SAFEGUARDING POLICY

NEW LIFE CHURCH LANCASTER

Charity No: 1150634

Company No: 08370243

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Details of the place of worship / organisation

Name of organisation:	New Life Church Lancaster
Address:	23 Yealand Drive, Lancaster, England, LA1 4EW
Email address:	office@newlifelancaster.org.uk
Network:	GoGlobal
Company Number:	08370243
Charity Number:	1150634

New Life Church is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for all its work with children[1] and vulnerable adults[2]. As Christians we seek to live to God's standards and give high regard to integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness.

Work with Children

We value children as part of our church community and encourage them to reach their full potential. We provide groups and activities at our Sunday gatherings and mid-week to help them access church life in a creative, age-appropriate way. We currently run:

Play room	0-4 years	Sunday morning 10:30am (parent accompanying)
Primary	4-11 years	Sunday morning 10:30am
Youth	11-18 years	Sunday morning 10:30am

and a mid-week activity in another church's building:

Youth meeting	11-18 years	Monday evening 7pm-9pm (partnering with Hope Church)

To clarify:

Leader – main responsibility for the primary or youth session

Helper – assists leader with the session (includes parents)

[1] Includes everyone under the age of 18
[2] See this link for a definition of 'vulnerable adult' - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/446/regulation/2/made

Work with Vulnerable Adults

We are a compassionate church and offer practical help and prayer ministry. Occasionally we will work pastorally with vulnerable adults. Currently we regularly offer the following:

Sunday service – including Prayer ministry	Sundays
Pastoral visits	By request
Homeless ministry (The Ark)	Fridays at 'The Centre' St Thomas's, Lancaster - this is covered under the policy of St Thomas's Church

Purpose of the policy:

- To promote the welfare and protection of children and adults in the church.
- To inform our volunteers how to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- To demonstrate our commitment as an organisation to achieving the best possible practice.

Designated Safeguarding Officers:

Jonathan Bayes, Ilo Ettah

- They are responsible for supporting volunteers in Safeguarding matters and must be informed of all safeguarding issues whether or not they need to take action. They should undergo appropriate training.
- Safeguarding Officers will keep the Elders/Trustees informed of any issues that arise (in line with confidentiality procedures) that may have wider implications for New Life Church, particularly where any allegation is brought against New Life Church volunteers.
- If Safeguarding Officers are unavailable or are the subject of a Safeguarding concern, Reph Walmsley, Head of Trustees, is the next point of contact.

Training:

- Appropriate training on these procedures will be given to those involved in working with children and young people in the church. Training will take place informally by leaders when appropriate and necessary.
- Employees will take part in annual safeguarding training
- Head of Trustees/Safeguarding Trustee will take part in bi-annual training.
- All registered leaders of children's and young people's groups will be able to access copies of these procedures.
- Ilo Ettah - Designated Safeguarding Lead Training completed 28 May 2025
- Jonathan Bayes – Designated Safeguarding Lead Training done 12.07.24

- New volunteers to children/youth will receive verbal information on practice guidelines and be sent a copy of this policy.

DBS checks:

- All leaders working with children 0-18 years and vulnerable adults (leaders who are actively providing regular care – this doesn't include anyone who might interact with a vulnerable adult, such as through Prayer Ministry) must be DBS checked.
- The Ark Ministry hosted by St Thomas's oversees references and DBS checks for volunteers.
- Some adults may volunteer as helpers with children's activities e.g. parents, particularly of young children, one-off helpers and those considering volunteering as Children's Workers who would benefit from a 'taster' session. This is acceptable without a DBS check as long as they are not given unsupervised (by a DBS checked adult) access to any child other than their own.
- Jonathan Bayes co-ordinates DBS checks and a record of DBS checks will be kept in a password protected document in the computer files.

Practice Guidelines:

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

All areas:

- A minimum of two volunteers is recommended. When this is not possible, the volunteer working alone must have a DBS check.
- Ministry leaders are responsible for supervising their volunteers according to their experience and competence.
- Accidents, incidents or safeguarding concerns must be recorded and kept in accordance with our GDPR policy.
- Safeguarding concerns should be shared with Jonathan Bayes or Ilo Ettah. A safeguarding report will be written.
- Children can be easily frightened, therefore all prayer with children and young people should be in a public setting and never in an isolated or unsupervised situation. Children can access the prayer ministry team with a parent/carer.
- If you are praying for a child with laying on of hands, this child must be of the same sex, and this must be done only with the permission of the child, and only with a light touch on the arm or shoulder of the child.
- Physical contact with children and adults must be appropriate, sensitive, meet the needs of the recipient and preferably be in the sight of others.
- Risk assessments should be undertaken for: the venue; the activity or anything else relevant to the event such as travel arrangements.
- Risk assessments should take into account the likelihood and the severity of the risk, and record those measures taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level. Risk Assessments should be regularly reviewed as a matter of policy; and *must* be reviewed whenever there is a notable incident as a result of the activity.

Children & Youth:

- Recommended ratios are: 1:6 for children up to aged 8
  1:10 for children over 8
    - (There are no specific guidelines for childcare outside of a school context, however the nspcc gives recommendations which we have drawn from – https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children)
- With youth, where the activity is within the confines of the Sunday venue and other leaders are in adjacent rooms, it is reasonable to operate with one adult.
- At times when the number of volunteers is unexpectedly low (e.g. leaders fail to turn up due to illness) the remaining leader(s) must, if necessary, change or reduce the activities planned in order to maintain control of the session. If possible a parent could be asked to stay in such an emergency or be asked to contact another recognised leader.
- Children under 18 years of age will not act as a leader, but, when appropriate, a person under 18 years of age may act as a helper under the supervision of a DBS checked leader.
- Keep a register of attendees at each group.
- Primary children can only be accompanied to the toilets by DBS checked volunteers.
- Adult toilets and children's toilets are clearly signed.
- Children must be treated equally and fairly. Positive behaviour should be recognised and rewarded e.g. with verbal praise. Disruptive behaviour should be addressed or help/advice should be sought from a group leader on how to address behaviour issues.
- A mentoring relationship with a young person must be same sex and be agreed by the parents and the Youth team. It is advisable that meetings take place in a public setting.
- Parental consent will be required for any events and activities where children and young people unaccompanied by their parent/carer may be present. Adults willing and able to act in loco parentis will need to be identified and agreed with the parents/carers.
- Consent must be sought for photos and videos of children and young people (particularly in group sessions) to be taken and used for the purposes or promotion of New Life Church. They must not be taken for a volunteer's personal use/Facebook page.
- Consent forms will be kept electronically.
- Leaders should not give out their personal email or telephone number to children under the age of 11 or contact them via these means, instead they

should liaise with parents/carers. Prior to giving personal contact details to children between the ages of 11 to 18 (such as for a whatsapp group) Leaders should seek parental consent first.

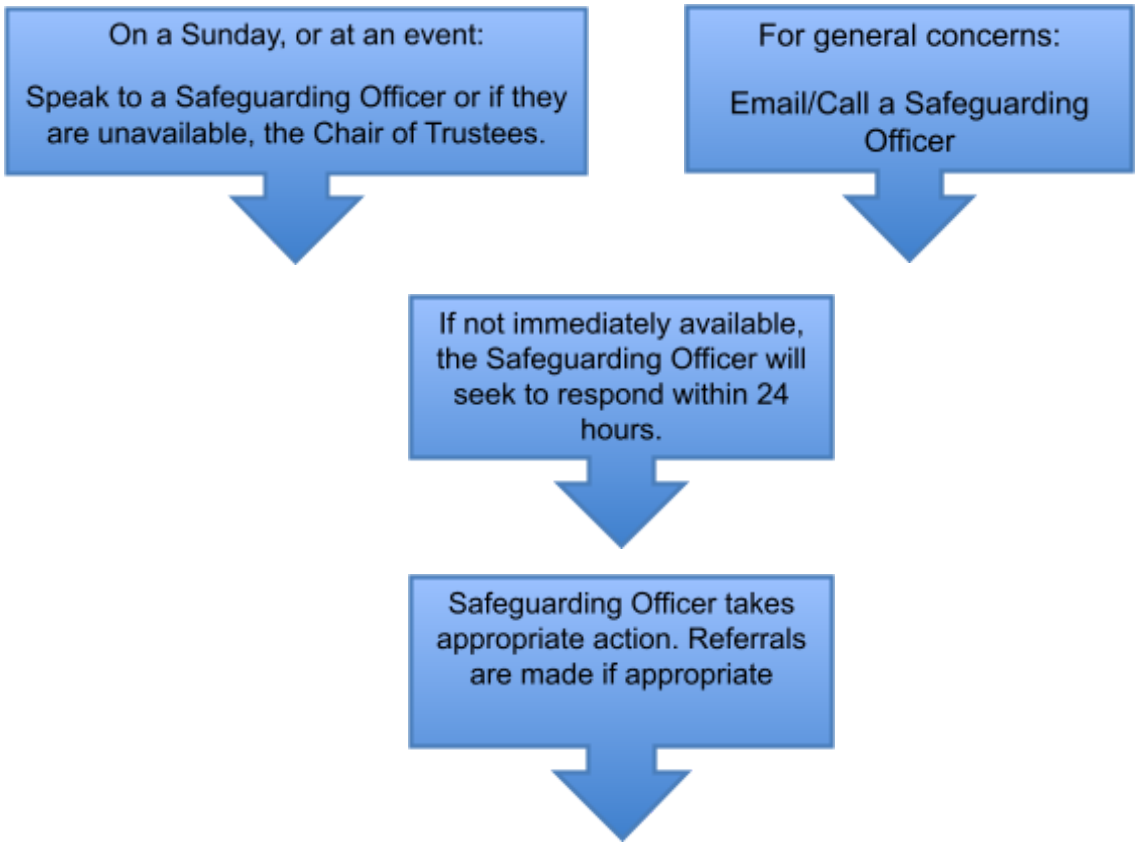
- The Youth worker has a Whatsapp broadcast with parents' contact details in order to communicate information.

Concerns about abuse & disclosures:

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or adult….pass on the information! (see Appendix for definitions of abuse)

If anyone discloses safeguarding issues to you…..listen, record and make a phone call! All written records should be passed to the Safeguarding Officer.

If there is an immediate risk call 999 or a safeguarding helpline (see details below). Otherwise follow this procedure:



A Safeguarding file should be kept, which is confidential and kept securely in accordance with our GDPR policy.

The Safeguarding Officer should be alert to any emerging pattern of behaviour and take action accordingly. Reports should be kept indefinitely (it is not unusual for abuse cases to be brought years later when the victim is an adult, in which case old records may provide evidence).

If you are unable to contact a Safeguarding Officer, report concerns by contacting:

- *For urgent safeguarding concerns in Lancaster involving immediate danger, call **999**.*
- *For child safety concerns, contact Lancashire Children's Social Care at **0300 123 6720** (out of hours: 0300 123 6722).*
- *For adult safeguarding, call **0300 123 6721**.*
- *The NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000) provides expert advice if you are worried about a child.*
- *The Thirtyone:eight (31:8) safeguarding advice line provides expert, tailored support for concerns regarding children or adults, including disclosures of abuse, allegations against workers, and complex cases. Reach them at 0303 003 1111 (Option 1) for urgent advice.*

Disclosures:

- Confidentiality: In the case of a verbal disclosure explain to the person that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed (for the sake of their welfare the matter may need to be referred on to a Safeguarding Officer).

- Recording information: After speaking to a Safeguarding Officer, they will record[3] anything that causes concern, including any conversation (both sides of it), anything observed, who raised the concern and the date and time.

[3] See appendix for Safeguarding record

If a child or adult wants to confide in you….

You SHOULD…	You SHOULD NEVER….
Be accessible and receptive	Promise confidentiality
Listen carefully at the child's pace	Assume someone else will do something about your concerns
Take what is said seriously	Speculate, accuse or confront anyone allegedly involved
Reassure the person with your tone and body language and tell them that they are right to tell you	Offer opinions about what is being said
Tell the person that you must pass this information on	Investigate, suggest or probe for information (ask leading questions)
Record the conversation accurately, using the child's words as much as possible.	Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc
Ask, 'When was the last time this happened?'	Forget to record what you have been told
Ensure the immediate safety and protection of the person concerned.	Fail to pass this information on to Safeguarding Officer

Pastoral Care

Working with offenders

- When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Elders will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.
- The Safeguarding Officers will be informed of any attendee for the protection of children, this information should not be more widely disclosed.
- In some circumstances, a Contract of Acceptable Behaviour will be necessary. This will lay down more specific guidelines. Breach of this contract by the individual will be cause for them to be asked to cease attending. Advice may be more widely taken where necessary e.g. from police or social services.

Supporting those affected by abuse

- The elders are committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship / organisation.
- Prayer is available to attendees of the church after the service. The Prayer Team are accountable to the elders and prayer team co-ordinator.
- Pastoral visits are encouraged to be done by two people or if one-to-one on a same gender principle in private dwellings.

We reserve the right to not allow someone to attend a Sunday meeting or other gathering, however the reasons for this will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will normally be a last resort.

Safer recruitment

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

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short-listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified

- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant - including Safeguarding training
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Complaints procedure

In the event of a safeguarding complaint, the following complaints procedure must be followed:

- Anyone making a verbal complaint should be offered the opportunity to make it in writing with the Safeguarding Officer. The Safeguarding officer will record the complaint in writing on the complainant's behalf with the complainant signing and dating the written complaint after. Many conflicts can and should be resolved at the time without recourse to a formal procedure, though they should be logged as a notable incident.

- Should a formal procedure be required, the complainant should be asked to do so in writing with the Safeguarding Officer, a copy of which they may retain and a copy of which is to be included in the event log.

- If the complaint is about a safeguarding officer then the complainant can contact an elder or trustee who may offer to record the complaint in writing if the complainant has decided to log a formal complaint.

The log should be reviewed by the Safeguarding Officers on an annual basis and review conduct and responses in case any adjustment needs to be made for future occasions.

The subject of the complaint should be kept informed by the Safeguarding Officers and given the opportunity to put their case in writing. Safeguarding Officers are to acknowledge receipt within 5 days – unless it is an issue of possible abuse in which case the procedures laid out in the section 'concerns about abuse & disclosure' should be given priority. Subsequent action depends on the nature and severity of the complaint. In all cases, the complainant should be informed in writing of what action has been taken within 28 days. Safeguarding Officers may need to refer the matter to the Elders/Trustees. If the complaint is about a safeguarding officer then the elder or trustee who has been informed will review the complaint and take whatever action is deemed appropriate, consulting other elders/trustees as appropriate.

Safeguarding contact details:

Contact via the Church mobile (07708 082262) for contact details of Safeguarding Officers or the Head of Trustees.

Appendix:

Understanding Abuse:

- Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of illness in a child.

Possible indicators are reoccurring bruises, inconsistent explanations, fear of parents being told, untreated injuries, flinching at sudden movement.

- Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in sexual images, watching sexual activities or behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Possible indicators are physical injuries, pregnancy/STI's, changes in behaviour, self-harm, depression/anxiety, inappropriate sexualised behaviour/ use of language.

- Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ridiculing and humiliating them. It may involve bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Possible indicators are children lacking in confidence, overly-affectionate to strangers or people they haven't known very long, aggressive or nasty behaviour towards other children, extreme outbursts, lacking in social skills, appearing not to have a close relationship with parents.

Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is important when discussing such cases with statutory agencies who may not be familiar with the concept to be clear that the case is psychological or emotional abuse within a religious context. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context.

The key aspect of spiritual abuse is the religious context in which the abuse occurs and the ways in which people are controlled through the misuse and abuse of religious scripture, divine position, spiritual threats and fear of spiritual

consequences and the suggestion of God as complicit. All or some of these features can be used to control or coerce.

- Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve inadequate feeding, clothing, shelter or failure to protect the child from physical and emotional harm and danger, such as not ensuring adequate supervision or medical care. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Possible indicators include poor appearance and hygiene, health and developmental issues and housing and family issues.

Safeguarding Record

Please complete in ink (the spaces in the form can and should be extended if more information is needed)

Date:…… Time: ……

Place:……

Person's name: ……

Gender:……

Does the person know this form has been completed? YES NO

If no, why not?

……

If yes, what did they say?

……

Why are you concerned about this person?

……

……

……

……

What have you observed and when?

……

……

……

……

What have you been told and when? (please try to use the person's own words & be factual)

……

……

……

……

Your name:……

Your volunteer position:……

Recipient signature:……

Date and time of this record:

……