



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Last reviewed: June 2025, Claire Belton, Interim Safeguarding Officer

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Church details

Emmaus Rd Church
Founders Studio
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General information: info@emmausrd.com

Safeguarding questions and concerns: safeguarding@emmausrd.com

Registered Charity Number: 1152606

Insurance Company: Public Liability Insurance, Allianz Insurance PLC

Emmaus Rd is a vibrant and missional church community within the 24-7 prayer movement. We seek to support and encourage members of our congregation in their Christian faith, whilst also seeking to make a measurable difference amongst those in need both locally and through our global mission partners. We currently have congregations in Guildford, Aldershot and Woking.

For this reason, we run a variety of activities including those aiming to encourage and benefit those who attend our church, as well as outreach activities working with all faiths and none.

Introduction and Overview

This policy applies to all workers, including Senior Pastors, the Board of Trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, or anyone working on behalf of Emmaus Rd Church.

This policy defines work as any activity carried out in line with the vision of Emmaus Rd Church as set by the church's Elders team and commissioned and regulated by the Board of Trustees. The nature of the church is that relationships exist outside of centrally regulated activities. Whilst we acknowledge the responsibility of promoting the safeguarding and wellbeing of vulnerable groups during regulated activities, we urge workers and church attendees to use wisdom in applying the guidance and good practice guidelines outlined in this document when outside of regulated activities.

The purpose of this policy:

To protect children, young people and adults at risk who receive Emmaus Rd Church's services or attend the church. This includes the children of adults who use our services or attend the church.

To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Emmaus Rd Church believes that a child, young person or adult at risk should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Safeguarding Officers and will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special education needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years – Statutory Guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Working together to safeguarding children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; HM Government 2015
- The Care Act 2015

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- All children and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse

- Some children and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, adults at risk and their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's and adults at risk's welfare.

We will seek to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Safeguarding Officer (SO) and Deputy Safeguarding Officers (DSO) for children, young people and adults at risk, and a lead Board member for safeguarding. DSOs are appointed in each local congregation.
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support and training
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely, and sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who needs to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, adults at risk, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and statutory guidance.

Definitions of abuse

Defining a child and an adult at risk

A child is:

A person under the age of 18

An adult at risk is:

A person aged 18 years or over who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Defining abuse of children and vulnerable adults

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

Definitions of abuse of children

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. 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 for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)'.

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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 developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and 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 (including cyberbullying), 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions of abuse of adults at risk

Physical abuse

Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic violence

Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual abuse

Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse

Including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse

Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory abuse

Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational abuse

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission

Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more.

Spiritual abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves.

Recognising abuse of children and vulnerable adults

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in the context of the child or adult's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate 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

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- 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

Neglect

- Under nourishment, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food

- Failure to grow or put on weight
- Inappropriate clothing, e.g. no warm clothes in the winter
- Poor hygiene, e.g. smelly or dirty
- Being left alone at home a lot
- Poor social or language skills
- Untreated illnesses

Receiving a disclosure

How to respond to an individual wishing to disclose abuse

- Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or adult at risk to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.
- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- Above everything else, listen without interrupting
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
- Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- Use language that is age appropriate

Do say

- You have done the right thing in telling me
- I am glad you have told me
- Thank you for telling me. I am going to have to tell someone else what you have said, but only people that need to know

Don't say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

Receiving disclosures/concerns from adults: The 6 key principles

If you have concerns specifically about an adult/an adult has made a disclosure, it's vital the following six principles are enshrined within the process.

Empowerment – person-led decisions and informed consent.

Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs.

Proportionality – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need.

Partnership –local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

Accountability – transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Recording and responding to a disclosure/concern

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

If you have a concern that abuse is taking place, or a disclosure is made to you, record it using the incident form found in **Appendix 4** as soon as possible.

Ensure the record is legible, and is an objective, accurate record of exactly what happened, and/or was said, and follow this process:

If a child or an adult at risk is in immediate danger, call the **emergency services** on 999, the relevant **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub** (MASH) team for your local area, or the **Mental Health Crisis Line** if it's a mental health related emergency. Phone numbers for these services can be found at the end of this document.

It's vital to ensure the immediate safety of the person who has made the disclosure or who the concern relates to. This may include staying with the person until further arrangements can be made.

It is important that concerns are passed on to the right people as soon as possible. In the first instance, inform your **team leader or Pastor** immediately who will inform the Safeguarding Officer or one of the Deputy Safeguarding Officers. If more appropriate, inform the Safeguarding Officer or one of the Deputy Safeguarding Officers directly.

If the suspicions in any way involve any of the above, then the report should be made to the **Chair of Trustees**.

If the suspicions implicate all of the above, then the report should be made to **Social Services**, the **police** or to **thirtyone:eight** (safeguarding advice service).

If the concern/disclosure is regarding an adult at risk, before you report it, ensure you speak to the person concerned (or their advocate) if this is possible, to find out their views about the concern and include this in the reporting process.

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or to seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the leadership team hopes that members of the church will use the procedures outlined above. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Safeguarding Officers have not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency directly.

Safeguarding data storage and retention

The records made during a safeguarding process are stored on a secure, encrypted and password protected online storage system. We store and retain safeguarding information related to individuals and concerns in line with best practice as advised by thirtyone:eight.

Allegations against young people and workers

Allegations against young people

It is possible for children and young people to abuse other children and young people. Be mindful not to dismiss disclosures or concerns of this nature.

Allegations against staff and volunteers

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

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid employee), whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer will need to liaise with the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer (LADO), in regards to the suspension of the worker. thirtyone:eight will also be contacted for advice.

Advice will be taken from Children's Social Services and thirtyone:eight as to whether a referral to the DBS is required.

The DBS will be contacted if the nature of concern leads us to end the employment of the employee or volunteer or would have led to us making this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

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

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Social Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers, or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide, not the church.

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid employee), whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer will need to liaise with

Adult's Social Services in regard to the suspension of the worker. thirtyone:eight will also be contacted for advice.

Advice will be taken from Adult's Social Services and thirtyone:eight as to whether a referral to the DBS is required.

The DBS will be contacted if the nature of the concern leads us to end the employment of the employee or volunteer or would have led to us to making this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

Working with offenders

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs, the leadership team will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care but, in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep.

If someone who poses a risk to children, young people or adults with care and support needs wants to join in with activities or attend the church, we will manage the risk appropriately by creating a code of behaviour in the form of a written agreement which the individual must follow. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future. The contract will give details of both the boundaries we expect the individual to keep and the support we will offer them. It will be tailored specifically to individual circumstances and informed ideally by risk assessments from the statutory agencies.

Confidentiality

Information regarding allegations, concerns and on-going investigations are confidential. Information sharing will only be on a need-to-know basis.

If the Safeguarding Officer is made aware of a safeguarding concern, they will need to inform the Deputy Safeguarding Officers and the Pastor of the relevant site. The Safeguarding Officer may inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern at their discretion.

The Elders and Trustees will support the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Safeguarding Officers 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.

Prevention of harm

We are committed to preventing harm to children and young people and adults at risk. Please see **Appendices 1, 2 and 3** for our codes of conduct for working with children and adults at risk at Emmaus Rd, and for working with those with additional needs.

Radicalisation

We are committed to working to identify and support those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. The UK government strategy for counter terrorism (CONTEST) highlights three main categories of factors which may lead to vulnerability to radicalisation:

Engagement with a group, cause or ideology

- Feelings of grievance or injustice
- Feeling under threat
- A need for identity, meaning and belonging
- A desire for status
- A desire for excitement and adventure
- A need to dominate and control others
- Susceptibility to indoctrination
- A desire for political or moral change
- Opportunistic involvement
- Family or friend's involvement in extremism
- Being at a transitional time of life
- Being influenced or controlled by a group
- Relevant mental health issues

Intent to cause harm

- Over-identification with a group or ideology
- 'Them and Us' thinking
- Dehumanisation of the enemy
- Attitudes that justify offending
- Harmful means to an end
- Harmful objectives

Capability to cause harm

- Individual knowledge, skills and competencies
- Access to networks, funding or equipment
- Criminal capability
- If there is a concern that someone is a victim of radicalisation or is vulnerable to radicalisation, it should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer or one of the Deputy Safeguarding Officers who will seek guidance from the police, Social Services or the Channel programme (the UK government's programme for supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation).
- Those working with children or adults with care and support needs will receive basic training in identifying people vulnerable to radicalisation during their annual safeguarding training.

Spiritual Abuse

As a church, we are aware that we must take extra care to be aware of and safeguard against spiritual abuse.

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

“Spiritual abuse is coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include:-manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a ‘divine’ position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.” (Oakley & Kinmond, 2013)

If an individual recognises or experiences any signs of spiritual abuse, this must be reported and responded to immediately.

Safer recruitment

We are committed to ensuring that all workers are 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 role
- Those applying to work directly with children, young people and adults with care and support needs have completed an on-line application form
- Those short listed for paid employment have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview for paid positions
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate for those working directly with children, young people and adults with care and support needs
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (and updated every 3 years), and the equivalent if the applicant has lived abroad or is not a UK citizen (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 if required

- Paid employees have completed a probationary period
- Those working directly with children, young people and adults with care and support needs have been given a copy of the church's safeguarding policy and know how to report concerns
- Those working directly with children, young people and adults with care and support needs attend annual safeguarding training
- Pastoral support for those involved in the safeguarding process

We are aware of the emotional impact of making a disclosure/allegation, receiving a disclosure/allegation and being alleged against. We are committed to offering emotional support to all parties involved in the process without judgement, regardless of the outcome of an investigation.

Working in partnership

Emmaus Rd regularly works in partnership with other organisations.

When working together with another organisation, an agreement should be made in advance of the event as to which organisation is taking responsibility for safeguarding and which policy will be followed. Steps should be taken when another organisation will be taking responsibility for safeguarding to ensure they have robust and effective policies and procedures in place.

When an external group hires or uses an Emmaus Rd site they are responsible for the safeguarding of their group.

Contact details

If you have any safeguarding questions or concerns can you please direct them to: safeguarding@emmausrd.com

Adoption of the Policy

This policy was agreed by the Trustees and will be reviewed annually.

Last reviewed by the board: July 2025

