**The Safeguarding Policy**

**Section 1**

**Details of the place of worship**

Name of Place of Worship / Organisation: **Three Rivers Church East**

Address: **88 Denmark Street,**

 **Bedford,**

 **MK40 3TJ**

Tel No: **01234 217519**  Email address: **child.protection1@russellpark.org**

Charity Number: **235182**

Insurance Company: **Public Liabilities Insurance with Methodist Insurance**

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

**We are a growing church that welcomes people from all ages and walks of life. We meet for worship services on Sunday mornings, where there are groups for the children and young people aged 0-16, and many Sunday evenings. During the week there are many groups which meet for various reasons, including one for mothers and toddlers and another for adults with learning disabilities.**

**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 the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

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 Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
* Ensure that the whole church are aware of the collective responsibility to support the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults

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

Definitions of abuse – see appendix 1 for the statutory definitions of abuse for both children and adults.

Signs and symptoms 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 recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis using material provided by CCPAS to provide in house training. We will also support attendance training days run by CCPAS or our Local Safeguarding Children’s Board/Local Adult Protection Board where appropriate.**

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 *Emma McCrossan (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator") tel no: 079802 80044*  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 the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to *(Name)David Cavanagh (hereafter the "Deputy ") tel no: 07966 769006.*
* If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the *Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0845 120 4550*. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.
* 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 or take advice from CCPAS as above.

*The North Bedfordshire Children’s Social Care office telephone number (office hours) is* ***(01234) 223599****. The out of hours emergency number is* ***08702385465.***

*The Bedford Safeguarding Adults Helpline telephone number (office hours) is* ***(01234) 276222.*** *The out of hours emergency number is* ***0300 300 8123.***

*The Police Child Protection Team telephone number is* ***(01234) 841212.***

* The Safeguarding Co-ordinator **may** need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
* 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, the Police or taking advice from CCPAS.
* The Leadership 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.
* 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 CCPAS, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) 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 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.

**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 Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

* Contact Children’s Social Services (or CCPAS) 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 CCPAS (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 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.
* Seek and follow the advice given by CCPAS if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children’s Social Services/Police. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

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

**Suspicions 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, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

* contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively CCPAS 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.

**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 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 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. We will therefore work with them to support any decision they make.

**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
* 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)
* A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
* The applicant has completed a probationary period
* The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation’s safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

**Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

**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.

**Working with offenders**

When someone attending the place of worship is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. We will use CCPAS resources (and advice and risk assessments from statutory agencies) to develop a contract which will take into account individual circumstances and as well as detailing the boundaries we expect the individual to keep, we will detail the support we will offer them.

**Section 5**

**Practice Guidelines**

As an organisation / place of worship working with children, young people and vulnerable adults 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.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached/will be developed.

**Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**