



The Safeguarding Policy

SECTION 1

Details of the place of worship / organisation

Name: Lowestoft Community Church

Address: The Depot, 8 Hadenham Road, South Lowestoft Ind Est, Lowestoft, Suffolk. NR33 7NF

Tel No: 01502 537527 Email address: info@lowestoftcommunitychurch.co.uk

Charity Number: 1181951

Affiliated to:

- Relational Mission (www.relationalmission.com)
- The Evangelical Alliance (www.eauk.org)
- The Charity Commission (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)

Insurance Company: Ansvar Insurance (www.ansvar.co.uk),

Policy Number: CHP2107818

The following is a brief description of our place of worship / organisation and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

Lowestoft Community Church is Christian church, a community made up of people from a wide range of ages and backgrounds from in and around the Lowestoft area. As a local church it is our goal to reach out to the local community and to the nations with the good news of Jesus Christ.

As a local church one of our aims is to provide a safe environment for children and young people to grow and develop in social skills as well as have an opportunity to engage in games and activities directed at their age group. Most of our children's and youth activities take place at "The Depot", which is our site on the South Lowestoft Industrial Estate. Here we have two different sized halls which can accommodate a variety of activities. Most of the groups run by the church are staffed by volunteers from within the church. We also employ a part-time Youth Worker and a part-time Children's Worker who support the volunteers and do a lot of the preparation for the group activities. All of the midweek children and youth work that we undertake as a church have a significant number

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of attendees from non-church families, and we are always keen to serve the wider community as best as we can.

We seek to support vulnerable adults through groups and projects that we run, including Lowestoft Foodbank and the CAP Debt Centre – both of which are co-ordinated by staff members.

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and 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 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 “thirtyone:eight” (a safeguarding advisory service for churches).

The Leadership 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 and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Deputy (DDSL) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- the Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

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SECTION 2

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

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.

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. 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.

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 indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

Definitions of abuse:



Child abuse: Any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. (NSPCC)

Aged 18 years or over: A person 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. (NHS England)

Signs and indicators of abuse: See Appendix 2

How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse: See Appendix 3

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. All our workers will receive induction training and undertake safeguarding training updates on a regular basis from the Lowestoft Community Church Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Deputy (DDSL)

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS 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 REDACTED (hereafter the "DSL") tel no: REDACTED 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 DSL or, if the suspicions in any way involve the DSL, then the report should be made to REDACTED (hereafter the "DDSL") tel no: REDACTED. If the suspicions implicate both the DSL and DDSL, then the report should be made in the first instance to "thirtyone:eight" PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0303 003 11 11. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

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- Where the concern is about a child the DSL should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social Services or take advice from "thirtyone:eight" as above.

The local Children's Social Services office telephone number (24 hours) is 0808 800 4005.

The local Adult Social Services office telephone number (24 hours) is 0808 800 4005.

The Police Protection Team telephone number is 101 or 999 (emergency).

- The DSL may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern (for example the Chair of Trustees to log that a safeguarding concern is being dealt with, Insurance company to log that there is a possibility of a serious incident concerning safeguarding or a Designated Officer (formerly LADO) if allegations have been made about a person who has a role with under 18's elsewhere).
- 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 DSL, the absence of the DSL or DDSL should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from "thirtyone:eight".
- The Leadership will support the DSL / DDSL 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 or seek advice from "thirtyone:eight", although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the DSL / DDSL has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL / DDSL as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.



The role of the DSL / DDSL 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.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

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

- Contact Children's Social Services (or "thirtyone:eight") 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.
- Seek and follow advice given by "thirtyone:eight" (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL / DDSL 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.



- Seek and follow the advice given by “thirtyone:eight” if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children’s Social Services/Police. “thirtyone:eight” will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse

If there is concern about any of the above, DSL / DDSL will:

- contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively “thirtyone:eight” can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, DSL will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact “thirtyone:eight” and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

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 member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the DSL, 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 designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

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

The Care Act places the duty upon **Adult 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.

SECTION 3

Prevention

Safer recruitment

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

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

SECTION 4

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. The LCC Pastoral Team will be involved in providing ongoing support.



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 adults with care and support needs the Leadership 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.

SECTION 5

Practice Guidelines

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

For all children attending any church group a consent form will be completed by the parent/guardian which contains contact, emergency and medical information. For any off-site activities, an additional permission form will be completed.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and 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 and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets CCPAS' safeguarding standards.

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

Approved & adopted by L.C.C. Trustees;



	Approved	Reviewed and Updated	Reviewed	Reviewed
Date	July 2018	October 2019	October 2020	November 2021
Signed				



APPENDIX - 1

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Leadership Team recognises the importance of its ministry /work with children and young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

We are committed to creating and enabling a healthy culture in order to minimise any coercion and control within our church.

This place of worship/organisation is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial and discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults who have care and support needs and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe in the necessity of creating a healthy culture in our church where the value of all people is recognised and challenges are responded to appropriately.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.

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- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/adults with care and support needs.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

We recognise:

- 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 an adult with care and support needs.
- 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.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

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If you have any concerns for a child or adult with care and support needs then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of worship/organisation.

REDACTED – DSL , REDACTED - DDSL

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from the church office.

APPENDIX 2

Signs of Possible Abuse (children & young people)

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child'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, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc

*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self - harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.



APPENDIX 3

Initial Response to a Concern or Allegation of Abuse

If there is a concern that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been abused or a direct allegation of abuse is been made, it is important the person receiving this information does the following:

- Using the pink LCC Safeguarding Forms, make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking) including a description of any injury, its size, and a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body.
- Write down exactly what has been said, when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity).
- Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
- Write down any action taken and keep all hand written notes even if subsequently typed up.

This form should be passed on to the safeguarding co-ordinator to assist them should the matter need to be referred to Adult or Children's Social Services or the police. Any referral should be confirmed in writing within 48 hours and you should expect an acknowledgement of your written referral within one working day of receiving it.

All documents should be signed, dated and kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. Consideration should be given to any procedures that have already been adopted by the organisation and it is important that the conditions laid down by organisation's insurers are followed to ensure there is appropriate cover against any claims. There is also a requirement for some allegations to be reported to both the Charity Commission (if the place of worship or organisation has charitable status) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority.



APPENDIX 4

Parent’s permission will be sought for Under 18’s to take part in online video conferencing calls using the following form:

Video-conference meetings procedure for those Under 18

We will operate groups according to the standards of our safeguarding and online safety policies and the following principles should apply in the groups:

- There will always be a minimum of 2 safely recruited leaders (DBS checked) running a zoom group call or break out room.
- We ask that the children younger than 16 years log on with the parents account. Zoom say that no child under 16 may create an account.
- People using it should be dressed appropriately and preferably young people use it in a communal space in their home.
- Video calls will not be recorded by the leaders and should not be recorded by young people.
- Should a parent or young person have a safeguarding concern about any activity of a zoom group call then please get in touch with REDACTED as safeguarding coordinator or (Deputy) REDACTED (both via safeguarding@lcc-lowestoft.co.uk)

I(parent or legal guardian) give permission for my child/children

.....
to participate in LCC video conferencing meetings using online technology in accordance with the guidance outlined above.

Date:

APPENDIX 5

Electronic communication must never become a substitute for face-to-face contact with young people. With the world of electronic communication changing so rapidly, it is not possible to issue guidance that covers all eventualities. However, there are some general principles that can help to ensure that the church's overriding concern is for the well-being of the children and young people.

- parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.
- workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given
- workers should not put any pressure on children or young people to reveal their email address, mobile phone number etc.
- direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided
- only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed safeguarding procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children or young people on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations
- contact with children and young people by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter
- where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:
 - significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
 - a log kept of who and when they communicated and who was involved
- workers should not share any personal information with children and young people, and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role
- workers should be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives
- clear, unambiguous language should be used, avoiding the use of unnecessary abbreviations
- electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 8.00 am and 10.00 pm



- e-mails to young people should include a church header and footer showing this to be an official communication from a youth team member

Mobile phones

- mobile phone usage should be primarily about information-giving
- 'text language' should be avoided so that there is no misunderstanding of what is being communicated
- 'text conversations' should usually be avoided (that is a series of text messages/emails being sent to and fro between mobile phones)
- the use of the phone camera should comply with the church's policy on photos/videos
- workers should not retain images of children and young people on their mobile phone

Instant Messaging Services (IMS)

- the use of instant messenger services should be kept to a minimum
- where a child or young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:
 - significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
 - a log kept of when they communicated and who was involved
- if youth leaders are going to communicate via social networking sites consideration should be given to creating a separate profile for the church group
- alternatively youth leaders should consider having a site that is used solely for youth work communications which is totally separate from their own personal site
- if youth leaders are going to use their own personal site they should ensure that all of its content is appropriate for young people to see
- lower age limits of social networking sites should be adhered to (this varies for each site)
- be aware of the content of photos that may be uploaded on to your site
- be aware that children and young people could view photos and communications of other people linked to that social networking site
- all communication with young people should be kept within public domains
- workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny
- copies of communications should be retained and where possible other workers should be copied in on communication