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.



Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the DOFA if they are involved.
- Email: dofaservice@wiltshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 456 0108

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or



Bearfield Church
Huntingdon Street
Bradford-on-Avon
Wiltshire
BA15 1RE

organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.



Section 5

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the place of worship is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.



Appendix 1: Code of Conduct

The church has a code of behaviour for all those working with children and/or adults at risk so that everyone is shown the respect that is due to them:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Use age and ability appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your body language and the effect you are having on the child or adult at risk.
- Listen well to everyone. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or adult at risk is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is being spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the individual's body language to better understand what is being said.
- Be aware of any physical contact you may have with a child or adult at risk and record it when necessary. For instance, if you need to stop a fight, administer First Aid, give a hug to someone in distress, or protect yourself or others from danger.
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or adult at risk, even in 'fun'.
- Do not scapegoat, belittle, ridicule or reject a child or adult at risk.
- Make a written record of any significant incidents or concerns and pass this to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Specific considerations when working with children:

- Do not invade the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or showering
- The level of assistance with personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Avoid rough games involving physical contact between a worker and a child
- Avoid sexually provocative games
- When it is necessary to discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment. There may, however, on the rare occasion be circumstances where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.
- Only invite children and young people to your home or on trips in groups and always make sure that another worker is present.
- Notify the Safeguarding Coordinator of any children's trips which take place in the name of the church. Parental permission must always be sought.
- Do not give lifts to children or young people on your own. Ensure that if transporting



children as part of your church role, you have the correct insurance cover in place as well as parental permission.

- No person under 18 years of age should be left in sole charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.

No one should normally be left working alone with children, young people or adults at risk, but should instead work as part of a team. If there are insufficient leaders for groups:

- Internal doors should be left open.
- At least two people should be present before external doors are opened for an event.
- Consider whether you could combine groups together or rearrange planned activities.
- Reconsider whether you can run the group safely, carrying out a Risk Assessment to record your findings.

If workers do find themselves on their own with a child/children or adults at risk in a non-public place, they should:

- Assess the risk of sending the child or adult at risk home.
- Phone another team member and let them know the situation.

If a child or adult at risk wants to talk on a one-to-one basis you should make sure that:

- You try to hold the conversation in a corner of a room where other people are present.
- You leave the door open if you are in a room on your own.
- Another team member knows where you are.

If conducting a home visit to a child make sure that:

- You inform your line manager or safeguarding co-ordinator of the date and time.
- Have parental consent and a parent/carer or another worker present.

Consideration should be given to how many workers should be involved with the group and whether they should be male or female workers, or both. See the thirtyone:eight ten standards for recommended ratios. The only adults allowed to participate in children's and adult at risk activities are those safely appointed and appropriately trained. The leader of the activity should be aware of any other adults who are in the building whilst the activity is running.



Appendix 2: Advice for raising concerns in relation to safeguarding

The scope of this advice

This advice is an addition to the Bearfield Safeguarding Policy and gives some specific advice in relation to concerns raised in relation to safeguarding. This is not advice where a disclosure is made. The policy above covers the process in the case of a safeguarding disclosure.

This guidance is particularly pertinent in the more sensitive circumstances involving vulnerable children and or adults. E.g. children in foster care or those where a social worker is involved with the family, where increased awareness of the vulnerabilities may lead to a heightened sensitivity around issues of safeguarding.

Any individual in Bearfield Church may have a concern related to safeguarding. A survey of the tragic safeguarding incidents reported in our news in recent years means that safeguarding training encourages anyone with a concern about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult to raise it. Safeguarding must be the priority over fear of upsetting others in the church fellowship.

Concerns which are not the result of direct disclosure

Where you are concerned about someone's behaviour toward another, but are clear that it is not a formal category of abuse for children or adults, we encourage you to speak to the person directly if you have an established relationship with them. If you are unsure whether abuse or harm is occurring, based on your observation or experience, always speak to the Safeguarding Lead who will take advice from thirtyone:eight and act accordingly. You can call thirtyone:eight for advice personally, however, where a concern relates to church activities or people you should always report to the Safeguarding Lead first, or their deputy if it involves them.

The individual with the concern should raise the concern with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (William Butler), if the concern involves the Safeguarding Co-ordinator then the concern should be raised with the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding (Rebecca Squire).

The safeguarding officer should take the following action to look into the concern raised:

1. Seek advice from Thirty-One Eight – in a small church with close relationships an objective voice will be helpful
2. Act on the advice given, which because it is not a disclosure is likely to include speaking to the person(s) about whom the concern has been raised.
3. Offer to ask the pastor / pastoral team to provide support to all parties involved as raising any such concern is likely to cause some difficulty between the parties. It may also cause upset, stress and anxiety for the parties involved.
4. Recording that a concern has been raised and file it securing and confidentially
5. Feedback to the person who raised the concern about what action has been taken.



Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the leadership and will be reviewed annually on:

Signed by: _____ Position: _____

Signed by: _____ Position: _____

Date: _____

A copy of this policy is available on www.bearfield.org