

Safeguarding policy – Children

Grace Church Manchester is committed to providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment where all people, especially children can worship, learn, and grow in faith together. We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that the welfare of each person is paramount. This policy sets out our commitment to preventing abuse and responding promptly, compassionately, and appropriately to any safeguarding concerns. This policy should be read in conjunction with our code of good practice documents, which can be found in the church's google drive account.

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (page 128-129)
- On behalf of the voiceless: A theology of safeguarding by Dr Krish Kandiah
- Thirty-one: Eight, *Safe & Secure*
- NSPCC: Safeguarding in Faith Communities
- NSPCC: Child Protection System in England

Church Details:

Name of Place of Worship: Grace Church Manchester

Office Address: Grace Church Manchester
247a Wilmslow Road
Rusholme
Manchester
M14 5LW

Telephone: 0161 531 8476

Email address: admin@gracechurchmanchester.net

Sunday service address: Manchester Academy School, Moss Lane East, Moss Side, M14 4PX

Charity Number: 11082310

Insurance Company: Aviva Insurance Ltd

Structure of Children's work

At Grace Church Manchester there is a group called 'Crèche' for children of pre-school age, a group called 'Kids Club' for children from reception to year 2, a group called 'Explorers' for children from year 3 to year 6 and a group called 'Youth' for secondary school aged children. Crèche, Kids Club, Explorers and Youth are managed by at least two adults each. All adults who work with children at Grace Church Manchester are DBS checked and underwent Safer Recruitment procedures.

Our Responsibilities

We recognise that both as a charity and as Christians, we have a responsibility to:

- Protect and promote the wellbeing of those who attend the church; paying particular attention to those who may be more vulnerable than others.
- Ensure that we have suitable systems and processes in place to manage safeguarding risks
- Ensure that those who act on our behalf are competent and safe to do so.
- Identify non-safeguarding risks and manage them effectively.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that meet the threshold to the appropriate statutory services as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. Where immediate action is required to ensure safety, an urgent report to the Police (999) or the appropriate Social Services department will be made without delay.
- If we are unsure whether a statutory threshold has been met, we will seek advice from either the relevant statutory services or from ThirtyOne:Eight.
- Ensure that our conduct and practice is accountable and transparent and that we care well for those to whom we minister.
- Ensure that if problems occur or dissatisfaction is expressed, we examine these in an impartial and careful way and manage any conflict of interest effectively.

Our Commitment

The Leadership of Grace Church Manchester, that is the church elders and Trustees, recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to

“All the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The Leadership of Grace Church Manchester, that is the church Elders and Trustees, undertakes to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2011 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action, they may need to take to protect children and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding awareness

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. Safeguarding training takes place annually led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), appropriate deputies or external agencies such as Thirtyone: Eight. Prior to joining a team all children’s workers will have received a copy of the Children’s Safeguarding policy. All our senior leaders will receive induction training, and they have also attended other training provided by Thirtyone: Eight.

Safeguarding policies are displayed prominently on our website, and our safeguarding banner/noticeboard is displayed each Sunday morning where congregants join for tea and coffee. We have leaflets about safeguarding on our welcome table and information on how to record concerns online through our software platform 'IKnowSafeguarding.'

During Safeguarding Sunday, we remind the congregation of key contacts and procedures. By embedding safeguarding messages into everyday church life and communications, Grace Church Manchester reinforces that protecting children is a shared, ongoing commitment.

Recognising and responding appropriately to disclosures or concerns

Defining abuse

A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child.

To safeguard children in our place of worship we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have it as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

- 1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
- 2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy (See Appendix 2).

Responding to disclosures or concerns

- If the child is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention, call **999**.
- The person in receipt of the disclosure should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Laura Likissa (Designated Safeguarding Lead, DSL) **Tel: 07706 426 132**

In the absence of the DSL the following person can also be contacted:

Grace Fulford (hereafter Deputy Safeguarding Lead) **Tel: 07908 856 109**

Sophie Craggs (hereafter trustee safeguarding lead) **Tel: 07856 687 818**

safeguarding@gracechurchmanchester.net

- All concerns should be recorded on 'IKnowSafeguarding' as soon as possible by the anyone who has had contact with the child/family or where information has been shared. IKnowSafeguarding is a UK-based safeguarding software platform. This platform allows anyone to securely record safeguarding concerns and provides the means to note down the date/time, what happened, what was said. All

congregants can access this platform via a QR code on our website or information is found at our welcome table. The DSL and DDSL are the only members of the church that have access to the records.

- The purpose of using this software is so that details are recorded as accurately and securely as possible before they are forgotten so that the concern can be addressed correctly. In the event of a serious safeguarding event, they may also be used as evidence.
- If the disclosure implicates both the DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

o **THIRTYONE: EIGHT**, Telephone: 0303 003 11 11
PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

- The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ deputy is to collate and clarify the details of the disclosure and pass this information onto children's services or the police who have a legal duty to investigate. The local authority contacted will depend upon the address of the child.
- **Manchester Children's Services**: Call: 0161 234 5001, email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk
- **Greater Manchester Police**: Call: 101 or complete an online form <https://www.gmp.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us-beta/contact-us/>
- The DSL/Deputy may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the incident, but this will only be done if it is the best interest of the child and it does not increase their risk. For example: the elders to log that a safeguarding concern is being dealt with, the insurance company to log that there is a possibility of a disclosure made about a person who has a role with under 18s elsewhere.
- The Eldership and Trustees will support the DSL/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies, the police, or to seek advice from THIRTYONE: EIGHT.
- If any individual has reason to believe that a child or vulnerable adult is at immediate risk in any way and cannot contact the DSL or deputy, then they should immediately contact the police or social services.
- Where there is a concern that a child is being subjected to physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse the DSL/deputy should: NOT tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services or THIRTYONE: EIGHT. They should seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of concerns.
- In the event of a disclosure or concern of sexual abuse towards a child, the DSL/Deputy will: Contact Manchester Children's Services and the Police direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else. They will seek and follow the advice given by THIRTYONE: EIGHT if, for any reason they are unsure whether to contact Children's Social Services/Police. THIRTYONE: EIGHT will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Safer recruitment

All workers (employees, elders or volunteers) 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 and person specification for the post, which is shared with all candidates applying from the beginning of the process, and which contains a statement about their commitment to safeguarding.
- Those applying have completed an application form, a self-declaration form, and have been asked to read the safeguarding policy and the relevant code of good practice.
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- A DBS check has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information) and in the event of a blemished report, advice will be sought from THIRTYONE: EIGHT.
- The applicant has read the organisation's safeguarding policy prior to starting work with children or young people and knows how to report concerns.
- The DSL will review safeguarding policy and best practice at their annual team meeting. This will include a review of how appropriately job descriptions match current practice. Following this review all policies and documents then be shared with anyone working with children or vulnerable adults.

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship / organisation. This may be through one-to-one help, or referral to someone qualified.

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 Leadership 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. A document has been created at GCM called 'Supporting those who present a risk to others' which will provide additional information and procedures.

The Leadership and DSL/deputy will review this policy and our procedures annually.

Role	Name	Date
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Laura Likissa	01/11/25
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Grace Fulford	4/12/25
Safeguarding Trustee	Sophie Craggs	12/1/26
Minister	Pete Horlock	13/2/26

APPENDIX 1

Important contact information

THIRTYONE: EIGHT contact details are:

Address: PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ

Telephone: 0303 003 11 11

Website: <https://thirtyoneeight.org>

Email: info@thirtyoneeight.org

Membership number: 17179

Local authority departments of Children's Social Care:

Manchester 0161 234 5001

Bolton 0120 433 7400

Bury 0161 253 5454

Oldham 0161 770 3790

Rochdale 0845 226 5570

Salford 0161 603 4500

Stockport 0161 217 6028

Tameside 0161 342 4150

Trafford 0161 912 5125

Wigan 0194 282 8300

Police 101 (non-emergency), 999 (emergency)

Helplines for non-emergency advice on religious and political extremism:

Department for Education 020 7340 7264

counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk

Police 101

In addition, the following telephone numbers may be useful for children and parents/ carers:

Childline 0800 1111

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Barnardo's 0800 942 8787

Manchester Early Help Hubs and Early Help Parenting Team: earlyhelpcentral@manchester.gov.uk,

0161 234 1975

MThrive: 0161 203 5333, mthrive@mft.nhs.uk

42nd Street: <https://www.42ndstreet.org.uk/>

APPENDIX 2

Definitions of abuse (England and Wales)

The following definitions of child abuse are recommended as criteria throughout England and Wales by the Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills and the Home Office in their joint document, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023). They are also drawn from the latest NSPCC definitions and guidance.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

INDICATORS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and continuous adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children 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.

INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also, depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia

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, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

INDICATORS OF NEGLECT

- Poor appearance and hygiene - smelly or dirty, unwashed clothing or the wrong clothing for the weather / season or their size.
- Frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants or repeated skin issues e.g. rashes, fleabites, ringworm etc.
- Hungry or not given money for food - perhaps stealing food or scavenging in bins etc. ● Medical or dental issues, missed medical appointments or not given correct medication, regular illnesses or infections.
- Repeated accidents relating to poor supervision.
- Poor language or social skills.
- Describing being left alone for long periods when developmentally inappropriate.
- Changes in behaviour such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn, increases in depression, anxiety or obsessive behaviours, missing school, struggling to concentrate.
- Self-harm or substance misuse.