unitychurch

Celebrating God, serving the community.

Safeguarding Policy

(Based on wording supplied by Thirtyone: eight (31:8))

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Unity Church Orpington Safeguarding Policy. Version 6 – Oct 2026, Review date - Oct 2027

Preface – How to Report Concerns

Important contact details if you have concerns for a child or an adult with care and support needs.

If you find yourself with concerns for a child or an adult with care and support needs, please contact the relevant Safeguarding Co-Ordinator or Deputy immediately. They can advise you on what to do and/or take the next steps:

Safeguarding Coordinator: **Lydia Taylor-Down**	Email: **safeguarding@unitychurch.uk**
Deputy Safeguarding Officer: **Liz Maltman**	Email: **safeguarding@unitychurch.uk**
Safeguarding Trustee: **Peter Price**	Email: **peterp@unitychurch.uk**

If your concerns relate to either **Lydia Taylor- Down, Liz Maltman or Peter Price,** please contact **31:8 directly for advice on 0303 003 1111.** **helpline@thirtyoneeight.org**

Section 1 – Organisation Details

Name of Place of Worship: **Unity Church Orpington**

Address: **Rye Crescent, Orpington, Kent. BR5 4NH.** Tel No: **0772 329 1151**

Interim Senior Leader Name: Amy Kolver

Interim Senior Leader Contact Telephone / Email: 07341 524 117 /amy@unitychurch.uk

Safeguarding Coordinator Name: **Lydia Taylor-Down**

Safeguarding Coordinator Contact Email: **safeguarding@unitychurch.uk**

Membership of Organisation: **Affiliated to Pioneer Network of Churches (from February 2026)**

Charity Number: **1151334**

Company Number: **8326589** Insurance Company: **Ecclesiastical Insurance Policy 04/XPG/0335367/SB**

Safeguarding Advisors: **31:8 www.thirtyoneeight.org**

Regulators: **Charity Commission**

1.1 Activities Overview.

On 9th September 1967, a local ecumenical project was launched as the Church of England partnered with the Methodist Church. For many years the Church of Unity served the estate and had a significant impact upon the lives of children and young people.

Unfortunately, as the years passed, the church started to decline in numbers. There was a great need for more workers to help re-build and strengthen the church. As work began to bring new life to the Church of Unity, God was at work calling men and women to mission on the Ramsden Estate. Alongside this, an exciting new partnership between the Anglican Church and Newfrontiers (a charismatic family of churches) was being organised.

On 3rd June 2012, Unity Church was launched under a Bishop's Mission Order. This new church was comprised of the original Church of Unity congregation plus Christians from primarily Christ Church Orpington and Hope Church Orpington.

Since then, God has done so much. People have come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Many children and young people have found a place where they are valued and cared for. Those who are struggling with food-poverty are receiving practical help and support through the Community Fridge project. The once tired-looking building is being improved and updated. And God has amazed us with His provision.

Each Sunday there are activities for children during the morning meeting. We also run various ministries during the week which are attended by adults who may also bring their children. Our Get Active project will include fitness sessions for older children after school.

In February 2026, Unity Church became a member of the Pioneer Church Network.

1.2 Our Safeguarding Commitment

Unity Church is committed to providing a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults with care and support needs. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults with care and support needs are at higher risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse plus neglect and exploitation.

We accept the United Nations (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 UN 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, maltreatment, negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual and online abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child within or outside the home.***"

The Leadership and Trustees 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.

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for our commitment statement in our Safeguarding Policy Statement.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on Thirtyone:eight's safeguarding guidance,

(Charity number: 1004490), a charity established to support safeguarding work in churches.

The Leadership and Trustees undertake to:

- Follow statutory denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults and will ensure that as a place of worship/organisation all workers will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of all relevant legislation including, but not limited to: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Equality Act 2010 and referring concerns about adults with care and support needs to the local authority under the Care Act 2014.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship/organisation.
- Supporting all in the place of worship/organisation affected by abuse.

Unity Church will adhere strictly to the guidelines laid out by the Government and 31:8 in respect to the safeguarding and checking procedures for DBS certificates and all applications will be made through the church DBS Officer.

Section 2: Introduction

Good governance helps an organisation prevent abuse and means it can respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise. Central to this, is the Governance Board or Board of Trustees.

The governance board is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility for how an organisation or charity and have a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of the organisation.

The standards and behaviours may be referred to as the culture of the organization or "the way we do things around here". Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

"The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object" (ICSA The Governance Institute, 2017).

Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022, it is illegal for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old under their care or supervision.

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our organisation but to also build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- there are accountability structures
- with codes of conduct
- the values of the organisation are embedded in its day to day actions and behaviours of its people
- and there is open communication

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, neglect and exploitation. 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, maltreatment, negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual and online abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child within or outside the home." 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.

Section 3 –Definitions

3.1 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.

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, maltreatment, negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual and online abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child within or outside the home.

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: *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 in our safeguarding training and are detailed in **Appendix 3.**

3.2 Definition of Children and Adults with Care and Support Needs.

Children
Anyone under the age of 18.

Adults with Care and Support Needs
The adult safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014 apply to an adult, aged 18 or over, who:
Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, maltreatment, neglect, exploitation; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect. Care and support is the mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent - including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. Care and support include assessment of people's needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to purchase their own care and support. It could include care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations. If such a person is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, then the local authority has a duty to investigate.

Section 4 - Responding to Allegations of Abuse

4.1 First Response

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. They should follow procedures as below:

- **Documenting a Concern**

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

1. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible using the form found here: https://thirtyoneeight.org/media/z32hdkfg/cause-for-concern-form-1.docx to

Name: Lydia Taylor-Down (hereafter called the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator")

Tel: 01689 870039 /07985 162189 Email: safeguarding@unitychurch.uk

The above is nominated by the Leadership and Trustees 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.

2. 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: Liz Maltman (hereafter the "Deputy Safeguarding Officer")
Tel: 07971 564189 Email: safeguarding@unitychurch.uk
If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report

should be made in the first instance to Thirtyone:eight on **Tel: 0303 003 1111, Option 2 or email helpline@thirtyoneeight.org .** Alternatively contact Bromley Children's Social Services, or the MET police by dialling 101. If a child or adult is in immediate danger or threat of significant harm, please call 999.

3. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency, or they may first ring the 31:8 helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

Name of local authority: Bromley
Children's Social Services Tel: 0208 461 7373,7379,7026 Office hours Mon – Fri.

Adult Social Services Tel: 0208 461 7777

Out of hours, Children and Adults Tel: 0300 303 8671
Email for Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) mash@bromley.gov.uk

Police: Dial 999 in an emergency, if a crime is taking place.

4. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform other people depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern:

- Chair or Trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
- Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.

5. 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.

6. 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 31:8

7. The Leadership and Trustees 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.

8. The Leadership and Trustees will consider whether a serious incident report should be made to the Charity Commission in line with the safeguarding guidance for charities.

9. 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 31:8 although the Leadership and Trustees hope that members of the place of worship / organisation 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 directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership and Trustees demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

10. The worker or volunteer should not talk to anyone else about the allegations as while complete confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information should be kept to those on a need-to-know basis.

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.

4.2 Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

4.2.1 Allegations of physical injury, neglect, maltreatment, or emotional abuse.

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

- Contact Children's Social Services (31:8) 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 the parent/carer still fails to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by 31:8 (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

4.2.2 Allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse and exploitation, 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 31:8 if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. 31:8 will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

4.3 Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection: (This includes suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, maltreatment, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse, exploitation.)

If there is concern about any of the above, the 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, 31:8 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, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Identify support services for the victim e.g., counselling or other pastoral support.
- Contact 31:8 and in discussion with them consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

4.3.1 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:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regard to the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

4.3.2 Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with Care and Support Need

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.

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 and not the church.

4.4 Whistleblowing

Unity Church, Orpington is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the trustees, directors, staff members, volunteers or other associate. This policy aims to help individuals in any of these groups to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues or their employer with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.
It is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects employees who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

Whistleblowing, or public interest disclosure, is when a worker reports a concern about the improper actions or omissions of their colleagues or their employer which may cause harm to others or to the organisation. Obvious examples of such improper actions include theft, fraud, abuse, breaches of health & safety. The disclosure should be made 'in good faith'. In other words, the disclosure must be made out of real concern about wrongdoing. Knowingly and maliciously making false accusations for ulterior motives is not whistleblowing. The whistle-blower should reasonably believe the information and allegation is substantially true, even if the information later turns out to have been incorrect.

Whistleblowing is not the same as making a complaint or raising a grievance, where the individual is saying that they have personally been poorly treated. A whistle-blower is usually not directly or personally affected by the concern and therefore rarely has a direct personal interest in the outcome of any investigation into their concerns. The whistle-blower raises the concern so that others can address it.

The full policy is stated in **Appendix 7**

Section 5 - Prevention

5.1 Safer Recruitment

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

1. A brief written description of the role will be given to the applicant. **Appendix 5** has a list of these roles.
2. An application form will be given to and completed by those applying for the post, and a self-declaration form will be given to them by the appropriate ministry head.
3. An interview of the applicant will be undertaken by the appropriate ministry head. If there is a short list, those short listed will all be interviewed.
4. Safeguarding will be discussed at the interview.
5. Written references are to be obtained, and followed up, where appropriate, by the Safeguarding Trustee.
6. A disclosure and barring check is to be completed, where necessary, by the DBS Officer, once she has been given the completed Self-Declaration form.
7. Suitable training is to be provided for the successful applicant, if the post requires it.
8. If it is a paid position, the applicant shall complete a probationary period.
9. The applicant is to be given a copy of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy Statement and asked to read the full safeguarding policy published on the church website. They must be made aware of how to report any safeguarding concerns. A copy of the Vision and Values of the church will be given to them.
10. Basic Awareness Safeguarding training should be completed before starting in the role.

5.2 Training

The Leadership and Trustees are committed to on-going safeguarding training for themselves and for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. They will undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis. Each person will be asked to agree with the church's Vision and Values **(Appendix 4)** as this is the basis on which all activities in the church are conducted.

The Leadership and Trustees 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.

Those receiving regular (every 3 years, minimum) training will be:

- All Leadership and Trustees and administrative staff
- All members of children's teams (voluntary or paid)
- All members of youth teams (voluntary or paid)
- All volunteers working with adults with care and support needs

For the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Officer, every two years (minimum) safeguarding training and updates will be undertaken.

5.3 Ratio Guidelines

5.3.1 Recommended adult-to-child ratios (working with children)

We will always have at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. We should follow adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

0 - 2 years - one adult to three children

2 - 3 years - one adult to four children

4 - 8 years - one adult to six children

9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children

13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

At least two adults must always be present, even with smaller groups. If young people are helping to supervise younger children, only people aged 18 or over can be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

5.3.2 Toilet Ratios (Working with Children)

Parents/carers should be encouraged to ensure their children have been to the toilet before the group session commences. During group sessions, primary-aged children are allowed to visit the toilet independently, while from a vantage point, a staff member of the children's team observes and ensures that the child returns to the group safely. For a younger child, or children who are less capable of visiting the toilet independently, parents would be advised in advance that they will be contacted to accompany their child to the toilet.

If the parent is not available, one of the children's team staff or a DBS checked and vetted adult would accompany the child to the toilet. In situations where a child needs help but the parent is not available, the cubicle door must be left open. Adults who have not previously had the necessary vetting checks should not be left alone with children or take them to the toilet.

Section 6 - Pastoral Care

6.1 Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership and Trustees 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 church.

Depending on the severity of a situation there are different levels of pastoral care required for different cases. It is also important to realise that every person is different, and we must treat each situation that arises on an individual basis. Our pastoral care is provided through our Pastoral Care Team and where deemed necessary, leadership staff. If additional professional care or advice was required, we would seek care from a professional (for example, recommending that they discuss with a doctor, or counsellors).

6.2 Our pastoral care will include:

Regular phone or text contact with the church family to see how people are in cases of illness or other family issues.

Provision of support for those in need.

Meeting up for a chat to encourage each other.

Arranging home visits to those who are not able to get out very often.

There will always be other types of contact and care given to the church family as matters arise.

6.3 Working with adults who may pose a risk

When someone attending the place of worship is known to have abused children, is under investigation or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs, the Leadership and Trustees will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. But in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults, strong, carefully considered boundaries will be outlined clearly for that person, who will be expected to keep them. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties. (Resources for dealing with someone who poses a risk are held by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator).

6.4 Dealing with disruptive behaviour

We all need to be aware of who is attending our services and ministries and ensure that everyone is protected, particularly those who may be more vulnerable. In the event of anyone displaying disruptive behaviour on the church grounds or during a Sunday service, please refer to Appendix 2.d. for further information.

Any concerning behaviour must be documented for church safeguarding and brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer or the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

Section 7 - Practice and Guidelines

As a 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 accusation.

7.1 Codes of Conduct and Practice Guidelines for Workers

As a Leadership and Trustees, we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers will be asked to read the codes of conduct towards children, young people, and adults with care and support needs.

We have the following guidance documents in **Appendix 2.**

- Guidelines for working with and caring for children
- Guidelines for working with and caring for youth
- Guidelines for working with and caring for adults with care and support needs.
- Relationship building and boundaries
- Guidelines for managing those adults who may pose a risk

Good practice guidelines for our activities are as follows:

• **Duty of Care**. Duty of care is in part exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships, but also by workers taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of those they have responsibility for, particularly in relation to sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Before individuals start working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent to their role. Workers will complete a general application form and be subject to DBS checks.

• **Data Protection, Human Rights and Safeguarding** - All personal data is confidential. Where disclosing information might place a child, young person or vulnerable adult at risk, then safeguarding considerations take precedence over data protection. Children, young people and adults with care and support needs have the right to be protected from harm and therefore information relating to concerns that a child, or any other vulnerable person, is at risk of significant harm should not be withheld on the basis that it might be unlawful.

• **Anti-bullying Policy and Practice (Children & Young People)** - If bullying does occur, children and leaders are able to report the matter and it can be dealt with promptly and effectively. There can be an expectation that anyone who knows that bullying is happening will report it.

• **Information Communications Technology (ICT) and E-Safety** - E-safety stands for electronic safety; it is not just about keeping safe on the internet, but also keeping safe on all electronic devices such as mobile phones, games consoles, use of emails, social networking and other information communications technologies (ICT). Any inappropriate content is to be reported. (See ThinkUKnow.co.uk for more information).

• **Peer-group Activities (children and young people)** - All peer-group activities will be overseen by named adults who have been selected in accordance with agreed recruitment procedures and have the backing of the leadership of the organisation.

• **Risk Assessments** - Taking care of children, young people and adults with care and support needs always involves taking responsibility for their well–being, being prepared for unforeseen eventualities, anticipating situations where they could be harmed and taking steps to minimise the risks.

7.2 Working in Partnership with Another Organisation.

We will discuss with all close partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any legally registered organisation using our premises, as part of a letting agreement, will have their own safeguarding policy and procedures and standards.

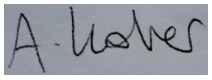
We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

7.3 The steps we are taking to promote safeguarding includes:

- Displaying the 31:8 helpline number in the church.
- Discussing our policy with our Leadership Team and Trustees and group leaders.
- Ongoing safeguarding training for all our trustees, staff, leaders, and volunteers, as relevant.

Section 8 – Adoption of this policy

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

Signed by:  Amy Kolver Position: **Leadership Team Member**

Signed by:  Peter Price Position: **Safeguarding Trustee**

Signed by:  Neil Maltman Position: **Chair of Trustees**

Dated: 1st November 2026

Unity Church Orpington Safeguarding Policy. Version 6 – Oct 2026, Review date - Oct 2027

Appendices

1. One Page Safeguarding Policy Statement.
2. a. Working with and caring for children, guidelines.
2. b. Working with and caring for youth guidelines.
2. c. Working with and caring for adults with care and support needs, guidelines.
2. d. Dealing with disruptive behaviour.
2. e. Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers for Relationship building and boundaries.
3. Abuse Types and Signs and Symptoms of Abuse.
4. Unity Church, Orpington Vision and Values.
5. Brief descriptions of volunteer's roles.
6. Anti-Bullying and E-Safety policy.
7. Whistleblowing.

Full wordings are shown on the following pages below.



unitychurch
Celebrating God, serving the community.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Policy Statement

Name of Place of Worship: **Unity Church, Orpington**

The following statement was agreed by the leadership and trustees on: **1st November 2026**

- This place of worship is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent harm or abuse to children and adults with care and support needs in all their recognised forms.
- We recognise that the personal dignity and rights of adults and children and will ensure all our policies and procedures will reflect this.
- We believe all people should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe every child and adult should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that all those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are experiencing significant harm.

We are committed to:

- Following statutory denominational and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults and will ensure that as a place of worship, all workers will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of all relevant legislation including, but not limited to; Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Equality Act 2010 and referring concerns about adults with care and support needs to the local authority under the Care Act 2014.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this place of worship.
- Supporting all in the place of worship affected by abuse.

We recognise:

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

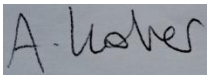
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult, then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for Unity Church, Orpington.

Lydia Taylor- Down, Safeguarding Co-Ordinator Tel: **01689 870039/07985 162189**
Email: **safeguarding@unitychurch.uk**
Liz Maltman, Deputy Safeguarding Co-Ordinator Tel: **07971 564189** Email: **safeguarding@unitychurch.uk**

A copy of Unity Church, Orpington's Full Safeguarding Policy can be seen on the church website: www.unitychurch.uk/safeguarding

Signed by Church Leadership Team Member  Name: **Amy Kolver** Date 1st November 2026

Signed by Safeguarding Trustee  Name: **Peter Price** Date 1st November 2026

Rye Crescent, Orpington, Kent. BR5 4NH Tel: 0772 329 1151. Charity No: 1151334

Safeguarding - Appendix 2.a.

Guidelines for working with and caring for Children at Unity Church, Orpington.

THE AIM: TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN TO ENCOUNTER JESUS FOR THEMSELVES, IF THEY WISH; TO LEARN ABOUT THE BIBLE AND PRAYER, AND PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER, IF THEY WISH; TO BE PART OF A CARING GROUP AND DEVELOP GOOD FRIENDSHIPS.

At Unity Church we want to be exercising best practice at all times to safeguard the welfare of both the children AND the team. Having a well thought-through policy is essential. Doing so conveys that we value the children in our care and seek their protection, safety, and wellbeing at all times. Therefore, please be mindful of the following principles:

1. Please ensure you know exactly what your area of responsibility is. Please ask your Team Leader any questions you may have about the practicalities of your role and your specific role during each session.

2. Create a fun and friendly atmosphere for children so they can experience God, have a fun time and feel safe. As much as possible try to be enthusiastic, friendly to all children as you are their role models.

3. Be aware that children who come along will be from a variety of backgrounds, needs and situations. Treat children with respect – being aware of their individual way of learning. Hold back on your judgements but let your Ministry Team Leader or the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator know any safeguarding concerns you have about any particular child/children.

4. If you have any safeguarding concerns, they need to be kept confidential and should not be discussed with parents or other church members.

5. Follow guidelines on responding to the possibility of abuse. Please read our Safeguarding Policy for more information about this. It can be found on the website www.unitychurch.uk/safeguarding.

6. At least two adults should be present when working with or supervising children.

7. Adult to child ratios should be followed as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:
0 - 2 years - one adult to three children 2 - 3 years - one adult to four children
4 - 8 years - one adult to six children 9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children
13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children
At least two adults must always be present, even with smaller groups. If young people are helping to supervise younger children, only people aged 18 or over can be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.
These are guidelines only. However, they are intended to make rooms safe and manageable for the team.

8. Do not take photographs of any child unless specifically asked to do so and have their parent's or carer's consent.

9. Good Practice Guidance
· A register of children should be kept at each attendance
· Remind parent/carer to take their child to the toilet before signing in/attending the event or group.
· Team Members should be vigilant about who should be in your group at any given time.
· Parent/carer should be asked to change nappies.
· If a child appears distressed or anxious, talk to the Ministry Team leader after the event.
· You should never be the only adult with one child.

· If a child needs help to go to the toilet, parents/carers are to take them.
· Do challenge adults who enter the children's area if they are unknown, regardless of who they say they are.

10. At the end of the session
Any issues or concerns you may have about specific children or team members should be reported directly to your Ministry Team Leader. If you have any safeguarding concerns about your Team Leader, these need to be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Guidelines for working with and caring for children V7 2026

Safeguarding - Appendix 2.b.

Guidelines for those working with and caring for Youth at Unity Church, Orpington.

THE AIM IS TO: PROVIDE A SAFE AND CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO ENCOUNTER JESUS FOR THEMSELVES, IF THEY WISH TO DO SO, TO LEARN ABOUT THE BIBLE, TO PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER, IF THEY WISH TO DO SO, AND TO DEVELOP GOOD FRIENDSHIPS.

At Unity Church we want to be exercising best practice at all times to safeguard the welfare of both the youth **AND** the team. Having a well thought-through policy is essential. Doing so conveys that we value the youth in our care and seek their protection, safety and wellbeing at all times. Therefore, please be mindful of the following principles:

1. Please ensure you know exactly what your area of responsibility is. Please ask your Ministry Team Leader any questions you may have about the practicalities of your role and your specific role during each session.

2 Create a fun and friendly atmosphere for young people so they can experience God, have a fun time and feel safe. As much as possible try to be enthusiastic, friendly to all young people as you are their role models.

3. Be aware that young people who come along will be from a variety of backgrounds, needs and situations. Treat the young people with respect – being aware of their individual way of learning. Hold back on your judgements but let your Ministry Team Leader know any concerns you have about any particular young person.

4. Follow guidelines on responding to the possibility of abuse. Please read the Safeguarding Policy for more information about this.

5. Ratios of adults to youth are 13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children. They are intended to make rooms safe and manageable for the team. These are guidelines only.

6. Note the youth's name in the register **AND** collect the mobile number and email address of the parent/carer so we can contact them. This also acts as an emergency contact point during that session.

7. **You should never be the only adult with a young person**. Under 18s cannot be counted as adults.

8. Do **challenge** adults who enter into the youths' area if they are unknown regardless of who they say they are.

9. Do not take photographs of any youth unless specifically asked to do so and have their parent's or carer's consent.

10. Any issues or concerns you may have about specific children or team members should be reported directly to your Ministry Team Leader. If you have any safeguarding concerns about a child or your Ministry Team Leader, these need to be reported to **the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator.**

Safeguarding - Appendix 2.c.

Guidelines for working with and caring for adults with care and support needs at Unity Church, Orpington

Adults with Care and Support Needs

The adult safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014 apply to an adult, aged 18 or over, who:

1. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
2. Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

Care and support is the mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent - including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers.

Care and support include assessment of people's needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to purchase their own care and support. It could include care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations.

At Unity Church we want to care for adults with care and support needs who attend our ministries. In doing so we are committed to the safeguarding of adults and ensuring their wellbeing. Our responsibility as trustees, leaders and team members is to partner with each other as we seek to protect all those entrusted to our care. Please therefore be mindful of the following principles and guidelines:

1. Dignity and Respect - Ensure that all adults with care and support needs are treated with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.

2. No Photos - Do not take photographs of any adults with care and support needs unless specifically asked to and have theirs and/or their carers consent.

3. Behaviour and Discipline - It is important that we treat all adults with care and support needs equally. If there is an issue such as swearing, racism or destructive behaviour they can be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring and asked to stop.

If physical restraint has been necessary, the team members involved should always record what happened in writing as soon as possible after the incident.

The report should include:

- What activity was taking place
- What might have caused the disruptive behaviour
- The person's behaviour
- What was said and how the team member and others responded
- A list of others who were present who witnessed the incident

If an incident occurs involving an adult with care and support needs, who has a carer, the carer should be informed.

4. Taking care of touching – Keep everything public. Touch should be age-appropriate and normally instigated by the adult with care and support needs rather than the team member.

Avoid any physical activity that may be sexually stimulating. All adults with care and support needs are entitled to personal privacy and the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in circumstances such as a medical emergency.

Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.

5. Effective Listening – If you believe an adult with care and support needs, needs to talk about a potential abuse situation, ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the adult with care and support needs to talk in private but making sure others are aware that 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 if possible, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc., if that is required.

Helpful Responses:

- You have done the right thing in telling me.
- I am glad you have told me.
- I will try to help you.

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

6. Specific Guidance - Please adhere to all the guidance issued by Unity Church regarding conduct with adults with care and support needs, for example guidelines for relationship building and boundaries, overnight stays or travel in private cars.

7. Contacts for Concerns.

Any concerns about incidents, specific children or team members should be reported directly to your team leader who will report to **the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.**

Issues concerning conduct of team leaders should be reported directly to **the Safeguarding Co-ordinator**

Issues concerning conduct of **the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator should** be reported to Thirtyone:eight Email: helpline@thirtyoneeight.org . Telephone – 0303 003 11 11 or the local Children Social Services.

The Safeguarding Co-Ordinator's details are shown in the policy document.

Any breach of this code of conduct and safeguarding guidelines towards adults with care and support needs will be taken seriously and the appropriate measures will be taken.

Guidelines for working with and caring for Vulnerable adults at Unity Church, Orpington. Version V8 - Oct 2026

Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour – Appendix 2.d.

In the event of anyone displaying disruptive behaviour on the church grounds or during a Sunday service:

- One of the stewards or the person leading the activity with another appropriate church member will **work together to guide the disruptive person away from others**, in order to have a conversation.

- **If there is a possible risk of harm or danger** to either the persons intervening or bystanders and the disruptive person will not respond and move away from others, a decision will be made by the leader whether to:
  a) **move other people away from the disruptive person** (clear the building) or
  b) **use a reasonable amount of force to encourage or guide the disruptive person to leave the premises. However, any force used must be proportionate to the situation and only as a last resort.**
  At no point should anyone attempt to physically intervene if doing so would place that person or others at risk of harm. Dealing with a disruptive person should never involve aggressive or excessive force, and personal safety must remain the top priority.

- **In the event of someone refusing to leave the building or church site, the Police must be called.** Those dealing with the person **must ensure that their request for the person to leave the property has been clearly stated** as the Police are only able to support such a request.

- If the disruptive person has moved to a quieter spot and does not calm down quickly, it is recommended that **this person is asked to leave the site and for a follow-up conversation to be had** when sufficient time has passed for the person to have calmed down.

Additional action points:

- Any concerning behaviour must be **documented for church safeguarding and brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Officer or the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.**

- We recommend that **people do not take lifts from anyone who has been displaying volatile behaviour.**

- We all need to be **aware of who is attending** our services and ministries and ensure that we protect everyone in our congregation, particularly those who may be more vulnerable.

Dealing with disruptive behaviour at Unity Church, Orpington V3 October 2026

Safeguarding – Appendix 2.e.

Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers at Unity Church, Orpington for Relationship Building and Boundaries

Please be mindful of the following principles and guidelines:

1. Positions of Trust - All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in positions of trust. It is therefore vital team members ensure they do not, even unwittingly, use their power and authority inappropriately.

2. Boundaries - Team members should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted.

3. No Sexual Relationships - Any kind of sexual relationship between an adult team member and a child (under the age of 18) or a vulnerable adult is never acceptable and if concerns arise in this area, this should be recorded and reported to the relevant Safeguarding Coordinator.

4. No Abuse of a trusting relationship - The trusting relationship between a team member and child, young person or vulnerable adult means the team member should never:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage.
- Use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce, or undermine.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote relationships that are or may become sexual.

5. Code of Conduct

Unity Church, Orpington behaviour code for working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).

The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The Role of Workers (staff and volunteers)

When working with children and young people or adults at risk of harm, you are acting in a position of trust for Unity Church, Orpington. You will be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

Good Practice

· Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare

· Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way

· Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged

· Listen carefully to those you are supporting

· Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures)

· Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary

· Work in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations

· Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the safeguarding co-ordinator
· Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality
· Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay taking action

Unacceptable Behaviour
· Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
· Taking unnecessary risks
· Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way
· Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches the Unity Church, Orpington social media policy
· Developing inappropriate relationships
· Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
· Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct
If a staff member or volunteer has behaved inappropriately, they will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, they may be asked to leave Unity Church, Orpington. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If a staff member or volunteer becomes aware of a breach of this code, they should escalate their concerns to the safeguarding coordinator or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

6. Contacts for Concerns
Any concerns about incidents, specific children or team members should be reported directly to your team leader who will report to **The Safeguarding Co-Ordinator.**

Issues concerning conduct of your team leader should be reported directly to **The Safeguarding Co-Ordinator**

Issues concerning conduct of **the Safeguarding Co-Ordinator** should be reported to Thirtyone:eight Telephone - 0845 120 4550, Email: helpline@thirtyoneeight.org or the local Children Social Services.

Contact details for the Safeguarding Coordinator of Unity Church Orpington are found in the Safeguarding Policy

Any breach of this code of conduct and safeguarding guidelines towards children, young people or vulnerable adults will be taken seriously and the appropriate measures will be taken.

Guidelines for Relationship Building and Boundaries at Unity Church, Orpington V7 Oct 2026

Safeguarding - Appendix 3
Unity Church, Orpington
Abuse Types and Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

1. Types of Abuse (Children)

Children

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.
The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)'.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by exploitation, inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused online, 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.

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 cyber bullying), 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, sexting, 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 caregivers) or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

2. Types of Abuse (Adults with Care and Support Needs)

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a person in a vulnerable position is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The following definitions are from the Thirtyone:eight guidance and the statutory guidance for the Care Act 2014:

Physical Abuse

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of parental care, including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Sexual Abuse

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent. This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teaching or innuendo, requesting sexual photography, sexting, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

These are acts or behaviour, which *either* cause mental distress or anguish, *or* negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty. This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation, unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or Material Abuse

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions. This includes theft, fraud, internet scanning, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or

arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Modern Slavery
This is slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive, and force individuals in a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Neglect or Act of Omission
This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the adult or to others. A person may be suffering from neglect when their general wellbeing or development is impaired. This includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services and the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory Abuse
This is the inappropriate treatment of an adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

Institutional or Organisational Abuse
This is the mistreatment or abuse of an adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice. It 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 the organisation.

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.

3. Further Types of Abuse (Children and Adults with care and support needs)
Significant Harm
This relates to the degree of harm that triggers statutory action to protect a child. It is based on the individual child's health or development compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child, e.g. severity of ill treatment, degree and extent of physical harm, duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, premeditation. The Department of Health guidance suggests that 'significant' means 'considerable, noteworthy or important'.

Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced (formerly known as Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy)
This is a form of child abuse in which the parents or carers give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations

and needless treatment for their children. The government guidance on this is found in 'Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced' (2002).

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.

Domestic Violence

The cross-government definition of domestic violence is: 'any incident or patterns of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality'. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, sexual, financial or emotional.

In 2004 the Government's definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called 'honour crimes', which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence.

Investigating Complex (Organised or Multiple) Abuse

This abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Complex abuse occurs both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from people outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including, exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups often make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, p 22).

Child Sexual Exploitation

The government document "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2018, p 103) states:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator of facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Online Abuse
This is any type of abuse that takes place on the internet, using devices like computers, mobile phones, and tablets.

County Lines
As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child Criminal Exploitation
As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Other Honour-Based Violence
The World Health Organization defines FGM as all procedures involving partial or total removal or stitching up of the female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons

The Government document "Working Together (2010)" states:
Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between four and thirteen, but in some cases FGM is performed on new born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy. A number of girls die as a direct result of the procedure from blood loss or infection, either following the procedure or subsequently in childbirth.

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 was passed. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act and made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.
FGM is much more common than most people realise, both worldwide and in the UK. It is reportedly commonly practised in 28 African countries and in parts of the Middle and Far East but is increasingly found in Western Europe and other developed countries, primarily amongst immigrant and refugee communities.

There are substantial populations from countries where FGM is endemic in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Cardiff but it is likely that communities in which FGM is practised reside throughout the UK. It has been estimated that up to 24,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK.

4. Signs and Symptoms of Abuse (Children)

Children and Young People

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

Physical

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

Sexual

a. Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse.
b. Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.
c. Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
d. Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
e. Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
f. Severe sleep disturbances with fear, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
g. Eating disorders -anorexia, bulimia.*

Emotional

a. Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
b. Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
c. Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
d. Obsession or phobias.
e. Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
f. Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
g. Attention seeking behaviour.
h. Persistent tiredness.
i. Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food.
- Untreated illness
- 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.

5. Signs and Symptoms of Abuse (Adults with Care and Support Needs)

Physical

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or overuse of medication and/or medical problems unattended

Sexual

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse.
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour.
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Infection or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosure or hints of sexual abuse.
- Self-harming.

Psychological

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful.
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of the abuser.
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes.
- Unexplained paranoia.

Financial or Material

- Disparity between assets and living conditions.
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents.
- Sudden inability to pay bills.
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf.
- Recent changes to deeds or title to property.

Neglect or Omission

- Malnutrition, weight loss and/or persistent hunger.
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores.
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition.
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care.
- No callers or visitors.

Discriminatory

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect.
- Poor quality or avoidance of care.

Institutional

- Lack of flexibility or choice over meals, bedtimes, visitors, phone calls, etc.
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication.
- Inappropriate use of restraint.
- Sensory deprivation e.g., denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids.
- Missing documents and/or absence of individual care plans.
- Public discussion of private matters.
- Lack of opportunity for social, educational, or recreational activity.

Abuse Types and Signs and Symptoms of Abuse. Version 7 Oct. 2026

Celebrating God, serving the community.

Safeguarding – Appendix 4

Vision and Values of Unity Church, Orpington

Our mission statement:

- **Encourage** others to experience and respond to God's love
- **Equip** them through commitment to a local church
- **Empower** them to be a blessing to the community

God is on a mission to reveal Himself to those who don't know Him and to establish His Kingdom on earth. One of the staggering truths of the Bible is that God delights to use us in His mission – **He wants to use you to accomplish His plan**.

Our mission is worked out through our nine values:

God First:

- **Passionate Worship:** We respond to the Father's love shown in Jesus Christ with joyful Spirit-led worship.
- **Hunger for God's Word:** We strive to grow in our understanding of, and obedience to, the Bible.
- **Empowered by the Holy Spirit:** We seek God to use us for His Kingdom purposes with those we meet.

Devoted to Church Family

- **Everyone is Valued:** We believe our diversity is a gift and we all have a role to play in our church family.
- **Growing Together:** We are committed to developing a closer relationship with Jesus and with each other.
- **Gracious Relationships:** We reflect God's generosity and mercy in the way we respond in love to each other.

Serving our Community and Beyond

- **Loving the Ramsden Estate:** We desire to bless others and make a positive impact in this community.
- **Sharing our Faith:** We are outward looking and will share the good news with those we meet.
- **Heart for the Nations:** We are excited to play our part in seeing God's kingdom grow throughout the world.

Safeguarding Policy Appendix 4. Version 8: Oct. 2026

Safeguarding – Appendix 5

Brief Descriptions of Volunteers' Roles in Unity Church, Orpington
Volunteers in some of the following areas would not be eligible for DBS checks and therefore would not need application forms submitted. This would be assessed by the safeguarding team.

Administration- assisting the Church Leader and Church Administrator in certain aspects of admin work.

Building Maintenance – assisting the Premises Manager with various work in and around the buildings.

CAP Job Club – being a trained CAP leader, mentor, or group helper during the weekly sessions. Befriending and helping those adults who attend.

CAP Life Skills - being a trained CAP leader, mentor, or group helper during the weekly sessions. Befriending and helping those adults who attend.

Children's Ministry – being a leader or helper in the Sunday morning children's group.

Community Fridge & Cafe– helping to distribute the food to those who attend the food share on Wednesday and Saturday mornings at the church and to set up beforehand and clear away afterwards. Sit in café afterwards to befriend with those staying on after the Community Fridge and serve drinks at the café.

Community Garden – being part of the team and/or simply helping with the gardening project. Befriending those who attend, including adults and children.

Get Active Gym – helping in the fitness and wellbeing groups, to befriend and encourage those who attend.

Get Active Dance – promoting fitness and wellbeing in women, and encouraging a holistic approach to health.

Hosting Meeting – Co-ordinate and oversee smooth running of Sunday morning meeting.

Co-ordinating a Mid-week Small Group – co-ordinating a Bible discovery group with others including prayer and sharing personal concerns.

Leading a Prayer group – leading early morning prayer on Zoom on Tuesdays and other joint prayer meetings as arranged.

Men's Wellbeing Group (Proper Blokes Club) – Co-ordinate weekly meetings with external link person.

Pastoral Care Team – contacting a small number of people in the church family, to check that they are OK, encourage them and to help them practically and spiritually.

Preaching – Being part of the team that preach on Sundays.

Refreshments and Catering – helping with making and providing the refreshments on Sundays and at other church events.

Safeguarding Team – being part of the team that oversees safeguarding within the church under the leadership of the safeguarding trustee and safeguarding coordinator.

Sound and Visual Team – being part of the team that operates the PA desk and live streaming camera on Sunday mornings.

Stewards – being part of the team that sets out the church for Sunday meetings and that oversees all the logistics for the meeting.

Trustees/Directors - being one of the Trustee/Directors of the church who deal with all the legal and structure of the church and how it is run.

Welcome Team – being part of the team that welcomes people into the church on Sundays.

Worship – being part of one of the worship bands on Sundays, either singing and/or playing an instrument, and to possibly be one of the worship leaders on a Sunday.

Youth and Young Adults Ministry – assisting with the youth work on Sunday mornings and young adults mid-week sessions. Occasionally to help with youth events away from the church.

Brief descriptions of volunteer's roles. Version 5 Oct. 2026

Safeguarding -Appendix 6

Anti-Bullying and E-safety Policy for Children and Youth at Unity Church, Orpington

To be read in conjunction with Unity Church, Orpington's Safeguarding policy

Anti-Bullying

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as: The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or through cyber space.

Objectives of this policy:

- All children, leaders, volunteer workers, parents and carers should be aware of the anti-bullying policy within the church and what they should do if bullying arises.
- All leaders and volunteer workers should have an understanding of what bullying is, be aware of possible signs if it is happening and follow the policy when it is reported.
- Children and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Prevention.

Strategies can be adopted to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of group rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Procedures

- Report the bullying incident to children's leaders.
- Ensure that details are carefully checked before action is taken.
- In all cases of bullying, the incidents should be recorded by the worker.
- Consideration should be given to informing the parents/carers of the bully, but this should only be done if workers are satisfied there is no bullying/abuse going on at home that might exacerbate the situation
- If it is thought that an offence has been committed, the Safeguarding Coordinator should be informed, and consideration should be given to contacting the Police.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and stopped quickly.
- Help should be offered to help the bully address his/her behaviour.

Outcomes

- The children's worker involved in dealing with the incident should issue a warning to the child concerned
- An apology should be given by the child who has bullied another
- If possible, those involved will be reconciled
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
- After the incident(s) have been investigated parents/carers should be informed of the action taken
- All incidents must be recorded in the logbook

Useful sources: Helpline services: HSE InfoLine - 0845 345 0055; BullyingUK: 0808 800 2222

Websites: Anti-Bullying Alliance & Bullying Intervention Group.

Cyberbullying

These days bullying doesn't just happen in the playground. Cyberbullying – or bullying via digital technologies like mobile phones and computers – is a different threat to children. It can be harder to spot

and more difficult to stop than 'traditional' bullying but understanding the dangers can help keep children safe.

What's Different about Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is different to other forms of bullying because:

- It can occur anytime, anywhere – the victim can even receive bullying messages or materials at home
- The audience to the bullying can be large and reached very quickly and easily if messages are passed around or things are posted online
- It can be unintentional – people may not think about the consequences of sending messages or images

Characteristics of Cyber Bullying

- Anonymous – cyber abusers can use the internet using pseudonyms
- Accessibility - cyber bullies can approach their victims at any time
- Loss of inhibition – the anonymity of the internet can encourage cyber bullies to commit acts which they might otherwise do in person.

Ways of Cyberbullying

The most common ways of cyberbullying are through:

- Video chat apps, chat rooms, blogs and forums – although many of these are moderated, people involved in discussions can be sent abusive responses
- Text messaging – abusive and threatening texts can be sent to mobile phones
- Abusive or prank phone calls – these can be made to a child's mobile phone
- Picture and video clip messaging – offensive images can be sent to mobile phones
- Email – new addresses can be set up in minutes and used to send offensive messages and images
- Social networking and messaging apps (like Omegle, Facebook, WhatsApp) – offensive or humiliating messages and images can be posted on these sites
- Identity theft – in many cyber environments fake profiles can be set up pretending to be someone else with the aim of bullying others
- Instant message services – quicker than email, these allow users to have 'real time' conversations, and offensive messages or content can be sent in this way
- Webcams – usually used to view each other when chatting online, children can also be sent abusive images or encouraged to act in an inappropriate way while being filmed
- Video chat apps (like ooVoo) – children may find themselves the subject of films being shown (e.g. what is wrongly called 'happy slapping') or be accidentally exposed to pornographic images
- Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds – chatting is possible within many games, and name-calling, abusive remarks and picking on particular players can occur

Protecting Children from Cyberbullying

As with other types of bullying it's important for you to listen to children and react with sympathy. You should let children know that bullying is always wrong, and that seeking help is the right thing to do. It's important for them to learn to respect and look after their friends online and to think before they post or text.

To help keep children safe you can:

- Encourage them to talk to you or another adult about anything that's upsetting them
- Watch out for them seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- Try to understand the ways in which they are using their digital technologies
- Ask them to think about how their actions affect other users

- Suggest that they only use moderated chat rooms
- Encourage them to show you any abusive or offensive emails or messages they've received and keep a record of them
- Help them report any abuse to their internet service provider, the website manager/moderator, the mobile phone company or the Police
- Tell them never to respond to any abusive messages or calls
- Discuss keeping their passwords safe and avoiding giving their name, email address or mobile phone number to people outside their circle of friends and family
- Change email address or telephone number if the abuse continues
- Turn on in-built internet safety features and install computer software to ensure that you only receive emails from people you have chosen and to block unwanted images
- Tell them about places where they can go for help and support like ChildLine, ThinkuKnow, Childnet International.

E-safety in a Church Context

Online Safety Definition:

Online safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate and access the Internet; often referred to as Information and Communications Technology. This online safety policy has been adopted to reflect all communications between Unity Church's youth and children's workers and children (those under 18 years of age).

Policy guidelines for church workers/volunteers

- Generally, maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and their children.
- Use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal.
- Be warm and friendly, but do not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Be clear and explicit about information that you need to share; don't abbreviate or short-cut your communications.
- Be circumspect in your communications with children to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Do not share any personal information with children, or request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which might be appropriate as part of your role.
- Do not give children or youth your mobile phone numbers, e-mail addresses or similar.
- Do not take or use the mobile number or email address of children or youth.
- Only make contact with children for reasons related to the work of Unity Church and maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed.
- Emailing and texting/messaging should only be used to communicate specific information. (e.g. times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- Email history should be kept and dated.
- Use of Zoom and any other web camera or visual communication via the Internet on a one-to-one basis is generally not permitted.
- Workers should refrain from using such methods on a one-to-one basis as they cannot be recorded.
-

Social Media Policy - when being used by adults for church work on church social media platforms.

- All social media interaction for church work, on Unity Church Orpington platforms being used by church workers, paid or voluntary, will be monitored/administrated. No children under 18 will be included in these groups.

- Text and any other media posted shall be subject to the acceptable use policy
- All interaction on social media groups will be seen by the media group administrator and be available for viewing if required in any safeguarding concerns.
- Any safeguarding concerns/allegations arising from social media shall be referred onto the safeguarding co-ordinator.
- The church does not encourage children or youth to interact on the Facebook or what's app groups.
- Workers should ensure that children and youth do not use social media on workers phones and that their privacy setting ensure the highest levels of security.
- Any online abuse should be reported by children and youth to statutory authorities such as CEOP, to https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/ https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

Consent for photographic images and videos online

- Photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will endeavour to prevent children from being easily identified.
- Children's full names will not be used on the website in association with their photographs.
- Permission will be obtained in writing before any images are taken or displayed and images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought for and how the image will be stored if not destroyed. If the intention is to use an image on the internet this must be clearly stated, and further permission must be acquired if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated.
- Use of images will reflect diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance and where children are involved permission should be obtained in writing in line with the photographic guidelines.

Use of Unity Church's Wi-Fi

- Access to the church Wi-Fi is via password and will only be given to adults when needed.
- Where access to the Internet is provided on devices owned by the church, such as for Job Club or Life Skills, we will exercise our right to monitor usage which includes access to websites, interception and deletion of inappropriate or criminal material or unlawfully copied text, video, images or sound.
- Church Social media groups are governed by the group's administrator who will be in the leadership or ministry team. Children and youth will not be included in these groups.

Whilst engaged in church work/activities, whether on the premises or not, children and workers should not:

- Search for or download pornographic, racist or hate motivated content.
- Illegally copy or play copyrighted content where permission has not been given.
- Send, request or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Harass, insult or bully others.
- Access the Internet using another person's login details.
- Access, download, send or receive any data (including images), which **Unity Church** considers offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libellous material.
- Engage in any form of misinformation or disinformation.

Sanctions for violating the acceptable use policy, in the opinion of Unity Church, may result in:

- A temporary or permanent ban on Internet use.
- Additional disciplinary action in line with existing practice on inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Where applicable, police or local authorities may be involved.

Safeguarding Appendix 7 –

Whistleblowing Policy

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing, or public interest disclosure, is when a worker reports a concern about the improper actions or omissions of their colleagues or their employer which may cause harm to others or to the organisation. Obvious examples of such improper actions include theft, fraud, abuse, breaches of health & safety. The disclosure should be made 'in good faith'. In other words, the disclosure must be made out of real concern about wrongdoing. Knowingly and maliciously making false accusations for ulterior motives is not whistleblowing. The whistle-blower should reasonably believe the information and allegation is substantially true, even if the information later turns out to have been incorrect.

Whistleblowing is not the same as making a complaint or raising a grievance, where the individual is saying that they have personally been poorly treated. A whistle-blower is usually not directly or personally affected by the concern and therefore rarely has a direct personal interest in the outcome of any investigation into their concerns. The whistle-blower raises the concern so that others can address it.

Introduction

Unity Church, Orpington is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the trustees, directors, staff members, volunteers or other associate. This policy aims to help individuals in any of these groups to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues or their employer with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

It is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects employees who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

Policy Scope

The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with any legal obligation
- a failure in the protection of children or adults with care and support needs
- a miscarriage of justice
- a health and safety risk to an individual
- damage to the environment
- or concealment of the above.

It is not necessary for individuals who raise the concern to prove the wrongdoing that is alleged to have occurred or is likely to occur. However, if an individual knowingly or maliciously makes an untrue allegation (e.g. in order to cause disruption), Unity Church, Orpington will take appropriate disciplinary action against them. It may constitute gross misconduct. Individuals should note that they will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, they commit a criminal offence.

This policy does not deal with any complaints staff may have about their employment.

How to raise a concern in the workplace

The officer designated to handle whistleblowing concerns is **Neil Maltman** (contact via neil@unitychurch.uk) and shall be known as the Whistleblowing Officer.

If the matter concerns the Whistleblowing Officer, it should be raised with the Trustees/Directors.

Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns in writing where possible, setting out the background and history of their concerns (giving names, dates and places where possible) and indicating the reasons for their concerns. If any individual is unsure whether to use this procedure or they want independent advice at any stage, they should contact the independent charity, Public Concern at Work's legal helpline on 020 7404 6609, email: helpline@pcaw.co.uk.

Public Concern at Work will be able to advise on how and with whom to raise a concern about malpractice. Disclosures made to a legal advisor in the course of obtaining legal advice will be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

If the individual reasonably believes that the matter relates wholly or mainly to the conduct of a person or body other than Unity Church, Orpington or any other matter for which a person or body other than Unity Church, Orpington has legal responsibility, the disclosure should be made to that other person or body.

Protecting the individual raising the concern

If an individual raises a concern which they believe to be true, Unity Church, Orpington will take appropriate action to protect the individual from any harassment, victimisation or bullying. Employees who raise a genuine concern under this policy will not be at risk of losing their job, nor will it influence any unrelated disciplinary action or redundancy procedures. The matter will be treated confidentially if the individual requests it. If in other circumstances the concern cannot be resolved without revealing the individual's identity, the Whistleblowing Officer will discuss with the individual whether and how to proceed. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective but the Whistleblowing Officer will decide whether or not to consider the matter taking into account:

- the seriousness of the matter;
- whether the concern is believable;
- whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided.

How Unity Church, Orpington will deal with the concern

How the concern will be dealt with, will depend on what it involves. It is likely that further enquiries and/or investigation will be necessary. The concern may be investigated by Unity Church, Orpington's Whistleblowing Officer or the Trustees/Directors, through the disciplinary process or it may be referred to the police, other agencies such as Social Services, an external auditor or an independent investigator. It may be necessary for the individual to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings. Unity Church, Orpington will give the individual feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation wherever possible.

If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed. Staff will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and their confidentiality will continue to be protected.