



Safeguarding Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

All children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to live their lives to the fullest potential, to be protected, to have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy any activity, and to be treated with dignity and respect.

All staff and volunteers who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare and should know what to do if they have concerns about a child or vulnerable adult.

Open Heaven Church has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We are committed to ensuring that all children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm.

The principle of vulnerable adult protection is slightly different to that of child protection and raises different issues. The emphasis for us in our work with vulnerable adults is to promote the empowerment and well-being of vulnerable adults and to act in a way which supports the rights of individuals.

The guidelines outlined in this booklet form the core policies for Open Heaven Church and should be adhered to at all times.

As the trustees and leadership of Open Heaven we want to say thank you to all those who serve in the church and we hope you will find the information, training and support helpful in your role with children, youth and vulnerable adults. It is important that you feel well informed, trained and supported in the area of safeguarding. If you have any queries or concerns you should contact your Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Safeguarding Manager for Pioneer.

Trustees & Senior Leadership Team

Date Signed _____

Review date_____

Signed by chair of Trustee's_____

The procedures and policies in this handbook will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Officer and Trustee responsible for Safeguarding. Any legislation, that is relevant to this handbook, will also be used to review current policy as required.

2. SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Open Heaven Church accepts the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children, young people and vulnerable adults, safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse. We aim to do this by:

- Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children young people and vulnerable adults.
- Raising the awareness of staff responsibilities relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults throughout Open Heaven Church.
- Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults to protect them from harm.
- Creating a safe and healthy environment within all our activities, avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, and minimise risk to themselves.
- Responding to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children, young people or vulnerable adults in line with this Policy and these Procedures and Local Area Safeguarding Board as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Reviewing and evaluating this Policy and Procedures document on an annual basis.

3. DEFINITIONS

- The term children or young person is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- All the policies and procedures described within this document refer to vulnerable adults as well as children.
- The term “vulnerable adult” is a person 18 yrs. or more who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of or protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation
- The term parent is used as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.
- The term staff, members and volunteers is used to refer to employees, volunteers and anyone working on behalf, delivering a service for or representing Open Heaven.

This document applies to children, young people and vulnerable adults, and these terms may be used interchangeably.

4. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The designated officer should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and safeguarding, and should undertake any training, considered necessary, to keep themselves updated on new developments.

Open Heaven's designated safeguarding officer is:

Jez Cromie - jez@openheaven.org

Open Heaven's deputy designated safeguarding officer is:

Mel Cave – melanie.cave@openheaven.org

Open Heaven's Safeguarding Trustee is:

Sarah Ford - sarah.ford@openheaven.org

The role of the designated officer is to:

- Act as the first point of contact for staff or volunteers concerned about the safety and welfare of a child
- Ensure that the organisation's child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed and particularly to inform social services/health board of relevant concerns about individual children
- Be aware of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and be familiar with local procedures
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover as quickly as possible (e.g. within a working day)
- Liaise with children's service authorities and other agencies, as appropriate
- Keep relevant people within the organisation, particularly senior leaders and safeguarding trustee, informed about any action taken and any further action required.
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of any action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Advise the organisation of child protection and safeguarding training needs
- Deal with organisational impact following a safeguarding incident.

Responsibility

The designated person is responsible for acting as a source of advice on child protection and safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the organisation and for liaising with health, children's services and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse. They may also be responsible for implementing child protection and safeguarding training within the organisation.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

a) The Church Leadership & Designated Safeguarding Officer will provide:

- A safeguarding policy for protecting children, and a procedure for what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare.
- A named person for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and step-by-step guidance on what action to take.
- A rigorous recruitment and selection process for paid staff and volunteers who work with children.
- A written code of behaviour that outlines good practice when working with children.
- A training plan and regular opportunities for all those in contact with children to learn about safeguarding and health and safety.
- A whistle-blowing policy that allows for an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice any concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour.
- Information for young people and parents or carers about our safeguarding policy, and where to go for help.
- A protective culture that puts children's interests first – children must feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.
- Guidance on taking children away on trips and on internet use: social networking policy, use of photographs and guidance on chatrooms, websites.
- Policies and guidelines for those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored.
- Working practices when dealing with sex offenders in church.
- Pastoral support for those affected by abuse via our Pastoral Team.

b) Designated Safeguarding Officer and Children's Workers/Youth Leaders will ensure:

- All volunteers working with children and young adults are safely recruited using Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- All volunteers have completed an application form and applied for 2 references.
- Adults awaiting DBS checks or references are sensitively supervised, never left alone with a child or children and always have a DBS cleared member of the team in the room or toilet area with them.
- Volunteers receive induction training regarding policies and specific group practices before they start on rota.
- All volunteers complete Safeguarding training as soon as possible and on going training is monitored. This may be training received from other organisations, from the Designated Safeguarding Officer or update training sessions from Children/Youth Leader. Training should be recorded for each volunteer.
- Records of DBS checks and dates, and training received by volunteers, are up to date.
- Adults are not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open, making sure doors have windows inserted or having two groups working in the same room.

- Parents/carers are clear when responsibility for their child's care transfers from them to the children's worker and is returned to them at the end of the session.
- Parents of all children attending our groups complete a Registration and Consent Form giving contact details, outlining medical needs, any food allergies and giving consent, or denying permission for photographs to be taken.
- Parents can nominate other adults to collect their child if they are unable to collect them.
- Children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities are fully integrated and protected within the church community.
- Care Diaries and registration forms for each session are kept up to date and any information that may be shared in Care Diary is monitored.
- Any safeguarding concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the earliest possible moment.
- Children's Workers/Youth Leaders attend regular appropriate training regarding child protection.

c) Volunteer workers will always:

- Abide by the policies outlined in this handbook, and by the specific guidelines of their groups individual working practices. The day-to-day practicalities will vary within different groups, but will never conflict with the core values and guidelines contained in this handbook.
- Attend regular safeguarding training. This may mean attending a course run by the Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or periodic training from the Children's Worker or Youth Leader. If you have attended safeguarding training in other organisations then please inform your leader and produce relevant certificates or evidence. This will assist us in tailoring training for you accordingly.
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watching their language, tone of voice, body language and non-verbal signals.
- Control and discipline children and young people without using physical punishment. Read our Behaviour Policy on page 10.
- Report any concerns to a Children's or Youth Work Leader on team or to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the earliest possible moment .

6. GUIDELINES & POLICIES

a) General Guidelines

Adult to child ratios must be followed.

Age	Adults:	Children
Less than 2	1	: 3
Age 2 - 3	1	: 4
Age 4 - 12	1	: 8
Age 13 - 18	1	: 10

Should you find yourself in a position where there are not enough workers on team, report this concern immediately to the Children's Worker. They must find someone who can come on the team and assist or children will need to be taken back into the meeting. In the case of youth groups you may need to telephone in help or contact parents to come and collect young people if the ratios are insufficient to keep the group operating safely.

Ensure you are never alone with a child or young person that could be misconstrued or put you in danger of an accusation. In youth work it is more common to meet young people in one to one mentoring. Guidelines for doing that are on page 16 .

Toileting

We require childrens workers to have an enhanced DBS disclosure to be able to take children to the toilet. The role you take in this will vary according to the developmental maturity of the children.

Avoid one-to-one toilet situations that could be misinterpreted, by taking more than one child at a time if possible (usually once one child asks for the toilet there are others who need the toilet too). Use the closest toilet to your room. If you can organise toileting in a larger group with more than one adult present, this can also be helpful in avoiding one-to-one situations, and lots of mini trips to the toilet with a series of children.

Do not accompany children into the cubicle unless a child needs help with toileting. The cubicle door should usually be closed to preserve their privacy, but leave the cubicle door ajar if you need to assist a child. If they have become particularly messy and unable to clean themselves and need assistance, either call the parent, or if another helper is available to assist you can both help the child to clean themselves. Always fetch the parent if child is not happy for one of the team to assist him/her.

In the event that a child needs their nappy changing, you should not do this yourself but should go to find the parent and ask them to deal with it.

As workers you should also ensure you do not:

- engage in rough physical games, or other activity which could be seen, rightly or wrongly, as sexually provocative games;
- make sexually suggestive comments to a young person or remarks about their ethnic, religious or sexual identity, even in "fun".
- use inappropriate or intrusive touching in any form. Some children and young people may or may not want physical contact. Leaders should allow children and young people to take the lead in matters of affectionate physical contact. Be very careful that the level and frequency of contact is not open to being misinterpreted by an outsider looking on.
- invite a child or young person to your home alone; you should invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parents know where the child/young person is.

b) Equality & Diversity

Open Heaven Church values the diversity of skills and abilities that different people bring to it. Consistent with our policy our aim is to provide fair treatment for all members of staff and volunteers. We ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that all decisions on recruitment, selection, training and development of staff and volunteers are based solely on objective criteria.

In addition, you as an individual must not act in any way, which could be considered to be of an unlawful discriminatory nature against fellow employees, clients or anyone else with whom you come into contact. If you witness or consider that discriminatory action is being taken against any individual you should report this immediately to your team leader.

If you believe you have been or are being discriminated against, you should raise this with your team leader. If you don't feel your concern has been taken seriously or resolved appropriately, you should raise a grievance in accordance with our grievance procedure. We consider any form of unlawful discrimination to be a disciplinary offence, which may result in dismissal, in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

You need to be aware that we are totally committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment and will not tolerate any unlawful discrimination of any kind in the workplace.

Promoting Equality in our Children & Young People's Work

Open Heaven Church is committed to providing equality of opportunity for our children, young people and their families. All children, whatever their sex, disability, racial or ethnic background, religious beliefs or sexual orientation, have a right to be in a safe and caring environment when participating in any activities run by Open Heaven, and to equal

protection from any form of exploitation or abuse.

We are committed to keeping the welfare of any child who is involved with any of our activities paramount and ensuring that young people are valued, listened to and respected. They are actively encouraged to take part in all activities and partner us in the decision making of their programmes. We are committed to eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination wherever we see it in our procedures or practices. Children and young people will be actively encouraged to report anything they view as discriminatory.

c) Behaviour Policy

We aim to provide an environment in which there are high expectations of behaviour and where children learn to love and honour themselves, other people, and to respect their environment.

Leaders and Helpers will:

- provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy.
- use positive strategies for handling any conflict, helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development - for example distraction, praise and reward.
- work in partnership with parents. Parents are informed about their children's behaviour, both positive and negative.

Leaders and Helpers never:

- send children out of the room by themselves.
- use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking or threaten children with these punishments.
- use techniques intended to single out children that humiliate them.
- shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's behaviour.

All volunteers and staff only use physical restraint, such as holding, to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of Children or Youth Leaders and recorded in the Care Diary. A parent or carer should be informed on the same day.

Rewards and Sanctions system

Individual groups have a variety of ways in which they encourage good behaviour. Check with your Children or Youth Worker about their system of managing behaviour.

d) Anti Bullying Policy

The Office of Children and Young People's Services' Anti-Bullying Strategy defines bullying as a persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate.

Types of bullying

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over time.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard to defend themselves.

Bullying may take various forms, including:

- Physical e.g. kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating behaviour or interference with personal property.
- Verbal/Psychological e.g. threats, taunts, shunning/ostracism, name-calling/verbal abuse or spreading of rumours.
- Racist Bullying e.g. physical, verbal, written, on-line or text abuse or ridicule based on differences of race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, culture or language.
- Faith-based Bullying e.g. negative stereotyping, name-calling based on religion.
- Sexist Bullying e.g. use of sexist language or negative stereotyping based on gender.
- Sexual Bullying e.g. unwanted/inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo.
- Homophobic Bullying e.g. name-calling, innuendo or negative stereotyping based on sexual orientation or use of homophobic language.
- Special Educational Needs / Disability Bullying e.g. name-calling, innuendo, negative stereotyping or excluding from activity based on disability or learning difficulties.
- Gifted/Talented Bullying e.g. name-calling, innuendo, ostracism or negative peer pressure based on high levels of ability or effort.
- Cyber Bullying e.g. abuse on-line or via text message, interfering with electronic files, setting up or promoting inappropriate websites and inappropriate sharing of images from webcams/mobile phones.

All children, workers, parents and carers should be aware of the anti-bullying policy within Open Heaven Church and what they should do if bullying arises. Children and parent/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Prevention

Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying before it starts. We suggest:

- Writing a set of group rules that are issued to the group at the beginning of each new intake setting out a clear message of zero tolerance for bullying.
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

- Signing a behaviour contract with those that do not co-operate, ensuring that the safety of the children is paramount, and that help is offered to address the attitudes of the bully.

Leaders and Helpers will:

- Report any concerns regarding bullying incident to Children's or Youth Leaders.
- Ensure that details are carefully checked before action is taken.
- Record all the facts around the incident and keep on record for further action.

Procedure

- The children's or youth worker involved in dealing with the incident will issue a warning to the child or young person concerned.
- An apology should be given by the child or young person who has bullied another wherever possible.
- If possible, those involved need to be reconciled.
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored by the team and children/youth leaders to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated, the parents/carers of both the victim and the perpetrator of the bullying should be informed of the incident and of the action taken.
- All follow up and action must be recorded in the Care Diary.

e) Social Networking Policy

This policy aims to give guidance to people, who are in contact with young people, using social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or Orkut. Communication over the internet by these sites or through other web-based means such as Xbox or MSN are increasingly being used by young people and children. They are key places of interaction and provide a useful means of communication.

Open Heaven Church recognises that there will be benefits associated with the team of Youth Leaders and church staff using social networking to support and communicate with young people. There are, however, some safeguarding issues and other risks involved, e.g. such websites can be used for grooming, sharing of inappropriate images or bullying.

Policy and principles

- The use of social networking sites or other web-based forms of communication with young people fall within the remit of Open Heaven Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff and approved Youth and Children's Workers are asked to set a good example in the way in which they communicate, including in relation to social networking.
- Communication with young people should be accountable and transparent and the use of instant messaging is discouraged.
- If on Social Networking sites where a member of staff or leader is friends with someone aged under 18, then they should ensure all communication is appropriate.

Examples of good communication with young people that are encouraged:

- Encourage young people about something they've done.
- Make appropriate comments on their wall, not their private inbox.
- Sharing a word, thought, encouragement, advice or scripture on their wall or their status.
- Open pastoral contact, showing concern or following up with an individual.
- Challenging any inappropriate postings by others.

Areas that require care:

- Ensuring groups joined are appropriate.
- Appropriate status updates and comments.
- Inappropriate posts by friends to you that are then visible to young people.

Unacceptable use of online networking

- Use of offensive language including anything that constitutes bullying or harassment.
- Compromising photos of yourself or others accessible to young people.
- Posting photos of young people at organised youth events.
- One on one private messages with young people (including instant chat).

Accountability

- If you have any concerns or are encountering challenges or difficulties in any of the areas in this policy, please let the Youth Leader know as soon as possible so that they can support the Youth Worker/young person involved.
- Inappropriate use of social networking sites will not be acceptable not exclusively but particularly, when visible to young people and children.

f) Organised Trips

- Parental consent is required when taking children/young people on ALL trips.
- A risk assessment must be carried out and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- An information handout should be issued to everyone explaining what is expected, what to do if they get separated from the group and other contingency plans, including emergency phone numbers.
- With mixed gender groups you must have both male and female Workers.
- Medical details should be known about each child and the appropriate medication taken with you, along with normal first aid requirements.
- You must not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people.
- Ensure you do not invade the privacy of children/young people e.g. when they are showering or toileting.
- Registers and Care Diaries are very important on trips. Ensure there is an accurate register taken at the start of the trip, that there is adequate supervision on any transport used and that register checks are made regularly.
- Major incidents can occur such as accidents or even fatalities. Should you be a leader organising a trip please request this incident procedure from the church office.

g) Transport and lifts

If it is necessary to provide transport or take children, young people or vulnerable adults away from home the following good practice must be followed:

- Where practical request written parental/guardian consent
- A reputable firm must be used
- Always tell another member of staff that you are transporting a child, give details of the route and the anticipated length of the journey
- Ensure all vehicles are correctly insured and that up to date driving documentation is held by Open Heaven
- All reasonable safety measures are taken, e.g. children in the back seat, seatbelts are worn
- Ensure where possible, a male and female accompany mixed groups of children, young people or vulnerable adults. These adults should be familiar with and agree to abide by the Open Heaven Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Always plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities and ensure copies are available for other staff and parents/guardians

Transport in your own vehicles can run into difficulties. Please gain advice from your Children/Youth Leaders or Designated Safeguarding Officer before you commit to doing this. Generally we have a policy that workers do not give lifts to young people, especially on their own.

However, if a child or young person is left in a vulnerable situation with no transport home, then the risk is greater to the child to leave them on their own travelling or walking home unaccompanied.

If you should ever find yourself alone in a vehicle with a child or young person, ask them to sit in the rear of the car and use a mobile phone to call their parents. You should also let a member of your team know. If possible encourage the person to stay on the phone for the whole journey.

If you are concerned (some children/young people can build close attachments to their workers that cause concern), do all of the above and also make a note of the time you left, miles covered and time you arrived. Ensure the young person does actually go into their house before you drive away. You may also want to write up a report of the journey noting any concerns and conversations that may be needed later should an accusation or misunderstanding arise.

h) Meeting one to one with young people

Youth workers often need to meet young people for mentoring, sharing and supporting them differently to younger children. This can be done safely by following some of the guidelines below. You should also make yourself open and accountable to whoever you are responsible to, and the young person's parents wherever possible:

- Ensure that you are not meeting one particular young person more regularly than another, unless it's short term due to a stressful time they are going through or pre-agreed (e.g. individual discipleship) and consented by parents/carers. This could be viewed as favouritism or that you are showing too close an interest in that young person.
- It is good practice to encourage openness with parents where practical. Undisclosed regular meetings could cause more problems than you set out to solve. You don't need to share what their child is chatting to you about but most parents will appreciate your involvement and be supportive.
- Diarise the appointment on a calendar with someone else so that the time and location is recorded.
- Ensure the public meeting place is appropriate - meeting alone in a cinema for example would not be a wise choice. A busy public café is a better choice. The more public and open the better.
- Keep a notebook specifically to record meetings that are held 1:1. The entries do not have to be long and laborious, but they should include a few bullet points covering the main discussion points.
- You should ensure the safe storage of notes you have taken and share what is appropriate with your line manager or Youth Leader. If you should leave or another Youth Worker become responsible for the young person, ensure the proper handover of notes takes place where appropriate.
- If any distress or real difficulty was discussed, or they perhaps acted strangely or out of character during the meeting that should also be noted and flagged up to a line manager/Youth Leader as soon as is practicable.
- If during a 1:1 meeting they disclose abuse that is physical or sexual then you have a duty to report that. See page 33, what to do when abuse is disclosed.

i) Working on the Streets

For some youth outreach work or special events, workers will be connecting with young people that they do not know well, if at all. Your safety is very important in these situations.

Always work in pairs, be aware that both workers and young people can be vulnerable whilst working on the street.

You are never to knowingly participate in the taking of any drug including alcohol with any young person. Young people should be encouraged to be smoke and drug free.

Wherever we are working with young people we should always try to provide a safe environment for them e.g. no bullying, verbal or physical.

j) From the streets

Children may wander in from outside and want to join in with church activities (e.g. children's club, Sunday school and outreach events) without their parent's knowledge. CCPAS recommends the following:

- On arrival, welcome the children and try to establish their name, age, address and telephone number. Record their visit in a register.
- Try to establish if a parent/carer knows where they are and the time they are expected home. If this is before the session ends encourage them to give you their parents' number so you can call them and gain verbal consent for their attendance at the session. If parents are unreachable, or do not give consent, encourage the young person to return home and ask their parent/carer for permission to return the following week.
- Link the child with 'a buddy' who can introduce them to the group and show them the ropes.
- On leaving, give the child a leaflet about the group with contact phone numbers and a standard letter inviting the parent/carer to make contact if they wish. This will include details of any 'Home Visits' that may be made during the week to the child's home.

Without interrogating the child you will need to find out as soon as possible if they have any special needs, (e.g. medication or allergies), so an appropriate response can be made in an emergency.

k) Praying with children

We believe that prayer ministry in the body of Christ is important - we want to be free to pray for the children when appropriate in our groups, and to encourage them to pray with each other. We recommend the following as guidelines:

- Make sure that parents know that prayer - by the children, for the children and among the children - is part of your programme. If you are dealing with subjects where prayer ministry is definitely involved, e.g. the baptism of the Spirit, or spiritual gifts, parents should know this, and know that they are welcome to be there.
- Always pray in an open area with other children and adults around.
- Always have the child's permission to be specifically prayed for.
- Don't crowd the child when praying. Get down on their level - don't tower over them. It is often good to sit down on the floor together. If you feel it is appropriate to pray whilst holding the child's hand do ask their permission. Avoid placing hand(s) on a child's head as they may find this overpowering.
- Listen to what the child wants prayer for. If they have no specific needs or requests, simply ask the Holy Spirit to come and bless them.
- If you pray for a specific area, or if a word of knowledge, encouragement or prophecy is received by an adult or a child, this should be written down so that the child can let their parents know (and remember it themselves!).
- Keep language simple and short when praying, and generally keep prayer times short too.
- If a child becomes distressed, consult the leader in charge before continuing to pray with them. Discernment is important - the child may be being touched by the Spirit and responding with tears of repentance or joy and relief - or they may be feeling confused and afraid. If you are unsure, stop and talk to the parents later.
- Never allow any adult or child to get into anything like "deliverance" ministry - it is inappropriate in the context of a children's group.

l) Children's Sozo

Children's Sozo is only to be undertaken by fully trained people in children's Sozo, following Bethel Sozo UK guidelines and with a full DBS check, who come under the leadership of the Sozo team. The following should be adhered to:

- Written parental consent gained
- There may be 1 or 2 people doing the session, the parent may stay in the room or be in a room nearby. This must be explained fully to the parent and with their consent.
- Done in the church building when there are others in the building
- Suitable records to be kept afterwards of who was in the Sozo and length of session.

m) Photographing – general guidelines

Summary

We want to celebrate, record and publicise what's going on in the life of Open Heaven in a responsible manner and as such this policy will help define the use of photographs and other recorded media at Open Heaven Church.

Photographing children

Photographs and video images of children and young people are classed as personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Therefore the following guidelines will be applied:

- Using any images for publicity purposes will require the consent of at least one parent/carer.
- The Parental consent option for the use of photography is included in every Child's Information and Medical Consent Form. This is used for children and young people who are regularly involved with OH children's groups or youth group.
- For more public activities which require a booking procedure there will be an specific consent option in the booking process.
- The wishes of any child, young person or parent/carer not to be photographed must be upheld.
- No identifying information (first or last name, family members, email addresses, school names, etc.) of anyone under 18 years of age will be included in or associated with any photographs or videos displayed, posted, or published in any way.
- If for a specific occasions a first name is considered appropriate for some internal media, specific consent would be required from the parent/carer and the child.
- Copies of photographs must not be distributed to other individuals without the permission of a parent/carer. This includes digital images.

Photographing Adults and small groups.

- When an adult or a small groups of adults are photographed, each person will be asked for either written or verbal consent before any use of the photographs is made.
- Verbal consent will be deemed sufficient to use an adult or small group photo that contains no identifying information. Written consent will be obtained for any photos that contain any identifying information.

General group or crowd photographs

- Open Heaven church reserves the right to take photographs or video recordings at Sunday gatherings or any other church-related activities in which individuals are not prominently featured and no identifying information is presented.
- However, where possible, if photos or videos are being taken during a large gathering, the leader should advise the congregation this is happening and ask anyone who does not want their image or image of a family member to be included, to let them or the photographer know as soon as possible. It may be

possible to indicate where images will be taken from and therefore for those who don't wish to be included to avoid that area.

- Images taken by a photographer will be checked through to remove any that include the faces of those whose parents/carers have not given consent for images of their children to be used for publicity purposes.
- After this is done we will use any of the photo's or recordings for promotional purposes, without seeking or requiring the consent of each person represented.
- When a dedicated photographer is used, they will have an identification badge/sticker which must be displayed.

At certain events it may be helpful to say:

- Parents/carers are allowed to take photos of their own children, but should not take photos or video of other people or children unless they have been given permission to do so.
- Parents/carers should avoid publishing images of other children on the internet.

If any individual who sees himself/herself or a family member in a group photo online and would like it removed may follow the ***photo removal procedure*** given below.

Photo removal procedure

Any individual who appears in a photo/video (or whose children appear in a photo/video) that has been posted online may request that it be removed for any reason, even if prior permission had been granted, by sending a written note or email to the office@openheaven.org. They must indicate the person or persons involved and the photo or video in question, and it will be promptly removed from the website or other display where it is found.

Storing images securely.

- Images and video recordings will be stored in a secure location and only used by those authorised to do so.
- Images should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.
- Where possible use cameras or devices that belong to open heaven church.
- If media is taken on personal devices, it must be transferred to the church database for secure storage as soon as possible. Those files should then be deleted off the personal device.

Any concerns with photographers or video or film operators are to be reported to the Open Heaven Designated Safeguarding Children Officer and where relevant, the Police.

n) Gift Policy

Your conduct should never lead anyone to question your interests so you must be careful not to show by your behaviour that you may be influenced by any gifts or hospitality. This

is important because of our need to be transparent and above reproach as children and youth workers, and for the reputation of the church.

It is a criminal offence to demand or accept a gift or reward in return for allowing yourself to be influenced. If you are accused of this offence, you will have to prove that you did not favour or discriminate against anyone. It is advisable to only accept gifts that are under the value of £10.

You should never buy gifts for children or young people, or give money to them from you personally. Gifts should always be organised as a group gift and given publically. Gifts should also not be seen to "favouritise" any child over another.

o) First Aid Policy

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the following good practice should be followed:

- Be aware of any pre-existing medical conditions, medicines being taken by participants or existing injuries and treatment required
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any injuries
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child/young person/vulnerable adult, in language that they understand and their permission sought before any action is taken
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible
- The child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's interests and on professional advice not to
- A notification of Accident Form must be completed and signed and passed to Open Heaven's Designated Safeguarding Officer.

p) Use of Contractors

Open Heaven and its staff, members and volunteers should undertake reasonable care that contractors doing work on behalf of Open Heaven are monitored appropriately.

Any contractor or subcontractor engaged by Open Heaven in areas where workers are likely to come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, should have their own equivalent Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, or failing this, must comply with the terms of this policy.

Where there is potential for contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults it is the responsibility of the manager who is using the services of the contractor (the Client) to check that the correct DBS check has been satisfactorily completed, and those details be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Officer to double-check. Sometimes, where workers will be working specifically with children, young people or vulnerable adults, it may be appropriate for 2 references to be gained as well.

q) Responsibilities towards Colleagues

If you see another member of staff acting in ways that might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns.

Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care, which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss attitudes or behaviour which they think are, or might be inappropriate. For example you may have a fellow worker who seems to be giving more time and attention each week to one specific child or group of children. This can cause other children to feel left out and under valued.

If it goes on over a prolonged period of time it could give an impression that something more sinister may be occurring such as 'grooming'. Before it gets to a major concern we should all be able to chat to one another and offer supportive advice. If that doesn't work then having a chat with your leader or with the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the necessary next step.

r) Whistle Blowing Policy

Whistle blowing is the formal procedure for reporting more serious concerns.

You have an individual responsibility to report to the children's work/youth leader the improper actions of any member of staff or youth/child's work volunteer. This might include suspicions of abuse, acts of discrimination and omissions. This is particularly important where the welfare of children and vulnerable adults may be at risk. If you have concerns about the Children's Worker/ Youth Leader you should report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Congregation Leader. Be assured that all suspicions and accusations will be taken seriously, investigated and if necessary acted upon and you need not fear repercussions.

We will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 an employee making a qualifying disclosure is protected against being dismissed or penalised by their employer as a result of disclosing such concerns publicly, while a worker is protected from suffering any detriment as a result of making a protected disclosure. This means that, where a disclosure is made in good faith, the person making the disclosure ("the whistleblower") will be protected if he or she has a reasonable belief that malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.

s) Complaints Procedure

To raise a complaint, please see Open Heaven's Complaints Policy and Procedure on our website.

What we do if there is a serious complaint

If a complaint is raised against any member of staff, volunteer or leadership team, the complaint will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before any internal investigation is carried out. Children's Services and the Police will also be contacted if required.

Each case is individual, and we will work with all parties to offer any pastoral support where that is helpful. When the LADO has investigated the complaint, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will meet with the complainant to tell them the outcome where possible.

Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The role of the LADO is set out in the HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006).

The LADO works within the Local Authority and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Any volunteer or member of staff will be suspended from their role if an allegation is made against them regarding a child or vulnerable adult, whilst an investigation takes place. The suspension does not indicate a assumption of guilt; it is a form of good practice we follow.

7: ABUSE

a) Introduction

A person may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Recognising Abuse

Recognising abuse is not easy! It can come in the form of a full disclosure or small signs over a longer period of time. It is **not** the responsibility of Open Heaven staff, members or volunteers to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk. However, we do have a responsibility to act if we have a concern. Every child and vulnerable adult is unique and it is difficult to predict how their behaviour will change as a result of their experience of abuse.

Disabled People

There have been a number of studies which suggest people with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse. Various factors contribute to this, such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves, or inadequately communicating that abuse has occurred. Children, young people and vulnerable adults from ethnic minorities, who may also be experiencing racial discrimination, may be doubly powerless.

Race and Racism

People from black and minority groups are likely to have experienced harassment, racial discrimination and institutionalised racism. Although racism causes significant harm it is not, in itself, a category of abuse. All organisations working with children, including those operating where black and minority ethnic communities are numerically small, should address institutional racism. This was defined in the MacPherson Inquiry report on Stephen Lawrence as “the collective failure by an organisation to provide appropriate and professional service to people on account of their race, culture and/or religion”.

b) Types of abuse

- **Physical** - May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, cutting, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical abuse is anything that causes physical hurt or harm to a children’s or young people’s bodies. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of a deliberate act, can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

Physical Abuse	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body • Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching) • Cigarette burns • Bite marks • Broken bones • Scalds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of parents being approached for an explanation • Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts • Flinching when approached or touched • Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather • Depression • Withdrawn behaviour • Running away from home

- **Sexual** - Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of, or consent to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing rubbing or touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a child in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Boys and girls and men and women can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people.

Sexual Abuse	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas • Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas • Sexually transmitted infections • Vaginal discharge or infection • Stomach pains • Discomfort when walking or sitting down • Pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn • Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people • Running away from home • Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development age • Sexual drawings or language • Sleeping or eating disorders • Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone • Self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts

- **Emotional** - Emotional abuse is the emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making them feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar 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 the child's capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration or learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying 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 ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional Abuse	
Physical signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A failure to thrive or grow ● Sudden speech disorders ● Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking ● Being unable to play ● Fear of making mistakes ● Self harm ● Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

- **Neglect** - Neglect is 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, ensure adequate supervision, or ensure they get appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect	
Physical Signs	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from others ● Constantly dirty or 'smelly' ● Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight ● Inappropriate dress for the conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complaining of being tired all the time ● Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments ● Having few friends ● Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

- **Spiritual** - Spiritual abuse is arguably less recognised and researched than other forms of abuse but can be defined as:

'the mistreatment of a person who is in need of help, support or greater spiritual empowerment, with the result of weakening, undermining or decreasing that person's spiritual empowerment', or

'someone using their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practise to satisfy their needs at the expense of others'.

These definitions show that spiritual abuse is like any other form of abuse and is about the misuse of power. The main focus of understanding spiritual abuse has been on adults who feel, amongst other indicators, they have to be obedient to the church in all areas of their life without question, and who will be ostracised if they do question the practices of their church.

We can unwittingly impose our beliefs and practices upon children more strongly than we should and that can in small ways undermine their freedom to think and choose for themselves.

We must be wise when praying and prophesying for children and youth (as discussed earlier in the prayer guidelines). We should also be careful as relationships develop between workers and children that we do not step into overly guiding them; their relationships with their parents need to be honoured and not undermined. As we minister to under 18's we have that extra responsibility to be aware of what we say, do and infer to those that look up to us as role models. Allowing openness and accountability to others in all we do is key. If we feel particular workers/ leaders are slightly coercive rather than lightly encouraging please follow the procedures outlined earlier for responsibilities to fellow workers, or if needed our whistle blowing policy.

c) Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable adults can experience abuse as outlined above but there are several other types of abuse that are particular to vulnerable adults. These include financial abuse (sometimes called material abuse), discriminatory abuse and institutional abuse.

- **Financial Abuse**

Financial abuse as including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions (i.e. benefits), or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Financial abuse may be opportunistic or may be planned. The victim may have been deliberately targeted because of their vulnerability.

Financial	
Examples	When it might occur
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misappropriation of money and/or other assets by various means such as theft or fraud. • Transactions to which the person could not consent or which were invalidated by intimidation or deception. • Misuse of assets to meet the legitimate needs of a vulnerable person. • Non-use of assets to meet the legitimate needs of a vulnerable person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The perpetrator befriending the victim and then using their position of trust to gain financially from the victim – moving into their house to ‘care’ for them, becoming their appointee/attorney. • Being overcharged for services or tricked into receiving goods or services that they do not want or need.

- **Discriminatory Abuse**

Discriminatory abuse as any form of abuse based on discrimination because of a person’s race, culture, belief, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation etc. Discrimination may be a motivating factor in other forms of abuse.

Discriminatory	
Physical signs	Actions of the abuser
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person being abused may be withdrawn, reject appropriate services or have low self esteem. • They may sometimes agree with the abuser just to have an easier life. 	<p>The person who is abusing may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use inappropriate “nicknames”, use derogatory language or terminology, • have a lack of understanding of a person’s needs • enforce rules or procedures which undermine the individual’s well being.

- **Institutional Abuse**

Institutional abuse is repeated incidents of poor professional practice or neglect. Inflexible services based on needs of providers rather than the person receiving services.

Institutional
Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users required to ‘fit in’ excessively to the routine of the service. • Lack of procedures and guidelines for staff. • No/little evidence of training programmes for staff.

Important Rule

It is important to remember that many children, young people and vulnerable adults will exhibit some of these signs and indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. You should however report anything that causes you concern.

There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death, or the birth of a new baby in the family, relationship problems between parents/carers, etc.

d) Who may abuse?

- The people who tend to abuse are often known to that person, e.g. parent, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative, or friend of the family. It is VERY RARELY A STRANGER.
- Sometimes someone in authority; such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker or a church worker. All these are positions of trust!
- Sometimes paedophiles and others who are dangerous can set out to join organisations - often churches - to obtain access to children. Remember that such people are often very plausible and may outwardly seem to be the last person you would suspect.
- Men and women, other children and young people. Children do abuse other children – don't not assume it is always an adult.
- The church may have a significant role of pastoral care for the abuser, and those close to him or her, as well as support for the leader/person who has disclosed the abuse. But the primary concern is ALWAYS the safety of the child/ young person or vulnerable adult. See section on Supporting Known Offenders in the church.

8. RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

a) Introduction

These procedures inform all staff, members and volunteers of what actions they should take if they have concerns or encounter a case of alleged or suspected child or vulnerable adult abuse, i.e. response actions.

Open Heaven staff and volunteers may come across cases of suspected abuse through direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is your responsibility to report your concerns. Your concerns must be made immediately and shared with Open Heaven's Designated Safeguarding Officer.

It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not a child, young person or vulnerable adult has been abused.

Our primary concern is to ensure any relevant information is passed to the police or social services without delay. These organisations have statutory responsibility to make enquiries, to establish if a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm.

b) Responding to Disclosure

Abused children, young people and vulnerable adults are more likely to disclose details of abuse to someone they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening and taking seriously what the child, young person or vulnerable adults is saying, you are already helping the situation. The following points are a guide to help you respond appropriately.

Actions to take

- React calmly so as not to frighten them
- Explain to them that you will have to share your concerns with Open Heaven's Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- Encourage them stay with you until a decision has been made by Open Heaven Designated Safeguarding Officer, the police, or social services that they are safe to leave.
- Tell them they were not to blame and that they were right to tell.

- Avoid asking direct questions other than those seeking to clarify your understanding of what the person has said. It is up to the police or social services to formally interview the person and they should not have to repeat their account on several occasions.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.
- **Record all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child or vulnerable adult's own words, as soon as possible on the *Responding to Disclosures* Form (see Appendix 1)**

You must record:

- The date and time.
- The child, young person or vulnerable adult's name and date of birth.
- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any visible injuries.
- Your observations – e.g. a description of the child, young person or vulnerable adult's behaviour and physical and emotional state.
- Exactly what the child, young person or vulnerable adult said and what you said. Record the child, young person or vulnerable adult's account of what has happened as accurately as possible.
- Any action you took as a result of your concerns e.g. who you spoke to and resulting actions. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Sign and date what you have recorded.
- Store the information in accordance with relevant procedures.
- **Report to and inform your line manager and Open Heaven's Designated Safeguarding Officer.**

Actions to Avoid

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Probe for more information than is offered
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow their shock or distaste to show
- Speculate or make assumptions

c) Responding to Suspicions

In the first instance if you have any suspicions regarding a child, young person or vulnerable adult who you think is being abused it is important:

Step 1- Pass this information straight away to the Open Heaven Designated Safeguarding Officer to ensure the safety of the young person/vulnerable adult.

It is the responsibility of the Designated Officer to take a lead on suspicions and report them to Social Services and or the Police to take the appropriate course of action.

Step 2- Complete an incident reporting form (Appendix 2). The form should then be shown to Designated Safeguarding Officer.

d) Sharing Concerns with Parents, Carers or Partners

In all cases of alleged abuse this decision will be taken and followed up by Social Services as the professional body on protection issues.

Whilst delivering services to children, young people or vulnerable adults there is a commitment to work in partnership with parents/ carers and share concerns about their child, young person or vulnerable adult. Therefore in most safeguarding circumstances it would be important to talk to parents or carers to clarify any concerns. For example if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation, which a parent can provide.

There are circumstances when children/ young people/ vulnerable adults can be placed at greater risk by sharing concerns with their parents/ carers e.g. where the parent/ carer is the one who may be responsible for the abuse, or not able to respond to the concern appropriately. In these circumstances, or where concerns still exist despite an explanation from parents/carers, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately and recorded.

- Parents should not be contacted if the concern is about sexual abuse. Social Services and/or the Police will do this at an appropriate time.
- Parents should not be contacted if they are the alleged perpetrator. Social Services and/or the Police will do this at an appropriate time.

DO NOT inform the parents/carers of the disclosure when they come to collect their child unless instructed to by your leadership or safeguarding advisors.

e) Allegations against Staff or Volunteers

Any complaint related to our Safeguarding processes will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly by the DSO and designated Safeguarding Trustee Sarah Ford (sarah.ford@openheaven.org). Any Safeguarding allegation about a staff member or volunteer will be immediately referred to the LADO.

f) Support for the Reporter of the Alleged Abuse

Strong feelings may be generated by the discovery that a member of staff or volunteer is, or may be, abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult. We will fully support and protect all staff/volunteers who, in good faith (without malicious intent), report his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be being abused.

g) Types of Investigation

Where there are allegations of abuse about a member of staff there may be three strands of investigation:

- Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation
- Criminal Investigation

Open Heaven will consider suspending any employee accused of abuse pending a formal investigation. Suspension is a neutral act that does not imply any form of guilt. If suspension is felt unnecessary the member of staff will be relocated to another area of work pending the outcome of the formal investigation. An investigation will be carried out as quickly as is practically possible for the protection of all parties involved. Open Heaven will assess each individual allegation on its own, taking into account the findings of any criminal investigation and respond to the outcome of the investigation in line with Open Heaven policy and procedure.

h) Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned.

Where there is any possibility that a criminal act may have been committed, care should be taken not to take any action that may jeopardise any subsequent criminal investigation. This includes contacting the alleged perpetrator. Advice should FIRST be sought from the Police/NSPCC helpline and/or Social Services.

It is extremely important that allegations or concerns are not discussed, as any breach of confidentiality could be damaging to the child, young person or vulnerable adult, their family and any child/vulnerable adult protection investigations that may follow.

Informing the parents/carer of a child or vulnerable adult you may have concerns about needs to be dealt with in a sensitive way and should be done in consultation with Designated Safeguarding Officer and Social Services.

Any individual under supervision has the right to be notified about the cause for concern. This should be done in joint consultation with Social Services and the Police. It is important that the timing of this does not prejudice the investigation.

Recorded information should be stored in a secure place with limited access and in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

If enquiries arise from the public (including parents) or any branch of the media, it is vital that all staff, elected members and volunteers are briefed so that they do not make any comments regarding the situation. Staff, members and volunteers should be informed who the relevant designated Open Heaven spokesperson will be, and all enquiries directed through them. Staff, elected members and volunteers should reply 'no comment' to all questions / enquiries. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer, along with the Trustee responsible for Safeguarding, to make these decisions and brief staff as appropriate.

The 7 Golden Rules for Information sharing (NSPCC)

1. Remember that **the Data Protection Act is not a barrier for sharing information**, but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

2. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share confirmation without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. **Consider safety and well-being.** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. **Necessary, relevant, accurate, timely and secure.** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it. Share only with those who need to have it. Ensure it's accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose

i) Supporting known offenders in the church

Faith communities are unique in that they are one of the few places where those who have sexually offended against children and children themselves are in the same building. Known offenders have been successfully integrated into the life of faith communities where they have received support and guidance, agreed to abide by certain boundaries and are welcomed and accepted. Where a place of worship knows about a person's past offending behaviour this will make it easier to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Organisations are not expected to be able to carry out a professional risk assessment on a sex offender. This will have been carried out by the Prison or Probation services or other professional agency. However key people within the organisation can contribute to the discussions for management of risk if requested. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to ensure appropriate risk assessments have been undertaken and shared with all appropriate persons. Where appropriate, a behaviour contract must be written, agreed by all involved, and signed by the ex-offender before they can begin attending gatherings or events.

If the ex-offender does not keep to the boundaries set in the risk assessment and subsequent behaviour contract, the police should be contacted for advice. If the person leaves the organisation, the statutory agencies, such as probation, police child protection team, or Children's and Adult Services, should be informed.

Risk Management Meeting

For any individual who poses a risk to be allowed to attend activities run by Open Heaven Church, it is vital that robust measures are put in place to ensure children, young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded.

It is our policy that each person will meet with a Church Leader and the Designated Safeguarding Officer to review both the support they need and the activities they wish to attend. The details of previous offending behaviour must form part of the assessment and may need to be obtained from police, probation etc. The meeting may include the probation officer or other agencies involved.

The outcome of this meeting will be a written contract setting out behavioural boundaries they sign and agree to abide by, as well as the provision of appropriate supervision and support. These safeguards are in the interests of everyone - those at risk, the offender who may be making strenuous efforts to change, and the organisation.

At all times the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount when assessing the risk an individual may pose. No one has an automatic right to work with or have access to children, young people or vulnerable adults by attending church.

Once a 'Pastoral Care Plan & Contract of Agreement' is in place this is regularly reviewed to see if it is achieving the aims set out in it.

We will often work closely with the police and be involved with MAPPA* meetings to review progress and contribute information. If the individual on a contract or care plan does not follow the agreed conditions, then they may be refused entry or further access to gatherings and events. . If all discussions fail to improve their agreed attendance at church, this information will be passed onto all agencies involved and any local church if they are known to attend there instead.

**MAPPA stands for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. It is the process through which the Police, Probation and Prison Services work together with other agencies to manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community in order to protect the public.*

9. AWARENESS OF OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION

In the process of ongoing awareness raising for issues relating to safeguarding children, we are conscious of the growing information coming through regarding child trafficking, forced marriage, honour based violence (HBV) and female genital mutilation (FGM).

It would be appropriate for all children/youth workers and volunteers to have an awareness of the following forms of abuse.

a) Child Trafficking & Private Fostering

Child Trafficking is the movement of children for the purpose of exploitation. Trafficking is a process made up of 3 distinct phases; recruitment, movement and exploitation. The recruitment phase can involve deception, coercion, violence or being sold by a third party. It can also involve the child going willingly with an adult because they believe that they are going to a better life. If the child is moved from one place to the other and used for the benefit of another person, then the child is a victim of trafficking. The movement of a child can occur across international borders or within one country; the latter is often described as 'internal trafficking'. This means that children who are moved around the UK for the purposes of exploitation can be considered a victim of trafficking, often for sexual exploitation. They are often befriended, groomed and then taken away to be used as sex workers. Gangs operate through their need to belong somewhere as often these children are in the care system, 'looked after children' and have a fragile family background.

Children are also trafficked for domestic servitude, forced labour, including restaurant and catering work, manual labour, drug trafficking, begging, petty theft, benefit fraud, cannabis cultivation and selling counterfeit goods such as DVD's. There is also evidence that children are brought to the UK for forced marriage and illegal adoption. Most children who are trafficked are often out of the education system if used as full time workers. Those that have been trafficked for benefit fraud have poor attendance at school and tend not to socialise with other children for fear of being asked questions. As with all indicators of abuse, whether they are trafficked or not, we need to act on what we see and feel is right to do.

Private Fostering

Children live away from home for a number of reasons as privately fostered children. They can include children from overseas who come for a better education; teenagers who have fallen out with their parents and moved in with their boyfriend or girlfriends families; children whose parents have mental health issues, or abuse drugs and alcohol, or who are

in prison. The carers for the child must, by law, let the local authority know they are caring for somebody else's child. The local social worker has a duty to assess the situation and check everything is ok. Children who are privately fostered are more likely to suffer neglect, abuse and do less well at school. They are known to be one of the most vulnerable groups of children.

If any of the following indicators are present then you may have identified a privately fostered child, or a privately fostered child from overseas and you have a responsibility to make sure the proper procedure has taken place:

Simple ways to identify children privately fostered and those from overseas:

- Child seems to be from overseas and living in your area for more than 28 days.
- A child who has started to live with a family and is obviously not their child.
- The child or young person tells you they are living with friends/relatives.
- You hear confusing stories from the child about why the child is in the UK.
- You have concerns about their welfare.
- You are unsure who has parental responsibility for the child or young person.

How to make a referral:

- Ask your team leader, children's worker or church leader to chat with them. If the child is privately fostered ask the carers if they have notified the local authority.
- If they haven't then talk to our Designated Safeguarding Officer who will refer this to the local authority.

b) Forced Marriage

What is an Arranged Marriage?

Arranged marriages have worked well in society for many years. Families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

What is a Forced Marriage?

One or more partners do not (or in the case of some vulnerable adults, cannot) consent to the marriage, and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. Forced Marriage is an abuse of Human Rights and cannot be justified on any grounds. Forced marriage is not an arranged marriage, nor is it in any way a religious practice.

The government's Forced Marriage Unit deals with 5,000 enquiries and 300 cases of forced marriage each year. 30% of these concern under-18s and 85% are women. Where it affects children and young people, the UK Government regard forced marriage to be child abuse.

If a potential victim of forced marriage seeks your help, you should:

- see them immediately in a secure and private place
- insist on seeing them on their own, even if they attend with others
- contact the Forced Marriage Unit (020 7008 0151) as soon as possible, and give the Unit's details to the potential victim
- refer the matter to the Children's Social Care department of your local authority
- refer the matter to the local police Child Protection Unit if you have any suspicion that a crime has been or may be committed against a child, or if the potential victim has children under 18 years old
- handle all confidential information in a sensitive manner and store/retain it securely (as required).

If the potential victim is due to travel imminently, give them the details of the British embassy or high commission in the country they are travelling to. Try to gather as much information - such as their passport details, dates of travel and destination - from them as possible.

If a potential victim of forced marriage seeks your help, you should not:

- treat their allegations merely as a domestic issue or an acceptable cultural issue and send them back to the family home;
- ignore what they have told you or dismiss out of hand the need for immediate protection; approach their family, their friends or people with influence within their community without their express consent - this will alert those people to your enquiries, and could increase the risk to the potential victim;
- contact their family in advance of any enquiries, either by telephone or letter; or
- try to be a mediator.

Mediation, reconciliation and family counselling as a response to forced marriage can be extremely dangerous. There have been cases of victims being murdered while mediation was being undertaken. Do not undertake any of these activities, as you may unwittingly place the potential victim in further danger.

c) Honour Based Violence (HBV)

The honour code means that women must follow rules that are set at the discretion of male relatives and which are interpreted according to what each male family member considers acceptable. Breaking the rules is seen as destroying the good name of the family, and is deserving of punishment at the discretion of male relatives. Honour is an unwritten code of conduct that involves loss of face on someone's part if offended against, especially in groups where loyalty is considered paramount.

Honour Based Violence cuts across all cultures and communities: Turkish, Kurdish, Afghani, South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, South and Eastern European for example. This is not an exhaustive list. Where a culture is heavily male dominated, HBV may exist. Evidence shows that this type of violence is often planned and sometimes made to look like a suicide or accident. There tends to be a degree of family conspiracy.

When dealing with potential victims it is important to recognise the seriousness/immediacy of the risk. Incidents that may precede a murder include:

- Forced marriage
- Attempts to separate or divorce
- Threats to kill or denial of access to children
- House arrest and excessive restrictions
- Denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends
- Starting a new relationship
- Domestic violence
- Pregnancy
- Pressure to go abroad

Where a victim has fled, be aware that members of the family may make false allegations of crime against them in an attempt to enlist your support to track them down. This may be in the guise of missing person reports or an alleged theft. They may also employ bounty hunters/contract killers to trace and return the victim. There is specific refuge provision available for victims of HBV and the Forced Marriage Unit are available for help as before.

d) Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non medical reasons. FGM is a grave violation of the rights of girls and women. The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the ethnic group practising it. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood, adolescence, at marriage or during the first labour. It is estimated that up to 24,000 girls under the age of 15, are at risk of FGM in the UK alone. UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians, Eritreans, Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act came into effect in March 2004.

It is illegal to:

- practice FGM in the UK;
- take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in that country;
- to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad;

FGM has a penalty of up to 14 years in prison and/or a fine.

What are the signs that a girl may be at risk of FGM?

Suspensions may arise in a number of ways that a child is being prepared for FGM to take place abroad. These include knowing that the family belongs to a community in which FGM is practised and is making preparations for the child to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning absence from school. The child may also talk about a 'special procedure/ceremony' that is going to take place. Indicators that FGM may already have occurred include prolonged absence from school, with noticeable behaviour change. They may find it difficult to sit still and look uncomfortable or may complain of pain between their legs. You must report any concerns to your team/group leader.

Short-term health implications include: severe pain and shock, infection, urine retention, injury to adjacent tissues, immediate fatal haemorrhaging. Long-term implications include: extensive damage of the external reproductive system, vaginal and pelvic infections, cysts and neuromas, increased risk of complications in pregnancy and childbirth, psychological damage and difficulties in menstruation.

e) Domestic Violence & Abuse

Domestic Violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, Financial, Emotional. A child is a victim of domestic violence, as they are witnessing it in their home, even if they are not physically subject to it, and it has a direct effect emotionally on any children that may be living in that home. Of children living with Domestic Violence – 90% witness it and 50% of this group are abused themselves.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is: an act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Domestic violence can include a range of behaviours as described above, in part 7b. If an adult or child confides in you regarding domestic abuse please feed that information up to your group/team leader, and follow Safeguarding practises outlined above.

f) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

1. Introduction

The sexual exploitation of children and young people has been identified throughout the UK, in both rural and urban areas. It affects boys as well as girls and young women. Children and young people who are sexually exploited, or at risk of sexual exploitation, are the victims of sexual abuse and should be safeguarded from further harm. Sexually exploited children and young people should not be regarded as criminals and the primary law enforcement focus should be aimed at the perpetrators of such crimes.

2. Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation

The nationally agreed definition of CSE adopted by the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) is:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

3. What is child sexual exploitation?

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse. Victims are manipulated or forced into taking part in a sexual act, either as part of a seemingly consensual relationship, or in return for attention, gifts, money, alcohol, drugs or somewhere to stay. The young person may think that the abuser is their friend, or even their boyfriend or girlfriend. But they will put them into dangerous situations, making or forcing them to do things that they don't want to do or can't say no to. The abuser will create some form of dependency between the young person and them and may physically or verbally threaten the young person or be violent towards them. They will try and isolate them from friends and family so that they can control and manipulate them.

4. What are the signs?

Often the victims of sexual exploitation are not aware they are being exploited. Signs of sexual exploitation range significantly but there are a number of tell tale signs you should look out for in the child, including:

- Having mood swings.
- Changes in physical appearance.
- Changes in eating patterns.
- Misusing alcohol or drugs.
- Chatting to people they meet online.
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Being in a relationship with or associating with an older person.
- Increased or secretive mobile phone and computer use or in possession of multiple phones.

- Showing inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections.
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education.
- Regularly going missing for periods of time or returning home late.

What to do if you have concerns?

If you have any concerns, please pass them onto the Open Heaven Safeguarding Officer, Jez Cromie.

g) Prevent

Introduction

Prevent is the name given to the initiative aimed at combating extremism and creating a safe and secure country. The programme is managed by the council's Community Safety Team and has been developed in response to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015), and the Government's Prevent Strategy - a national counter extremism programme aimed at stopping people from becoming violent extremists or supporting extremism, both violent and non-violent.

Leicestershire and Rutland's Prevent Strategy is aimed at preventing violent and non-violent extremism, but is also very much about protecting our communities and supporting vulnerable people who may be targeted by extremists trying to recruit or radicalise them. The Prevent programme relies on community support and information to identify and safeguard people. For more information see: www.leicesterprevent.co.uk

What to do if you have concerns?

If you are concerned that someone is at risk of being exploited for extremist purposes, please contact, please pass this on to the Open Heaven Safeguarding Officer, Jez Cromie. Open Heaven will then inform the Local Authority and/or the Police who will assess the individual and provide them with appropriate support if they are at risk.

Appendix 1

Responding to Disclosures – Workers Action Sheet

CONFIDENTIAL

Name of Church/Group _____

Name of Child/Young Person _____

Address _____
_____ Post Code _____

Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____

Name of Person Reporting incident _____

Date _____ / _____ / _____ Time of incident _____

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations

Action Taken (including person(s) contacted) to ensure person's safety

Date _____ / _____ / _____ Time _____

Other

Notes:

Inform Open Heaven's Safeguarding Officer by email or phone of this report IMMEDIATELY

Designated Safeguarding officer is Jez Cromie

jez@openheaven.org (01509 215036)

Appendix 2

Accident and Incident Form

This form should be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident occurs. The worker should discuss and seek advice from other Children's workers what follow up action is necessary.

Date _____

Time _____

Name of person involved _____

Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____

Where did this incident take place?

Name of group / activity:

Who was responsible for the group at the time of the incident, if different from the above?
(Name, address and telephone number)

Which other workers were supervising the group at the time of the incident? (Names, addresses and telephone numbers)

Who witnessed the incident? (Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and ages if under 16) Normally only two witnesses would be needed.

Describe the accident/incident (include injuries received and any first aid or medical treatment given)

Have you retained any defective equipment?
 If so, where is it being kept and by whom?

What action have you taken to prevent a recurrence of the incident?

Is the site or premises still safe for your group to use? YES NO

Is the equipment still safe for your group to use? YES NO

Who else do you need to inform? -----

Have they been informed? YES NO (Please tick)

If so, when and by whom?

Signature of person in charge of group at time of accident/incident

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Form seen by Operations Manager / Children's Worker / Member of staff team.

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

- Information of a sensitive nature (e.g. abuse) will need to be kept separately in a secure place.
- Some Accident & Incident forms will need to be cross referenced to the Accident book.
- Records should be kept indefinitely as advised by insurance companies.

Appendix 3:

Training and Information Checklist for Workers

We are committed to a rigorous recruitment process for all paid staff and volunteers who will be working with children or hold a position of trust and responsibility. Use the checklist below to make sure you have read the relevant information and have filled in the correct forms.

- Completed Application Form including reference details
- Read relevant policies
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- Induction training with Children's or Youth Worker
- Attended Safeguarding Training

My named person for queries or concerns is

You may also contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer for Open Heaven Church

This person is: Jez Cromie
Contact: Jez@openheaven.org

The Deputy Officer is : Mel Cave
Contact: Mel@openheaven.org

Appendix 4: Contact Information and Helplines

If you have concerns about a child, Contact:

Leicestershire county Council

0116 305 0005

childrensduty@leics.gov.uk

Police

Non emergencies, call 101

in emergencies, always dial 999

Childline

0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

(24 hour service for children and young people to call about anything worrying them)

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

help@nspcc.org.uk

(24 hour service for adults worried about the safety of a child)

Stop It Now!

0808 1000 900

Helpline for those that are unsure or worried about their thoughts or behaviour towards children. Experienced advisors can offer confidential advice on what steps to take.

Other forms of abuse/exploitation

Spiritual Abuse:

SAFE is an organisation supported by CCPAS website.

SAFE, St Paul's Centre, High Town, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 3BY.

Forced Marriage & Honour Based Violence (HBV)

Forced Marriage Unit on 02070 080 151 for further help and support

safe.met.police.uk has useful website and links to other support organisations

Female Genital Mutilation

If you are concerned that a British citizen may be taken overseas for the purpose of FGM please call the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 02070 081 500 or email fgm@fco.gov.uk

Karma Nirvana is a registered charity which operates nationally, supporting victims and survivors of forced marriages and honour based violence. www.karmanirvana.org.uk

Forward provide support, counselling and safe space for girls and women to talk about their FMG experiences. They can also educate and work with families to prevent FGM happening to any other girls in the family. www.forwarduk.org.uk

Domestic violence

National Domestic Violence helpline: 0808 2000 247

Local helpline

Living without abuse: 01509 550317, alternative telephone: 0800 2000247

Appendix 5:

Child Information and consent form

Child's full name	
Name that child is known by (if different)	
Date of Birth	
Does your child have any special needs/disabilities/medical conditions?	
Allergies (please list)	
Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your child?	

Parent/Carer details

Parent/Carer 1	
Name	
Relationship to child	
Contact number	

Parent/Carer 2	
Name	
Relationship to child	
Contact number	

In the event that my child requires immediate medical treatment, I hereby authorise the Children's Leader to consent to emergency medical treatment on my behalf.

YES / NO

I give permission for photographs to be taken of my child and understand they may be displayed on Open Heaven media.

YES / NO

Signature of Parent/Carer.....

Date.....