



Living Stones Community Church and Old Town Community Church

Child Protection Policy

**Revised
June 2022**

Living Stones Eastbourne is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England No. 4765158. Registered Office: Community Wise, Ocklynge Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 1PY. Registered Charity No. 1098281. We are part of the Evangelical Alliance UK and Churches Together for Eastbourne

This policy has been lodged with the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service and a copy sent to East Sussex Duty & Assessment Team (Eastbourne, Lewes & Wealden). We wish to express our appreciation of the help given by PCCA Christian Childcare Churches Child Protection Advisory Service in the drawing up of this policy.

1. Why the need for a policy?

Children have a special place in the community of Christ (Mark 9:36-37, 10:13-16). They are a model for adults and also in need of special protection (Matthew 18:1-6).

We are aware that over the years a taboo in the area of harm to children has allowed many awful things to take place at terrible cost to individuals. Situations that have been known about were covered up. Sadly, the church in general has not been immune to these things. In particular some with special responsibility for the care of children within churches have harmed them and it is not unknown for children to be harmed in the homes of church members. We are aware also that unscrupulous people can consider churches as relatively 'soft' targets.

To produce and implement a policy will ensure that we have taken all reasonable steps to protect our children and workers both now and in the future.

2. Who does the policy aim to protect?

This document deals specifically with the issue of the protection of children, within the orbit of the church community, from physical, emotional, sexual harm or neglect. It also seeks to provide clear boundaries and guidelines which will help to protect adults who may have some previous history or be vulnerable to temptation in the area of harm to children and which will enable them to steer clear of any involvement with children that may entail risk. It will also limit the possibility of false accusation against workers.

3. Who are the key adults who need to know about this policy?

It is the responsibility of the whole church community to attend to the proper protection of children within the church family and also those children we seek to reach and minister to in the name of Christ. For practical purposes this policy will be the special concern of:

- the recognised leadership of the churches
- the recognised full- or part-time youth leaders
- those volunteers who regularly work with children and young people
- occasional volunteer helpers
- parents

4. Who will ensure that the policy will be implemented?

It is the responsibility of the respective church leaderships each to appoint a co-ordinator and a deputy who will

- Co-ordinate the implementation and on-going monitoring of the policy
- Ensure that all the above are aware of the policy
- Ensure that all new volunteers and workers are aware of the policy
- Ensure that occasional refresher sessions are held for all the above.
- Know where any confidential information is stored and how to access it
- Or, ensure these tasks are delegated to a competent person.

5. What situations are covered by the policy?

The policy seeks to cover

- The organised children's and young people's work of the church
- Informal contacts between youth workers and children and young people

The policy also seeks to give guidance over

- Informal arrangements made by parents concerning their children

In general, a child is anyone aged 12 and under. A young person is anyone aged over 13 and under 18.

6. Good practice for those working with children and young people

- As far as possible no worker should be alone with a child or young person where their activity cannot be seen. This may require leaving doors open, for example. In a confidential counselling situation where privacy is required then another adult, aware of the situation, should be present in the building and the young person should know they are there.
- Workers should exercise discretion and caution over situations where they are alone at home with children or young people. Regular meetings alone at home would normally be inappropriate unless, for example, one child arrives first at a group meeting in the home. Whenever possible, the worker should arrange to meet individual young people in an environment where others are present. Discretion is exercised when a child or young person calls at the door, taking into account such matters as age, gender and the circumstances that have brought the young person.
- When transporting children every care should be taken not to be alone with a child in a car. When giving lifts home, for example, it is wise to ensure that the last one dropped off sits in the back seat. Fast driving is actively discouraged and drivers may be banned from carrying children or young people if their driving is unsafe. Appropriate booster seats and seat belts should be used at all times. Children should only be transported by people who have appropriate insurance cover.
- All children and young people should be treated with respect and dignity befitting their age. Do not show favouritism. Attention should be given to language, tone of voice and body language.
- Do not allow unknown adults, access to children or young people during formal children's and youth work activities.
- Never invade the privacy of a child or young person who is washing, showering or going to the toilet. Parents/guardians should be asked to change nappies.
- Only DBS cleared workers and own parents/guardians should take children to the toilet.
- Do not engage in violent or sexually suggestive games.
- Avoid all innuendo or sexually suggestive language, even in fun.
- Do not use ridicule or sarcasm as a means of control.
- Do not use physical means of punishment. Physical restraint and/or removal should be avoided at all costs except when the individual is endangering him/herself or others
- Involve another adult when a child needs washing after soiling.
- Do not allow a child or young person to involve you in inappropriate physical or sexual contact or attention seeking. If this happens, make sure you tell the child or young person clearly that their behaviour is not acceptable. Tell the responsible adult for the group or a leader colleague, if you are the leader, about the incident, even if you find this embarrassing. You should both date and sign a written record of the incident, which should be given to a co-ordinator. Agree together what measures should be taken to ensure there is no re-occurrence.
- Take all necessary precautions to make sure a group activity is conducted in a well-lit and safe place.
- There should be ready access to a telephone for all children's and young people's activities.
- No smoking should be permitted in church arranged children's and young people's activities.
- No alcohol should be permitted in any children's or young people's activity nor proscribed drugs at any age. Group adults are also included in this. Communion wine may be taken under the supervision of an adult.
- Children aged 12 and under should not be allowed to leave the premises unsupervised during an activity. Parents should be made aware of their responsibility for the collection and safe return of their children at the end of an activity.
- Parents should sign a consent form for any off-premises activity. This applies to all young people under 18 and living at home or under care order. It does not apply to young people over 16 and living independently.
- A record of parents' addresses and phone numbers should be maintained for all regular members of a group.
- It is best practice not to run a regular mixed group activity unless there is both a male and female adult present.

Further guidelines for residential events:

- A home link person shall be agreed before the event. They shall be available to take emergency calls during the event. The event leader shall have the phone numbers of at least two other people in case the link person is not immediately available.
- The event leader shall make sure that there is reasonable access to a phone during the event.
- Parents and the home link person shall have details of a phone number at the event in case of emergency. Parents should also be given the number of the home link person. There is no need for a home link person for one night sleepovers on church premises provided all parents and carers are aware of the relevant church phone number.
- Names, home addresses and phone numbers of all children and young people on a residential event shall be left with the home link person.
- In general adults should not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people on residential. Exceptions should be carefully discussed and agreed with other leaders and parents.
- There should be no mixed sleeping arrangements, except for married couples.

7. a) Working with colleagues

All those working with children and young people should do so with the confidence and responsibility to share any concerns with colleagues. Be alert and ready to share misgivings. It must be understood by all those who work with children and young people that our own behaviour is open to scrutiny. The welfare of the children and young people is our first concern. It is important however, that all concerns are shared in a discreet and caring way so that we support one another and do not use situations as ground for destructive criticism. In case of a cause for concern, in the first instance a personal approach with the colleague should be made. However, if your concerns are such that it would be unwise to make an initial personal approach or if your initial approach does not result in a change of behaviour, then talk with your immediate leader or the co-ordinator. Agree together, if it is considered serious enough, to refer the matter to a member of the church leadership team. Regular meetings of leaders should be held and it should be made clear that general child protection concerns should be raised at these meetings.

b. Working with offenders

Where someone attending church is known to have abused children or young people, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the commitment to the protection of all children and young people will mean that clear boundaries will be discussed with the co-ordinator and another leader and an agreed contract be made with the individual concerned. The individual would not be alone with a child in the church, would decline offers of hospitality from church members where there are children or young people present in the home or be involved in any church work with children and young people.

8. Disclosure, discovery or suspicion of abuse

a) Types of abuse

Physical. Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Emotional. Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

Sexual. Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

Neglect. The persistence of severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Organised abuse. Sexual abuse where there is more than a single abuser and the adults concerned appear to act in concert to abuse children and/or where an adult uses an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for sexual abuse.

b) Disclosure of abuse

When a child or young person discloses information which could well include details of abuse the following procedure should be followed:

- When it is apparent what the nature of the disclosure is, tell the child that you may need to talk to someone else about the matter so that the harm can stop. Do not give assurances of confidentiality.
- If possible ask if another adult can be present. It is likely that this will be declined. Allow the child to continue, but ensure that others know that there is a meeting with the young person and that someone else is around in the building.
- Maintain eye contact and listen carefully.
- Do not ask any questions.
- Reassure the child that he or she was right to tell you and that they are not to blame for anything that has happened.
- Try to explain what will happen next and that you will be available to support them.
- Make written notes of what was said within one hour, including comments on how they appeared emotionally and how they spoke. The notes should be signed, dated and kept in a safe place with a copy kept for a co-ordinator.

Concerns related to Living Stones Community Church must be reported as soon as possible to **Mary Leggett** (07958225409) and concerns relating to Old Town Community Church must be reported as soon as possible to **Christine Fredriksson** (07599 300172)

These are co-ordinators nominated by the respective church congregational leadership teams to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. A co-ordinator may also be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy immediately to inform the Insurance Company. In the absence of the Co-ordinator not being contactable please contact **Justin Ayres** (07540 524811) for Living Stones Community Church, **Caroline Dombrowski** (07546 821539) for Old Town Community Church.

If the suspicions in any way involve a Co-ordinator then the report should be made to the Deputy Co-ordinator. If the suspicions in any way implicate both the Co-ordinator and the Deputy Co-ordinator, then the report should be made in the first instance to: Thirtyone:eight, Tel: 0303 003 1111 PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Alternatively contact the local Duty and Assessment Team (Eastbourne Lewes & Wealden) Tel: 01323 747373 1st Floor, St Mark's House, 14 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 1EP.

It is important that allegations of abuse are kept on a need to know basis and as few people as possible are informed. Any suspicions should therefore go to the Co-ordinator or the Deputy, except in the case where both are implicated.

- If the child needs urgent medical attention, in consultation with a colleague or leader, call the appropriate emergency services or take the child to the hospital. Tell the medical staff of your suspicions.
- If there is uncertainty about what to do next, an approach for advice to the local Duty and Assessment Team (Eastbourne Lewes & Wealden) Tel: 01323 747373 1st Floor, St Mark's House, 14 Upperton Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 1EP, or Thirtyone:eight, Tel: 0303 003 1111 PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ should be made, ideally with the Co-ordinator or the Deputy.
- If it is apparent that the child or young person is actually or potentially at risk, then the Co-ordinator, having consulted with one of the leadership team, shall contact Social Services. The alleged abuser should not be contacted nor should anyone else other than the statutory authorities (or Thirtyone:eight for advice). The telephone contact with Social Services should be followed up by a letter confirming the conversation, with a copy given to one of the leadership team. The co-ordinator and leader should consider the situation and if on a rare occasion it is not safe for the child to return home, it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and/or the Police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.
- Any suspected abuser should not be contacted nor should anyone else other than the statutory authorities or Thirtyone:eight.

If abuse is discovered or suspected but has not been disclosed at the initiative of the child or young person, provided there is no immediate need for medical attention, then the co-ordinator should be consulted. With the agreement of a member of the leadership team advice should be sought from Social Services or Thirtyone:eight on the next step.

9. Appointment of workers

The following shall complete the Workers Voluntary Declaration Form and shall be responsible for submitting a DBS clearance application to the relative Church Administrator (The church will be responsible for reimbursing any fee):

- Full and part-time children's or youth workers
- The congregation leadership teams
- The co-ordinator and deputy, if different
- All regular children's and young people's team members.

Those who have been cleared through another organisation with the enhanced DBS disclosure may present the original clearance to the co-ordinator who will ensure a copy is made and a record of its expiry is note. Although, this is to be considered as a temporary measure while the person is deciding whether to continue on a long term basis.

Two references shall be required for all new full or part time employed workers whose work will involve contact with children or young people. An interview will take place and following an appointment to a position of responsibility, a probationary period shall be agreed. A more experienced worker shall be responsible for monitoring performance during that time and, if satisfactory to all parties, the appointment will be confirmed. Once in a permanent position, a contract will be agreed.

Two references shall also be requested for all new volunteers who are not well known and established members of the congregation.

Any other occasional volunteer worker shall complete the Workers Voluntary Declaration Form. They shall be shown a copy of this document and shall sign to say they have understood its contents.

10. Parents and their children

This section 10 may be separately distributed to all parents/guardians.

All parents who participate regularly in the life of the church with their children shall be informed of the existence of this policy, which shall be available on request. Any parent whose child attends church-arranged activities may also be given a copy of the policy on request. The attention of parents who are regular participants is drawn to the following:

- Except for the duration of formal church arranged children's activities, children are the responsibility of their carers or parents.
- Parental discipline of their own children in public should be appropriate and due regard to the effect on others.
- We wish to maintain an environment of trust and openness where all children and young people are safe from harm. We welcome the sharing of concerns where these are apparent to a parent. Any concern may be shared with the co-ordinator or with a member of the leadership team.
- While in no way wishing to engender a climate of suspicion, we would advise parents only to entrust their children to the care of others in whom they have good reason to be confident. It should not be assumed simply because a person has made a profession of Christian faith that the person can be trusted with children.
- It is recognised that some children, especially those with lone parents, may well need the company and support of an adult member of the opposite sex as a role model and father or mother figure. Lone parents especially should take care not to entrust their child with another adult without giving it some thought first. Some wise steps to take might be:
 - To check with a member of the leadership team or another mature Christian for a second opinion.
 - To double check that the child is happy with the arrangement.
 - To entrust the child only with someone you have known for some time and you feel comfortable about.
 - For the adult to do activities together with other children in the context of joint outings, for example.
 - We would counsel parents to be cautious about baby-sitting arrangements where a person regularly offers to baby-sit alone in a home with young children.
 - Parents should be advised that normal caution should not be removed just because this is a church.
- Parents should talk with their children about social networking sites. It is strongly recommended that parents request their children not to add anyone to any of their Social Media or Messaging accounts etc without informing them.

11. Ongoing monitoring and implementation

The leaders of the various groups shall be responsible for maintaining the policy in their sphere of activity.

The co-ordinator shall make sure that every leader has the relevant forms needed and shall make periodic checks with leaders to see that procedures are being adhered to.

The church leaders shall build into their programme of meetings a yearly review with the co-ordinator and deputy. This shall include the sharing of concerns, checking that new workers are informed of the policy and an annual review of policy and procedures.

13. Whistleblowing

The church leaders encourage all church members to raise any concerns they might have about the conduct of others in church, whether this be peers or those in authority. All members must be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrong doing and are therefore expected to be watchful for unethical and inappropriate conduct and report accordingly. Contact is to be made with the safeguarding leads in the first instance, unless the concern is about them and therefore the leaders would be informed and vice versa.

13. Supporting documents

Every group leader should have copies of the following documents as appropriate for the group for which they are responsible:

- ACCIDENT / INCIDENT FORMS
- GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORMS
- WORKERS VOLUNTARY DECLARATION FORMS
- WORKERS MATTERS OF CONCERN REFERRAL FORMS

Living Stones Church has two congregations. For further information, or if you need to talk to someone confidentially contact the appropriate co-ordinator:

Living Stones Community Church :-

Mary Leggett (07958225409) or Justin Ayres (Deputy) on 07540 524811

Old Town Community Church :-

Christine Fredricksson (01323 412302) or Tony Elliott (Deputy) on 07531 609784

Appendix A: e-safety and Safe Communication Policy Based on CCPAS Guidelines April 2015

1. Introduction

CCPAS e-safety definition:

e-safety – or electronic safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of mobile (cell) phones, computers (laptops, netbooks, tablets) and other electronic devices including games consoles, to communicate and access the Internet, emails, texts messages (SMS), Instant Messaging (IM), social networking sites (SNS) and other social media; often referred to as Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The technology is constantly advancing bringing with it additional safeguarding considerations. An e-safety policy should be adopted and adapted to reflect all communications between church/organisations workers and children (those under 18 years of age) recognising the merging between online and offline worlds and the distinctiveness and difficulties within faith based organisations of defining clear boundaries for everyone.

The church / organisations commitment to e-safety:

It is therefore important for a church to adopt policies and good practice in these areas to ensure these modern technologies are used safely and responsibly by all, thereby protecting children and young people and safeguarding the integrity of workers. A worker's job description should include an acknowledgement and approval of these technologies as a legitimate means of communicating with children and young people but also the expectations of the church in relation to their use.

2. Access to the Internet

If Internet Services are available for use by children and young people, (eg. at Community Wise) the following protocols should be adopted:

User Policy and Permission Form

Every parent/carer whose child or young person of secondary school age wishing to use the Church's Internet Services should sign an agreement to abide by the 'user policy'.

The agreement explains what is acceptable and unacceptable online activity. Below are examples of what would be classified as unacceptable behaviour:

- Searching for and/or entering pornographic, racist or hate-motivated websites.
- Downloading, forwarding on and/or burning onto CD any music, images or movies from the Internet where permission has not been granted by the copyright holders.
- Disclosing any personal information e.g. addresses (postal, email or messenger), telephone numbers, bank details. This includes personal information about another user.

3. Workers' communication with Young People

All children and young people need to be aware of the protocols that workers follow in relation to email, messenger services and mobile phones including texting. It is important to remember that as well as the parent/carer, children and young people have a right to decide whether they want a church worker to have their email address or mobile telephone number and shouldn't be pressurised into divulging information they would rather keep to themselves. Workers should not show favoritism to children and young people in relation to communication technologies e.g. communicating less with those who don't have a computer or mobile phone or offering to pay for a child's top up card.

(i) Email – Email is often used by workers to remind children/young people about meetings (e.g. times, dates, themes etc). If email is being used workers should consider the following:

- Obtain parental agreement before they use email services to communicate with a child or young person aged 16+. All other communication should be via parent/guardian.
- It is important workers use clear and unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation, and although it should be obvious when an email is ending, workers should never use inappropriate terms such as 'luv' to round things off.

(ii) Mobile Phones - Mobile phones are perhaps the most popular way of communication. It can be done anywhere, at any time and is far more difficult to monitor. Particular diligence needs to be applied therefore when workers use mobile phones to communicate with children and young people.

- Where appropriate use group rather than individual texting
- Ensure calls and texts are not sent whilst the child is at school/college as this may be against the educational establishments rules
- Workers should keep a log of significant conversations/texts and/or the church could consider supplying the worker with a phone and obtain itemised phone bills
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be passed on/shown to the worker's supervisor.
- Workers should use clear language, particularly when texting and not use words such as 'luv' or abbreviations like 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and always end with their name.

Many mobile phones have digital cameras. Workers should ensure that they only take photographs of children and young people in accordance with their church's policy on photography e.g. ensure that consent is obtained and all images are stored in accordance with Data Protection Act principles. It would be unwise to keep images on a worker's mobile phone. Images should be downloaded to the church computer and kept securely and deleted when no longer required.

(iii) Use of Social Networking Sites

- Facebook and Facebook Messenger is only to be used as means of communication of information regarding meetings and events – to ideally be done in a closed group of those involved and administrated by the appointed youth worker and an independent person. All normal facebook social interaction should be avoided or kept to a minimum.
- Workers should remain mindful of their digital footprint and exercise caution in their use of social media. This includes sites visited, photos and videos. It is advisable that profiles are set to private and only visible to confirmed or accepted parties.

4. Accountability of Workers.

Internet accountability software packages are now available and could be used by a worker. This software monitors Internet use and relays this information to a person who is the workers accountability partner. Originally designed for those tempted to access pornographic websites, the software scores sites visited based on objectionable content.

The Living Stones Eastbourne Trustees will be the final accountable body for the implementation of this policy.

This statement was adopted by the **Trustees of Living Stones Eastbourne** and the leadership teams of **Living Stones Community Church and Old Town Community Church** on **18th May 2022**

Signed: **Martyn Relf**

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date: 18th May 2022

Signed:

Signed: **Ruth Jones**

Position: Church Leader OTCC

Date: 18th May 2022

Signed:

Signed: Rob Kelly

Position: Church leader LSCC

Date: 18th May 2022

Signed:

It will be reviewed annually by the Trustees and the respective leadership teams.