

GATEWAY CHURCH ABERGAVENNY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Revised August 2023

Gateway Church Abergavenny is committed to protecting all those we care for in our communities. This policy explains our responsibilities and how we will meet them.

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Section A – What this policy is for

1. Policy statement

1.1 Gateway Church, Abergavenny is committed to protecting and keeping safe all those we care for in our communities.

1.2 This policy has been approved by the church's Charity Trustees, who are responsible for ensuring that we comply with all our legal obligations. It sets out the legal and practical ways in which we work to protecting and safeguarding all those we care for in our communities.

2. Why this policy is important

2.1 We are committed to protecting those we care for in our communities, to safeguarding them and to ensuring we are operating legally and in line with best practice at all times.

2.2 This policy sets out the measures we are committed to taking as an organisation, and what each of us will do to ensure we comply with the relevant legislation.

2.3 In particular we will make sure that those we care for in our communities are:

- a) treated lawfully, fairly, and in a transparent manner;
- b) shown respect and treated with dignity at all times;
- c) listened to and made to feel confident in the care and protection we offer and provide.

3. How this policy applies to you & what you need to know

3.1 **As an employee, trustee, or volunteer** caring for individuals on behalf of the church, you are required to comply with this policy. If you think that you have accidentally breached the policy, it is important that you contact our Safeguarding Officer immediately so that we can take swift action to try and redress the impact of the breach.

Anyone who breaches the Safeguarding Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, and where that individual has breached the policy intentionally, recklessly, or for personal benefit, they may also be liable to prosecution or to regulatory action.

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3.2 [**As a leader/manager:** You are required to make sure that any procedures involving safeguarding that you are responsible for in your area follow the rules set out in this Safeguarding Policy.]

3.3 **As an employee, trustee, or volunteer or leader/manager** you are required to make sure that any safeguarding procedures involving personal data that you are responsible for, follow the rules set out in the Gateway Church Abergavenny Data Protection Policy.

4. Training and guidance

4.1 We will provide general training at least annually for all staff to raise awareness of their obligations and our responsibilities, as well as to outline the law.

4.2 We may also issue procedures, guidance, or instructions from time to time. [Managers/leaders must set aside time for their team to look together at the implications for their work.]

4.3 We will liaise with local statutory agencies and national experts to ensure all training, guidance and practices are up to date at all times.

4.4 Wherever possible and practicable training, guidance and best practice will be made available both face to face and online.

Section B - Our safeguarding responsibilities

5. Our commitment to safeguarding

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

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten Safe and Secure safeguarding standards published by the thirtyone:eight

The church undertakes to:

endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above;

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provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached;
ensure that the premises meet the requirements of all the 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 in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.

6. Safe recruitment

The church will ensure all employees 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/or 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; one written character reference has been obtained and followed up where appropriate; a criminal records disclosure has been completed (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; the applicant has completed a probationary period and that the applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

See also the church policies on recruiting staff and volunteers.

As a church we are committed to supporting all employees and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All employees have been given access to this policy. The church undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Section C - Best practice in safeguarding

7. Recognising an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable 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 vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. 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

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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.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, can be found in Schedule 1 of this document..

Possible signs of abuse

The following may indicate abuse and the possibility should be considered, but do not jump to conclusions, as there could be other explanations. It is always better to talk to the Co-ordinator rather than not:

Physical signs:

Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.

Injuries that occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.

Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming.

Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc. that do not have an accidental explanation.

Cutting/slashing/drug abuse.

Emotional signs:

Unexplained changes or regression in mood and behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression.

Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.

Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.

Attention-seeking behaviour.

Running away/stealing/lying.

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Signs of sexual abuse:

Any allegations made by a child concerning self-abuse.

Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.

Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.

Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.

8. Responding to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

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

Following procedures as below:

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to Lawrence Wilson (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator") tel no: 07702289712 who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to Aaron Foley (hereafter the "Deputy ") tel no: 07472942767.

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Church Minister: Chris Vaz 07446043655..

Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services.

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services and/or the Police.

The church will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/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.

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It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies although the Leadership expects that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy/Pastor has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/deputy/Pastor as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. By making this statement the church demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

9. Responding to allegations or suspicions of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse in children.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

Contact Children's Social Services For advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.

Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services. Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.

For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.

Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.

10. Responding to allegations or suspicions of child sexual abuse.

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will: Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.

Duty Social Worker: 01291 635669

South East Wales Emergency Duty Team: 08003284432

Seek and follow the advice given by:

Monmouthshire Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit Manager: 07795334986

Designated Officer for Safeguarding in Education: 07917707343

11. Responding to suspicions or allegations of adult emotional, physical or sexual abuse

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If a vulnerable adult has a physical injury or symptom of sexual abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

Discuss any concerns with the individual themselves giving due regard to their autonomy, privacy and rights to lead an independent life.

If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

For advice contact the Adult Social Care Vulnerable Adults Team who have responsibility under Section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and government guidance, 'No Secrets', to investigate allegations of abuse.

12. Responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse against a person who works with children and/or vulnerable adults.

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Section D Practical measures for offering support and care to children and vulnerable adults at safeguarding risk

13. General points

Accept what a child or vulnerable adult says (however unlikely it may sound)

Keep calm

Look at the individual directly

Let them know you cannot keep secrets and that you will need to share the information at some point

Help the individual understand that even if they have broken rules or the law they are not to blame for the abuse

Be aware that the individual may have been threatened

Never push for information or interrogate an individual. Recognise that it takes a lot of courage to share any story of abuse and that the individual is trusting you to act appropriately.

14. Do say

Thank you for telling me

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I will get help for you

Take your time

15. Don't say

Why didn't you tell me before?

Don't tell anyone else.

I think you are making too much of this

15. Do

Make sure you are never alone with a child or vulnerable adult, always stay in sight or a co-worker.

When working with children follow the guidance in the church manuals on working with children and young people.

Reassure the individual that they did the right thing in telling you and that you believe them. Let them know what you are going to do next and that you will keep in touch with them about what is happening. Refer to the Safeguarding Coordinator immediately.

Make handwritten notes and keep them safe and secure

Record times, dates, circumstances, locations etc., and exactly what was said (as much as is feasible in each instance).

Report your discussion as soon as possible to the Co-ordinator. If the latter is implicated, report to the Deputy Co-ordinator or the Pastor.

Remember that you may need support after hearing disclosure by a child or vulnerable adult.

Section E Practical measures for offering support and care to victims of abuse

As a Church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse, and encouraging them in their faith.

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As a guideline for this we would suggest:-

That the person shares these issues with a leader within the church whom they trust and who is the same sex as themselves.

That disclosure of sensitive information takes place in a safe and secure environment for both parties.

That the involvement of external specialist agencies already offering support to victims is respected and deferred to at all times by church members. This is essential when the external agency is Social Services.

The diversity of organisations and settings means there may be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse. We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets Welsh government safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.

Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency. Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Schedule -1- Definitions and useful terms

Child - a young person under the age of 18

Abuse - may be physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect;

Significant harm - ill treatment or the impairment of health or development (compared with the health or development which might be expected of a similar child);

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Physical abuse - actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury; Sexual abuse - actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child, including prostitution;
Emotional abuse - actual or likely significant adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection;
Neglect - persistent or severe neglect of child, or failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care;
Safeguarding - includes promotion of health and well-being as well as protection of specific individuals;
Designated person(s) - the staff member designated by the Trustees as having responsibility for liaising with the investigating agency.

Schedule 2 - Information about Gateway Church Abergavenny

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation: Gateway Church Abergavenny
Address: Gateway Christian Centre, Monk Street, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire
Tel No: 01873 853126
Email address: admin@gatewaychurch.wales
Website: www.gatewaychurch.wales
Charity Number: 1146530 Gateway Church Abergavenny
Registered in England and Wales No. 7842926
Insurance Company: Congregational Policy no. RC01011550

Schedule 3 - Safeguarding Contact details

Safeguarding Coordinator: Lawrence Wilson 07702289712
lawrence.wilson@gatewaychurch.wales

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator: Aaron Foley 07472942767
Aaron.Foley@gatewaychurch.wales

Pastor: Christopher Vaz 07446043655
christopner.vaz@gatewaychurch.wales

Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Officer for Monmouthshire Social Services:
Katie Jacobs 07976837800
katiejacobs@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Schedule 4

A summative review of this policy will occur every year before the church AGM which normally occurs in April. Formative review will be the responsibility of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

An up to date copy will be posted on the church website: www.gatewaychurch.wales.

Date of approval.....18th July 2023.....

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Addendum 2023

What is physical punishment?

There are lots of types of physical punishment. It can mean smacking, hitting, slapping and shaking. But there are other types too. It isn't possible to give a set list of what makes up physical punishment because it can be anything where a child is punished using physical force. Research suggests that any type of physical punishment could be harmful to children.

What's the law on physical punishment in Wales?

All physical punishment is illegal in Wales.

Children have the same protection from assault as adults.

This means the law is clear - easy for children, parents, professionals and the public to understand.

Does the new law apply to everybody in Wales?

Yes, it applies to everyone - parents or anyone who is responsible for a child while the parent is absent. And as with other laws, it applies to visitors to Wales too. Physical punishment has been illegal in schools, children's homes, local authority foster care homes and childcare settings for some time.

What happens if people physically punish a child?

Anyone who physically punishes a child:

will be breaking the law

risks being arrested or charged with assault

may get a criminal record which is the same for any criminal offence

Information, advice and support is available for anyone who needs it, to help them find positive ways to manage children's behaviour and to help avoid such a situation ever happening.

What should I do if I see a child being physically punished in church or if I am concerned about a child attending church?

Follow the procedures outlined in the main body of this policy. First points of contact being Lawrence Wilson or Aaron Foley.

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