

Christian Science Society, Oxted

Charity Registration Number: 242971

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

For definitions, see Appendix A.]

Committee responsible:	The Executive Board
Chair	Mary Ferdinand
Safeguarding Lead board Member (Appendix B)	Caroline Howells
Status & Review Cycle	Issue January 2024; Annual Review
Next Review Date	January 2025

1. Safeguarding Statement

This society recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. Child protection forms part of the society's safeguarding responsibilities.

2. Key Personnel

The Nominated Safeguarding Lead (NSL) (see Appendix C) is: Mary Ferdinand

The deputy NSL (and Safeguarding Lead Board Member) Caroline Howells

CONTACT: Key personnel can be contacted by emailing the Clerk in the first instance at clerkcssoxted@gmail.com

3. Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, and in line with HM Government's guide: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 (see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>) and 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' 2015 (see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2>)

4. Policy principles

- 4.1 The welfare of the child is paramount.
- 4.2 All children regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.
- 4.3 We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff and volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting our children from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- 4.4 We believe that our church should be a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

5. Policy aims

- 5.1 To demonstrate this society's commitment with regard to safeguarding and child protection.
- 5.2 To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.

- 5.3 To raise the awareness of all members of the society of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of possible abuse.
- 5.4 To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of the society.
- 5.5 To develop a structured procedure within the church that will be followed by all members in cases of suspected abuse.
- 5.6 To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the local Safeguarding Children Partnership, local authority and/or Police should it be necessary.
- 5.7 To ensure that all those working within our church who have substantial access to children within the church and in the course of its activities have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity and a satisfactory DBS check (see Appendix D).

6. Why do we need a child protection policy?

The society needs a child protection policy so that the members can demonstrate the importance they attach to safeguarding all children who come to the church or any of its activities off the church premises and to assist the members in discharging their responsibilities towards those children.

The policy includes practical procedures that members are to follow.

7. Recognising signs of child abuse

The literature points out that abuse can be physical or emotional and that neglect can constitute abuse. It suggests that adults should look out for signs that a child may be being abused by another. Further information about the definitions of abuse (physical, emotional, and sexual) and neglect, and indicators that a child may be being abused, can be found in Appendix A.

8. What are the circumstances in which children come to church?

- 8.1 Sunday School is for children and young people up to 20. Children attend the Sunday School on Sunday morning from 10.00 am to 11.00 am, while their parents and carers may attend the Sunday morning service which is at the same time. Older children and young adults may come to church unaccompanied. (Where a class includes only young people aged 18 years or older it falls outside the requirements of child protection legislation and regulations but a duty of care still applies.)
- 8.2 All parts of the Sunday School can be seen or heard from other parts of the Sunday School area. Classes in Sunday School classrooms are easily visible and/or audible from outside the classroom and there are reasonable opportunities for others to see and/or hear what is happening in those spaces during class.
- 8.3 There are nearly always at least 2 adults in the Sunday School, except before 10.00 a.m. as people are arriving. The ratio of children to adults is rarely more than 4 to 1. During class time we follow the NSPCC's recommended ratios which are as follows:

Age	Ratio
0 - 2 years	1 adult to 3 children
2 - 3 years	1 adult to 4 children
4 - 8 years	1 adult to 6 children
9 – 12 years	1 adult to 8 children
13 - 18 years	1 adult to 10 children

From NSPCC: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children/#heading-top> .

- 8.4 The Sunday School Superintendent is responsible for routine safety during Sunday School. No hazardous areas or equipment are accessible to children. The building is checked regularly for safety by the Maintenance Committee, in accordance with the church's Health and Safety Policy.
- 8.5 Occasionally the church offers a crèche in which babies or children may be looked after during public lectures, which last one hour. The adult/child ratios above are complied with.
- 8.6 The church provides on request a nursery for babies and very young children during the Sunday morning service. This is treated as the youngest Sunday School class and the above ratios are observed.

9. Safe recruitment

Any adult who is invited by the Executive Board to be a Sunday School teacher or looking after children in the crèche for a lecture is likely to be a member of the society and thus would have been through the procedures for applying for membership (see the society's Constitution and Byelaws). They will be required to obtain a DBS check before being alone with children in the course of their duties. If a non-member takes on any such role the Board and Superintendent will ensure that they are suitably vetted and DBS checked before they can teach without another vetted and DBS checked adult present.

10. Procedures

- 10.1 All members involved with children and young people visiting the church or its activities should be vigilant in ensuring that the children are properly cared for and safeguarded, whether on or off the church premises.
- 10.2 The Board will appoint one Board member to be the Safeguarding Lead Board Member (see Appendix B) and will also appoint the Nominated Safeguarding Lead (NSL) who will take the operational lead and be responsible for all safeguarding activity and respond accordingly (see Appendix C). This person will be trained to an appropriate safeguarding standard. A deputy or deputies will be appointed to cover when the NSL is not available. The Safeguarding Lead Board Member and NSL may be the same individual.
- 10.3 The Board operates a safe recruitment procedure to ensure the suitability of those members who are invited to become Sunday School teachers (including the Sunday School superintendent and deputy Sunday School teachers) and carers in the crèche for a church service or church sponsored public lecture.
- 10.4 All members involved in activities with children and young people will have received information about the church's safeguarding policy and procedures, and the name of the person responsible for child protection (the NSL), so they know who to go to if they have a concern.
- 10.5 All members who work in activities with children and young people will receive appropriate safeguarding training to ensure they have up to date knowledge, and this training will be refreshed annually. All staff are trained and have at least completed a basic awareness course in child protection. Ideally the Nominated Safeguarding Lead and their deputy need to attend Level 2 training at a minimum once they have completed their basic awareness training.
- 10.6 The name of the NSL and the Safeguarding Lead Board Member will be clearly advertised in the church premises.
- 10.7 The Board is responsible for the appointment of the Sunday School Superintendent, Sunday School teachers, deputy Sunday School teachers, carers in the crèche and Sunday School pianist. The Sunday School Superintendent is responsible for the running of the Sunday School and for reporting to the NSL and the Board any issues or concerns relating to the safeguarding and welfare of children.
- 10.8 The society will obtain current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all individuals engaged to work in the Sunday School. This will include the Sunday School Superintendent, regular Sunday School teachers, deputy Sunday School teachers and Sunday School pianists. (See Appendix D.)
- 10.9 If a crèche is provided, the society will provide carers for whom current DBS checks have been obtained.
- 10.10 If a person is invited to serve in the Sunday School before a DBS check can be obtained, the church will ensure that the individual concerned is supervised during Sunday School by a person who has been granted a DBS check.
- 10.11 If a member of the Sunday School staff already has a DBS check obtained via another organisation, the church will normally treat this as acceptable, though it retains the right to request a further check through its own channels if the Board consider this appropriate, depending upon how long ago a DBS check was carried out.
- 10.12 All DBS checks should be updated with the Disclosure and Barring Service at intervals of not less than 6 years, either via their online checking service or by a new application.
- 10.13 The Sunday School Superintendent should ensure that the Sunday School register contains contact details for, and the ages of, all children attending the Sunday School as well as the names of the children who have come each Sunday. He or she should also be aware of who the adults are who bring each child to the Sunday School, particularly when the child is an ad hoc visitor. Any deputy for the Sunday School Superintendent should also be aware of these duties. These records and any others which could be relevant to Safeguarding issues are to be retained for at least 50 years.
- 10.14 The Sunday School Superintendent will encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings. Children should feel comfortable about reporting without fear of retaliation.

11. Safe environment

(Safety for, and the transfer of responsibility of, children before and after the service.)

- 11.1 Parents and carers should be encouraged not to allow their younger children to be left by themselves in the Sunday School before a Sunday School teacher arrives. That teacher should avoid being in charge of too many young children by him or herself and if necessary should ask a parent or carer to wait until another teacher arrives.
- 11.2 The Sunday School Superintendent and the other teachers should ensure that children do not leave at the end of Sunday School except in the care of their parents or carers.
- 11.3 Parents/carers should be encouraged to collect their children promptly at the end of the service.
- 11.4 Ushers on the outside doors of the church should avoid letting younger children leave the building unaccompanied by their parents or carers. Where an adult in the Sunday School, including the Sunday School pianist, does not have a current DBS check, he or she must remain in view of another adult who does.

12. Dealing with a concern about a child/young person: what to do

If an adult suspects abuse or receives an allegation of abuse, or if a child discloses abuse suffered within the church:

- 12.1 If staff or a volunteer has concerns about a child/young person, he or she must record the concern/s and report it/them to the NSL/Deputy. If there is a risk of significant harm to the child the NSL/Deputy will:
 - 12.1.1 Refer to the Children's Single Point of Access (SPA) at the local Safeguarding Children Partnership or Board. This is the responsible government authority. The SPA for Surrey is the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), whose telephone number is **0300 470 9100**.
 - 12.1.2 Make a record of initial referral details (time, date, person spoken to).
 - 12.1.3 Follow up your telephone referral in writing within the next 24 hours.
 - 12.1.4 Notify the Safeguarding Lead Board Member and/or the Board Chair. You should receive a confirmation of referral from the SPA within 24 hours and feedback of decision within 72 hours. I
 - 12.1.5 It is your responsibility to follow up on a referral, so contact the SPA again if you have not received a confirmation.
- 12.2 Keep a written record of all your actions. If an emergency situation arises dial 999 for the Police for an immediate response.
- 12.3 Remember you can always contact the SPA for help and advice.
- 12.4 If you have any doubts about the level of need or risk, you are not sure whether you should be making a referral, or simply don't know what to do, call the SPA.
- 12.5 The protection of the child is the most important consideration. The matter should be treated confidentially so far as possible.
- 12.6 The adult should promptly record any facts that support those suspicions and report to the Sunday School Superintendent or to the Board member responsible for child protection (NSL). All steps taken by members of the society should be recorded. All such records should be kept confidentially by the society for at least 50 years.
- 12.7 If a child alleges abuse, the allegations may be unfounded but nevertheless they should be treated seriously, and a referral should be made to the SPA. The utmost care should be taken for the sake of all involved. Avoid discussing the allegation with the person accused. Do not investigate any alleged abuse.

13. Allegations against church staff and volunteers:

- 13.1 Care needs to be taken to distinguish between allegations of abuse and concerns about the quality of care or practice, or a complaint. All instances need to be dealt with appropriately.
- 13.2 An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:
 - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
 - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
 - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- 13.3 If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member receiving the allegation or aware of the information will immediately inform the nominated safeguarding lead (NSL).

- 13.4 The NSL on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the earliest opportunity and before taking any further action. Contact via the SPA.
- 13.5 *If the alleged abuser is a member of the child's family:***
The matter should be referred to the SPA immediately, or in an emergency to the Police (999), and before the family is involved. The referral should be completed by the nominated safeguarding person (NSL) or deputy.
- 13.6 *If the alleged abuser is not a church staff member or volunteer, and is not a member of the child's family:***
Parents or carers should be informed immediately. It is for the parents or carers then to report the matter to the SPA, or in an emergency the Police.
- 13.7 *It may be appropriate to ensure that the child has no further contact with the alleged abuser.***

14. Timescale for investigations

Referrals to the relevant people/bodies outlined above should be made immediately.

15. Safeguarding contact numbers

If the situation is urgent always call 999.

Local Safeguarding Children Partnership or Board (MASH): Tel no: 0300 470 9100 (out of hours 01483 517898) - this is the correct local organisation to report a safeguarding issue to and to get support from.

Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU): 101 (or in an emergency 999)

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Telephone: 0808 800 5000.

Childline: ChildLine is a counselling service for children and young people up to their 19th birthday provided by the NSPCC. <https://www.childline.org.uk> or telephone 0800 1111.

16. When should this policy be reviewed?

This policy should be reviewed **annually** and agreed by the Board, even if there are no changes.

This Policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board on 15th January 2024.

Signed: *Mary Ferdinand*
Chair

Appendices

Appendix A – Terminology

'abuse' – see the NSPCC definition of November 2017 in <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf> .
(This is a 15 page document which can be downloaded free of charge.)

'child' means a person under the age of 18;

'child protection' is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm;

'DBS' means the Disclosure and Barring Service (see Appendix D);

'harm' means ill treatment, the impairment of physical or mental health (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment), or the impairment of physical intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment);

'ill treatment' includes sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and psychological abuse;

'LADO' means the Local Authority Designated Officer for child protection matters;

'NSL' means the nominated safeguarding lead for the church (see Appendix C);

'members' means all those working for or on behalf of the church, full or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

'parents' means birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents;

'safeguarding' means:

- protecting children from harm or maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes;

'SPA' means the Safeguarding Children's Single Point of Access at the local Safeguarding Children Partnership or Board.

Appendix B – Role of the Safeguarding Lead Board Member

The Safeguarding Lead Board Member takes overall responsibility for this Policy and its implementation in the church on behalf of the Board. He/she should have a reasonable level of Safeguarding training and experience but may delegate day to day responsibility to the NSL if they are not the same person.

Appendix C - Role of the Nominated Safeguarding Lead (NSL)

- The NSL is trained to an appropriate safeguarding standard.
- Provides support and advice for members regarding any safeguarding concern.
- Liaises with the church's safeguarding team.
- Liaises with children social care or adult social care concerning any safeguarding concern.
- Liaises with the local Safeguarding Children partnership or Board, or local authority children's social care or adult social care team concerning any allegation against a member of the church – contacting the SPA and speaking with the LADO or other appropriate local authority officer as advised by the SPA.
- Keeps records of any concern suspected case of abuse and or referrals in a secure manor.

Appendix D – DBS checking information and documents

1. The Disclosure and Barring Service can disclose any criminal, police or similar records for any individual. It is used to help organisations identify people who are unsuitable for certain types of work, such as jobs involving children. Disclosures for volunteers or unpaid positions are free but where an organisation makes fewer than 100 checks per year applications for a DBS check need to be made via an umbrella body, which may make an administration charge.
2. Charton Manor is such an umbrella body. It does not actually charge an administration fee for this purpose, but it might be appropriate to make a donation to it if the church were to use it in this respect.
3. How to complete an application for a check:
 - a. Ask your umbrella body for an application form.
 - b. Give the form to the applicant to fill in.
 - c. The applicant will return the completed form to you along with documents proving their identity. A list of appropriate documents can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/criminal-record-check-documents> .
 - d. Check the identity documents.
 - e. Send the completed application form to your umbrella body.
 - f. DBS will send a certificate to the applicant. You must ask the applicant to show you the certificate so you can check it's genuine.

The Disclosure and Barring Service supplies a list of other umbrella bodies on its website at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Tel: DBS helpline 03000 200 190

4. DBS checks administrator:

The board will appoint a member of the church to liaise with Charton Manor or another umbrella body, and check the supporting documents to be supplied with each application, such as passports and utility invoices. This means that only copies of those identity documents are submitted to Charton Manor, not the originals. The nominated person has to confirm that he/she has checked those copies against the originals. Details of the process and the documents required from those being checked are given in the guidance which comes with the application forms.

Appendix E - Sunday School Online Zoom Risk Assessment/Child protection policy

Christian Science Society - Online Sunday School - 2024

Area/ Activity	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Control Measures	Review/ Comments
Virtual Sunday School	Unwelcome participants / gate crashing	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting room • All participants to enter with their proper name initially (where possible) – Teachers to be aware where names are wrong and confirm participant upon entry. • All participants to have cameras enabled unless they have an issue with cameras (in these cases ensure identity is established) • The use of a password (not automatically generated) • Meeting ID and Password not to be published online but emailed or passed to parents off social media 	
Virtual Sunday School	Zoom Bombing	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only host / co-host can share screen. • Monitor “chat function” and disable at appropriate times 	
Virtual Sunday School	Unsupervised adult and young person interaction	Young people / teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No adult is allowed 1 on 1 with a young person (inc breakout rooms) • Parents or other appropriate adult to be in vicinity of young person during meeting 	
Virtual Sunday School	Data stolen Using teacher’s info to create a false meeting	Young people / Teachers/ Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure teachers PC / Laptop settings are up to date and security settings are enhanced. • Ask parents to keep their PC / Laptop settings up to date (but outside the control of the Group) • Do not store Sunday School material other than in accordance with what has been agreed with the Church/Superintendent • Do not make information relating to the meeting public. • Ensure any photos have names erased. • Ensure photos excluded children who have not given photo sharing permission (or ensure the child’s face is blurred) 	
Individual young person	Bullying	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the adult to young people ratio is maintained. • Monitor Chat Function • Monitor Breakout rooms. • Deal with any incidents quickly and in an orderly fashion 	

Area/ Activity	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Control Measures	Review/ Comments
Virtual Sunday School	Accidental indecent exposure	Young people / teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that young people are not positioned near potential sources of unexpected exposure i.e. toilet/bathroom • Ensure children do not Zoom from their bedrooms (unless parents have given permission) • Ensure that young people are made aware to wear appropriate clothing during the meeting. • Remind parents to tell others within the house that a virtual Sunday School is about to take place. 	
Virtual Sunday School	Accidental exposure to foul language	Young people / Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind young people of expected levels of behaviour if needed. • Inform adults that the microphone will pick up their voices as well as young people and to ensure that they do not use foul language. 	
Safeguarding Breach of Young People First code of practice (Yellow Card).	Abuse, inappropriate behaviour, Unsupervised adult and young person interaction	Young people / Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two adults holding current DBS must be present on the call and at least one must have up to date Safeguarding and Safety training. • Teachers to use waiting room facility. • Make sure the adults are present before letting young people in from the 'waiting room'. • No adult is allowed 1 on 1 with a young person. • Teachers to check UKHQ guidance - https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/staying-safe-and-safeguarding/supporting-life-issues-and-young-people/digital-safeguarding/ 	
Area used by teachers during zoom Area used by participants during zoom	Inappropriate items or messages	Young people / Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep background free of inappropriate items, such as alcohol. Check the background before each call. • Dress appropriately • Try to manage other people in the background's clothing, language, and actions to avoid inappropriate messages. Ensure family members are aware you are on a Zoom meeting and if possible/necessary seal off room for privacy. • Tell parents that other young people will be able to see the background and (where possible) ask them to keep it free of inappropriate items or behaviour. 	

Area/ Activity	Hazard	Who might be harmed	Control Measures	Review/ Comments
Video and photos	Inappropriate content	Young people / Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the meeting, check out content on all the links you're planning to share. • If any of the content includes images of people in your class, make sure you have proper permission from parents or carers and that the young person is comfortable with you using the image. • Photos of meeting is only shared to closed WhatsApp groups. • Ensure any photos have names erased. • Ensure photos excluded children who have not given photo sharing permission (or ensure the child's face is blurred) 	
Running a Quiz	Inappropriate content	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure questions/PowerPoint/website are age appropriate and have been checked for inappropriate content before sharing with young people. 	
Active Games	Injuries caused by lapse in focus.	Young people / Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of conduct in place to set clear expectations of behaviour. • Parental supervision to keep young people on task and ensure they are using equipment correctly and safely. • Ensure when doing active activities (e.g. jumping up and down) area behind children is free of objects and footwear is appropriate 	
Sharp items mistakes or misuse Mainly craft activities in Sunday School	Cuts	Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers to consider which parts of the activity need to be done by adults (or with close supervision). • teachers to ask that parent or carer to supervise young people when they're using sharp items. • teachers to brief young people on using the sharp item safely before they use it. • Age appropriate we would expect parents of younger members to support when using sharp items. • One leader actually leading activity with others watching screens to ensure correct behaviour 	
Cables and electricity (Inc Water activities near laptops/tablets)	Trips and falls Electric shock, burns	Young people / Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers to brief young people on use of electrical items. • Use appliances close to sockets where possible. • No liquids near electrical items where possible. 	