

Safeguarding Policy

Where everyone cares for everyone in Jesus' name

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For any general safeguarding issues (including pastoral queries or concerns), contact the DSO. For urgent or 'out of hours' needs, contact the Deputy DSO.

Zeo Church ("Zeo") has adopted this policy to protect all Children, Young people and Vulnerable Adults who participate in the life of the church in any capacity and to protect Staff, Volunteers and Visitors. Everyone involved in Zeo has a role in promoting a safe church environment for everyone.

Zeo is committed to practise in a way which protects everyone and recognises the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults. Safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework supported by government guidance which sets out a range of safeguarding duties, responsibilities and best practice.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & PROTOCOLS:

- *The Data Protection Act 1998* • *The Human Rights Act 1998 (article 8)* • *The Children*

Act 1989 / and 2004 • Working together to safeguard children –Statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. • Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 • The Crime and Disorder Act 1989 (section 115) • The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality • Care Act 2014 • Caldicott Principles • “No Secrets” (D.H. Guidance on protection of vulnerable adults) 2000 • Mental Capacity Act 2005 – DOLS • Equalities Act 2010 • Recruitment, induction and training • Fire Safety • Privacy Policy• Health and Safety Policy• Confidentiality policy• Abuse of Trust policy • Pastoral Care Policy Domestic Abuse Policy

Definitions

Safeguarding

The action an organisation takes to promote the welfare of vulnerable individuals to protect them from harm abuse and neglect.

Children and young people

For the purposes of this policy, we consider Children to be those under 11, and Young people to be those aged 11–18.

Vulnerable adults

It can be difficult to define a vulnerable adult. Individuals may go through a time in their life where they are vulnerable, e.g. in times of personal distress. It is expected that leaders will make judgements with a person-centred approach to those in their care rather than just adhering to a prescriptive model.

The Care Act 2014 defines an “adult at risk” as

- *A person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is providing this)*
- *Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect*
- *As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from the risk of or the experience of abuse or neglect*

Abuse

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person/persons. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Abuse may be a single act or a series of acts and includes physical, sexual emotional or financial (not an exhaustive list)

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a person's needs which can lead to harm or impairment.

Harm

Any act or situation that negatively affects an individual's well-being, health or human right.

Grooming

Grooming is an abuse of power and trust. It involves the perpetrator(s) building a relationship with an individual for the purposes of sexual abuse, radicalisation or criminal exploitation.

Zeo is committed to:-

- Promoting a Robust Safeguarding Culture that is accessible and proactive.
- Using Safer recruitment practices and supporting those with responsibility related to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults within Zeo.
- Responding promptly and sensitively to all safeguarding concerns or allegations.
- Providing Pastoral care for victims/survivors of abuse and others also affected.
- Providing Pastoral care for those who are subject to concerns or allegations of abuse and others also affected.

1. Promoting a robust, accessible, proactive safeguarding culture

- (a) Safeguarding is embedded throughout our governance, leadership and culture. All our safeguarding practice is actively non-oppressive, non-discriminatory and non-racist.
- (b) This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, including Leadership Team, Trustees, Sunday Teams and all those working in Youth and Children's ministry (e.g. Parent Helpers, Young Leaders) on behalf of the church. Anyone who is working with Children/Young People or Vulnerable Adults will be required to read this policy and thereafter each year after its

annual review to ensure they operate in line with it. All staff and volunteers will receive an induction process and safeguarding training.

- (c) Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and deputy DSO for children, young people and vulnerable adults. (see Appendix B)
- (d) Adopting child protection and safeguarding practices through good practice (see Appendix C), clear procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- (e) Developing and implementing an effective social media policy.
- (f) Providing effective supervision and training for staff and volunteers.
- (g) Recording and storing information professionally and securely, sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, families, staff and volunteers.
- (h) Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents and carers appropriately.
- (i) As part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities, we recognise our duty under the Prevent Strategy to help protect individuals from the risk of radicalisation and extremism. (see appendix F)
- (j) Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- (k) Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that arises.
- (l) Ensuring we have effective complaints and whistleblowing procedures in place.

Whistleblowing is when someone raises a concern externally about a person or practice within the organisation. If individuals reporting their concerns within our organisation do not feel they have been acted upon then we support their right to report these concerns to the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) social care services, the police, and /or the relevant Regulatory Authority (Charity Commission). They can also contact the NSPCC dedicated helplines and the charity Protect for advice and support.

- (m) Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance

2. Safer recruitment

- (a) All Staff and Volunteers involved in the church who are working with children, young people or vulnerable adults will:-

- Need to provide ID
- A suitable reference
- Be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service Application (DBS) or present an up-to-date portable DBS Certificate.
- DBS applications must be completed as a priority and no individual should be alone with a child or vulnerable adult until the DBS has been seen. If a DBS application (including ID check) has not been completed within 1 month that individual will be unable to continue serving on the team until it is completed
- Will be required to complete safeguarding training on induction and annually as a refresher

- (b) All Staff and Volunteers will be given a Job Description setting out the roles, responsibilities and the expectations of the position given adequate supervision and support by a Lead Staff/Volunteer.

3. Responding to allegations of abuse

Defining abuse against a child, young person or adult is difficult and complex. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, institution or community setting. Often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child, young person, adult or family.

Under no circumstances must any staff or volunteers carry out their own investigation into allegations or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures below:

(a) Report concerns IMMEDIATELY to the named responsible person

This may be the ministry leader, or one of the DSOs as stated on the front page of this policy. Suspicions should only be discussed with those named above in this policy.

The responsible person will then:

- Obtain information from staff/volunteers, children/young people or parents/carers who have concerns and record this information.
- Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.
- Consult with a statutory child safeguarding agency to clarify any actions (i.e. 31:8).
- Ensure that parents/carers of the child/young person/vulnerable person are contacted as soon as possible if appropriate, following advice from Statutory Services.
- A referral will be made to the appropriate Statutory Service.

(b) Individuals have a right to make referrals directly to child protection and safeguarding agencies.

If you do not believe that the DSO's have responded appropriately then it is your responsibility to contact the appropriate agencies directly.

(c) If a child/young person/vulnerable adult makes a disclosure of abuse:

Make notes as soon as possible (ideally within an hour of being told). Write down exactly what the child/young person/vulnerable adult said, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately. before you were told (e.g. activity/event).

- Record dates, times and when you made the record.
- Keep all written notes secure.
- Report concerns to the DSO as soon as possible.
- If the DSO is implicated, report to the deputy DSO. If both are implicated, report to the Chair of Trustees.
- Do not discuss your allegations with anyone else.
- In the event of concern of imminent abuse or harm, the DSO will consider carefully whether or not it is safe for a child/young person/vulnerable adult to return home or to the potentially abusive situation. If necessary, they should take immediate action to contact

Social Services or the police to discuss putting safety measures into place.

(d) If the child/young person/vulnerable adult has a symptom of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse the DSO will:

- Contact Social Services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or concerns about the safety of the child/young person – but must NOT inform parents/carers.
- Seek emergency medical treatment if necessary.
- For lesser concerns (e.g. poor parenting) encourage the parent/carer to seek their own help from social services, but not if this might place the child/young person at risk of significant harm.
- In the case of serious concern or if in any doubt contact a statutory child safeguarding agency or Social Services for advice.

(e) Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of any allegation or concern about sexual abuse the DSO will:

- Contact the Social Services/safeguarding team immediately but not speak to parents/carers or anyone else.
- Collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion. and provide this information to social services.
- Never attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation/suspicion.
- Note that in cases of sexual abuse any delay in contacting the DSO must not delay report to safeguarding/Social Services teams.

(f) Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

- It is important not to make promises that you may not be able to keep. Do NOT say that you will keep confidential what they are about to tell you as you may have a duty to share it with others.
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that it is likely this information will need to be shared with others.
- Stay calm and listen to what the child/young person/vulnerable adult is saying.
- Allow the child/young person/vulnerable adult to speak at their own pace. Resist the temptation to finish sentences, hurry or encourage them in any way.
- Ask questions for clarification only and never ask leading questions or those that suggest a particular answer.

- Tell them what you will do next and with who this information will be shared.
- As soon as possible record in writing what was said, using the child/young person/vulnerable adult's own words.
- Make a note of the date, time, names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure the record is signed and dated.
- Helpful statements to make include 'I believe you.' 'Thank you for telling me.' 'It is not your fault.' 'I will help you'.
- Avoid saying 'Why didn't you tell anyone before?' 'I can't believe this.' 'Are you sure that this is true?' 'Who? Why? Where? When?' etc.

(g) Allegations against a member of staff/volunteer

The church will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports their concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff/volunteer, there may be three types of investigation: criminal, safeguarding or disciplinary/misconduct. The results of any police/safeguarding investigation may well influence the outcome of any disciplinary investigation, but this may not necessarily be the case:

- If the allegation is about poor practice this will be dealt with as a misconduct issue
- If allegations of poor practice relate to the DSO(s) they should be reported to the Chair of Trustees, who will advise how to deal with the allegation and if disciplinary proceedings should be initiated.
- In the event of an allegation, the DSO will make an immediate investigation about whether any individual accused of abuse should be suspended, pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of police or social services, the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated, and how this can be handled sensitively. Where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police the organisation must reach a decision based on the available information. The welfare of children/young people must remain of paramount importance throughout.

4. Online Safety

All staff and Volunteers will agree and sign up to our Online Safety code of conduct to:

- use the internet and other forms of communication in a sensible and polite way.

- only access websites, send messages or access and use other resources that will not hurt or upset anybody.
- seek permission if they want to use personal information or take photographs of other people. 4. report any concerns to the Lead or Deputy
- See Appendix D for Online Safety Referral process.

5. Social Media

Social media The Online Safety Act 2023 and associated government guidance A Guide to the Online Safety Bill now makes social media companies more responsible for their users' safety on their platforms. This means children and adults will be protected online by making social media platforms:

- remove illegal content quickly or prevent it from appearing in the first place. This includes removing content promoting self-harm.
- prevent children from accessing harmful and age-inappropriate content.
- enforce age limits and age-checking measures.
- ensure the risks and dangers posed to children on the largest social media platforms are more transparent, including by publishing risk assessments.
- provide parents and children with clear and accessible ways to report problems online when they do arise

See Appendix F for Social Media Safety Referral process.

6. Child, Young Person or Adult goes Missing

If a child, young person, or adult at risk goes missing from a Group or Activity it should be reported to the police. Use 999 where there is a concern that they cannot be found or are vulnerable.

A missing person may be assessed as 'at risk' if they fit one or more of the following categories.

- is under 16
- has expressed feelings of suicide.
- has dementia. • has been acting totally out of character
- has mental health issues.

- is under increased stress.
- has an illness or a physical disability
- has a learning disability.
- is in need of regular medication/care.

The Lead or Deputy for Safeguarding should be informed as soon as possible, and all details and actions recorded, signed, timed, and dated.

Appendix A – Definitions and signs of abuse

We follow the NSPCC recommendations and information – see

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>

Appendix B – The role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Every place of Worship or Organisation should have a named person who acts as the DSO and must undergo safeguarding training. It is the responsibility of this person to make themselves available for consultation by Staff, Volunteers, Visitors, Church Members and Children/Young People and their Families.

The name of the DSO and information about their duties should be visible, so that everyone (including Parents and Carers) are aware of who to talk to if they have concerns. In the absence of the DSO a deputy must be confirmed.

The DSO's role includes:

- Ensuring that this Safeguarding Policy is implemented throughout the church.
- Ensuring that there is adequate induction and ongoing training relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that all activities carried out by the church are carried out appropriately in terms of safeguarding about personal, organisational, location and premises.
- Checking and actioning all incident reports made by Staff/Volunteers/Church Members/Members of the Public.
- Ensuring all necessary enquiries, procedures and investigations related to Safeguarding are carried out and recorded in a timely manner.
- Reporting results of screening enquires and preserving 'need to know' levels of confidentiality and access to secure records.
- All confidential records relating to safeguarding are kept secure.
- Liason with appropriate Statutory Services including Police, Social Services and Probation at a formal and informal level.
- Reporting allegations and suspicions of abuse to the appropriate Statutory Services within the local Authority.

Appendix C – Definition of Good Practice

- The Welfare of Children/Young People/Vulnerable adults is always the priority.
- Involving Parents/Carers should be involved decision making and planning.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering children/young people/ adults to share in the decision-making process and relationship building.
- Treating all children/young people/adults equally and with respect and dignity in attitude, language and actions.
- Ensure that children/young people/adults are aware that secrets are not acceptable in relationships between themselves and staff, volunteers at Zeo.
- No intimate relationships between staff/volunteers and children /Young People and vulnerable adults are acceptable.
- Ensure Staff/Volunteers work in pairs for accountability.
- Always working in an open environment (for example avoiding private spaces or unobserved spaces). No lone leader working in a room alone with children/Young People/Vulnerable Adults.
- We recognise that some unavoidable circumstances may require a volunteer/staff member to be alone with a child/young person/vulnerable adult. Staff/Volunteer should always make another member of staff/volunteer aware, and an appropriate open space/location must be used.
- Making activities and other off site events fun, enjoyable and safe.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Ensuring when mixed gender groups are participating in residential/off site activities they are always accompanied by a male and female member of staff/volunteer (but remember that same-gender abuse can also occur).
- Ensuring that at residential events staff/volunteers do not enter children/young people's rooms alone or invite children/young people into their rooms.
- Being excellent role models including not smoking, drinking alcohol or taking non-prescribed drugs in the company of children/young people/vulnerable adults.
- Giving positive and constructive feedback not negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children/young people/vulnerable adults and plan activities accordingly and allow them to choose to participate.

- Securing written consent from parents/carers for all events and to act in loco parentis if the need arises, to administer first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- In the event that any injury, incident or unusual event occurs, keeping a clear record on the provided incident forms (taking appropriate care where this is confidential information).
- Requesting written consent from parents if it is necessary for staff/volunteers to transport children/young people in their vehicles and avoid being alone with a children/Young People and Vulnerable adults in vehicles.
- In an emergency situation and a Child/Young Adult needs to be taken to hospital or a parent/carer fails to arrive to collect a child this must be approved by the Event Lead and/or the child/young persons/vulnerable adult's parent/carer

Practices never to be sanctioned.

No staff member or volunteer should ever:

- Engage in rough, physically or sexually provocative games.
- Use corporal/physical punishment to manage behaviour.
- Share a room with a child/young person.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children/young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make any ambiguous sexually suggestive remarks to a child/young person/vulnerable adult.
- Reduce a child/young person to tears as a form of control/coercion.
- Allow allegations made by a child/young person/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children/young people/vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children/young people/Vulnerable Adult to stay/visit your home or any other spaces.

Please note:

If Staff Volunteers are requested to support a Child/Young Person/Vulnerable Adult with personal care tasks the tasks should be done with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and of the Child/Young Person/Vulnerable Adult involved. Appropriate training/guidance should be given and be responsive to a person's reactions. Discuss with the individual

what you are doing and give choices, where possible. This is particularly important if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of clothing or where there is any physical contact – for example lifting or assisting a child/young person to carry out any particular activities. Do not do any task for which you are not adequately trained.

Appendix D Online Safety Flowchart

1. Initial Response

- Online Safety incident raised by a child or worker
- Inform Safeguarding Officer
- Assessment by Safeguarding Officer
- Contact CCPAS for advice: 0303 003 11 11

2. Determine the Nature of the Incident

2.1 Inappropriate but Not Illegal

Examples: Bullying*, adult jokes, violent films

- If child is accountable: Decide on appropriate course of action
- If worker is accountable: Leader decides on appropriate course of action
- Possible Internal Actions:
- Inform parents/carers
- Carry out risk assessment to prevent future incidents
- Counselling for child if necessary
- Disciplinary action for worker

2.2 Illegal Material or Activity

Examples: Grooming, sexually explicit material shared with child, child abuse images. Report to:

- Police
- Internet Watch Foundation (www.iwf.org.uk)
- CEOP (www.ceop.police.uk) or police if immediate risk

Next Steps:

- Allow relevant agency to carry out their investigation
- Follow advice on securing and preserving evidence until reviewed
- Debrief on online-safety and lessons learnt

Possible Internal Actions:

- Inform parents/carers
- Carry out risk assessment to prevent future incidents
- Referral for counselling for child if necessary

3. Legal Notes

Some bullying/content may be illegal under:

- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Obscene Publications Act
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 (for extreme pornography)

4. Useful Contacts

- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF): www.iwf.org.uk
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP): www.ceop.police.uk

Appendix E – Prevent Statement

Zeo are committed to safeguarding all members of our community, especially children, young people, and vulnerable adults. As part of our wider safeguarding responsibilities, we recognise our duty under the Prevent Strategy to help protect individuals from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

Our Commitment

We will:

- Promote a safe and inclusive environment where all individuals feel valued and respected
- Challenge extremist views and ideologies that seek to divide or harm
- Work in partnership with local authorities, police, and safeguarding boards to identify and respond to concerns
- Ensure staff, volunteers, and leaders understand the signs of radicalisation and know how to report concerns
- Embed Prevent awareness into our safeguarding training and policies

Recognising Risk

We understand that radicalisation can affect individuals of any age, background, or faith. We are alert to:

- Changes in behaviour, language, or appearance
- Expressions of extremist views or support for violence
- Isolation from family, friends, or community
- Online activity that promotes extremist content

Reporting Concerns

Any concerns related to radicalisation or extremism will be treated seriously and reported to:

- Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- The Local Authority Prevent Team or Police Prevent Officer if appropriate