



Garstang Free Methodist Church

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

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GARSTANG FREE METHODIST CHURCH

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Telephone No: 01995 602852

Email: info@garstangfmc.org.uk

Charity No: 514360

Introduction

Garstang Free Methodist Church (GFMC) is a Free Methodist Church in the UK & Ireland. Our Safeguarding Policy outlines our practices and the approach to handling concerns raised in relation to those who attend or are in contact with GFMC.

As a church we are committed to complying with the standards outlined by the Charity Commission and safeguarding organisation Thirtyone:eight and we as the local church take responsibility for undertaking appropriate DBS checks for our staff and volunteers in accordance with the latest guidelines.

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Safeguarding Policy

Section 1

Details of the organisation

Name: Garstang Free Methodist Church

Address: Windsor Road, Garstang, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 1ED

Tel No: 01995 602852

Email address: info@garstanGFMC.org.uk

Charity Number: 514360

Insurance Company: Employers Liability Insurance with Ansvar Insurance Co. Ltd. Broker: Arthur J. Gallagher Insurance Brokers Limited, Clipper House, Chester Road, Stretford. Manchester. M32 8AF. 01625 854 300 www.ajg.com/uk

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

GFMC is committed to the safeguarding of all children, young people and adults with care and support needs who attend or come into contact with our church. This may be through Sunday Services, regular activities (listed below) or through other events/circumstances.

Children under 13 years of age (up to and including end of school Year 7):

Sunday Clubs, Footprints (note, this group can include those of Children & Young People age), Sunday Creche, Kids Klub (School Years 1 to 4), Toddle In, Connect (School Years 5 to 7), Holiday Club, Light Party, Kirkham residential Weekend

Young people (13 to 18 years of age (school Year 8+):

Friday Youth, Youth worship group, Rooted, Youth Bible Study, Mentoring, Youth residential weekend,

Vulnerable Adults: any person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs; is experiencing or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs. (Care Act 2014). In this policy the term "vulnerable adults" will be used and understood to cover adults with care and support needs..

At times there will certainly be vulnerable adults who attend groups or who come into contact with the church. None of us is invulnerable but there is a need for particular care for those whose vulnerability is increased by situations, by disabilities or by reduction in capacities. We recognise that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible.

Life Groups, Craft Café, Friday Focus, Pastoral visiting, Men's Fellowship, Bereavement Support group, Alpha, Ladies Breakfast, Welcome Café, Prayer Meeting

We have appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer and Deputy Lead Officer, detailed on front cover.

Leadership Safeguarding Statement and Commitment

The Leadership of Garstang Free Methodist Church, hereafter referred to as the 'Leadership' recognise the importance of its ministry to children, young people and adults in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the organisation on: 11/11/25 GFMC is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect. We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory, institutional, spiritual and domestic abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults who find themselves victims of forced marriage or modern slavery and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the local church unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and adults and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy and provide ongoing training. Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding .
- Following any denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults in need of protection. Regularly reviewing our operational guidelines
- Supporting the Designated Safeguarding Officers in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that we abide by the guidance of the Free Methodist Church in the UK and Ireland.
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting all employees and volunteers within the charity affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by Thirty One: Eight.

We recognise:

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

- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Where working outside of the UK, concerns will be reported to the appropriate agencies in the country in which we operate, and their procedures followed, and in addition we will report concerns to our agency's headquarters.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Our statement, policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Elder & Trustee Board.

If you have concerns about any representatives of Garstang Free Methodist Church or the leaders of Free Methodist Church, contact the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy detailed on the front cover of the Safeguarding Policy.

Section 2

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included in the appendices of our policy see Appendix 1.

Safeguarding awareness to aid the recognition of abuse

We are committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. Designated

Safeguarding Leads within our church are responsible for ensuring that all workers receive recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults 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.

Documenting concerns:

All suspicions should be taken seriously, and therefore everyone should observe and record. Records should be made as soon as possible, with time, date, witnesses and observation. Cause of Concern, and other forms are found in the appendices. (Appendix 2).

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, face to face, by telephone or email. A written record should be made and given directly to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, or received in a sealed envelope marked confidential in the locked church office or sent using the email

safeguarding@garstangfmc.org.uk

The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy are nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead then the report should be made to the Deputy Lead:

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the Lead Pastor or Thirtyone:eight. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

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

1. The Safeguarding Lead or Deputy may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
2. Trustees responsible for safeguarding may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
3. Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, in the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy you should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Lead and respect their decisions within their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight although the Leadership hope that members of this place of worship will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside safeguarding agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding lead 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.

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Lead who is nominated by the 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.

In the absence of both the Safeguarding Lead and deputy, or if the suspicions in any way involves them, then the report should be made to the Lead Pastor.

Alternatively contact Thirtyone:eight, Social Services or the police. (Contact numbers Appendix 6)

For further information around actions taken following allegations of abuse please follow Procedure and Allegation Processes (Appendix 3). See also Practice Guidelines and Safeguarding Procedure (Section 5).

Section 3

Prevention – Safer Recruitment

Safer recruitment practices will be followed in the appointment of employees and volunteers of Garstang Free Methodist Church. Disclosure and barring checks will be carried out where necessary. It is the responsibility of the person recruiting to follow this procedure and make sure that a volunteer does not assume a leadership role until this procedure is completed. All employees and volunteers will have access to our Safeguarding Policy and know how to report concerns. See Practice Guidelines (Section 5).

Procedure for appointments

All leaders require an application form and DBS and may require references (see application forms in Appendix 4).

Helpers do not require application forms as they will always work under supervision, but may require DBS (Group leader to confirm with DBS recruiter).

Following an expression of interest:

1. Group leader has brief informal interview with the volunteer in which they:
 - a. Set out the vision of the team for which they are applying;
 - b. Inform them what is expected of both leader and volunteer, including information on the GFMC Safeguarding Policy.
 - c. Inform them of the contact details of the DBS Lead Recruiter and explain that he/she must contact the DBS Lead Recruiter and arrange for a DBS check.
 - d. Give them an Application Form - Appendix 1a (under 18's) or Appendix 1b (adults) Completed forms to be returned to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

2. The Group Leader informs the DBS Lead Recruiter of the name of the volunteer who will be contacting them for a DBS check.

The onus is on the volunteer to contact DBS Lead Recruiter, to make an online application for a DBS check and supply the required identification in a timely manner.

3. On receipt the completed application form is checked and signed by the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy and securely filed. If references are required, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy will send out the requests using the letter in Appendix 1c and once satisfactory references have been received these will also be securely filed. Completed application forms and references will only be seen by Safeguarding Lead or Deputy and the Lead Pastor.

4. Whilst the DBS process is in progress, the volunteer may visit a group on agreed limited occasions under the supervision of a leader. If someone is able to provide a recent DBS clearance (within 2 years) from another context and have returned a completed Application Form, then they can come to the group and lead as long as they are supervised by an existing leader, for a period of up to 12 weeks, while awaiting the return of completed documentation.

5. The DBS Lead Recruiter will inform the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy of the outcome of the DBS check. If satisfactory, the volunteer is then able to begin working unsupervised with children and/or vulnerable adults and is informed of the 6 month probation period by the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy.

6. All references (if required) and DBS (if required) must be received and verified as satisfactory within 3 months..

7. When the 6 month probation period is passed, and both the group leader and volunteer are satisfied, the volunteer is then clear to work with children (and/or vulnerable adults until their DBS form needs renewing in 3 years.

Concerns

If there are any concerns about an individual the Pastors in conjunction with Thirtyone eight and the Safeguarding Children Adviser when needed, will make a decision about the suitability of the individual and a record will be made in that person's file of any actions, advice, reasons or justifications which they regard as appropriate. They may make recommendations as to the nature of the role or specify training requirements. In the case of a person deemed to be unsuitable due to Safeguarding concerns, any records on file will be kept secure in the locked filing cabinet for any appropriate future reference.

Frequency of DBS Checks

All employees of GFMC who are required to have a DBS check will have one on appointment and subsequently every 3 years thereafter. All volunteers who require a DBS check will have one on Appointment and subsequently every 3 years. DBS check may be requested by the Pastors and Safeguarding Lead at any time within these time frames if required for safeguarding reasons. **In the event of a blemished DBS follow procedure in Appendix 4**

Where workers from outside of the UK are considered for roles within the church, then necessary background checks on those applying to work with children/vulnerable adults will be carried out, e.g. individuals will be required to 'fit person' checks from their home country as well as references from there.

Section 4

Pastoral Care

Garstang Free Methodist Church is aware that all pastoral relationships are ones in which the worker is in a position of power and influence over others by the nature of their work or activity. This is especially significant when the worker is engaging with vulnerable groups. GFMC recognise the importance that all pastoral carers know what abuse is, how to recognise the possible signs and indicators and how to respond to concerns. Pastoral workers should:

- Be supervised by and accountable to the Lead Pastor and/or the Pastoral & Ministries Assistant
- Be clear about the limits of their role. These are discussed and agreed at team meetings e.g. role does not include offering transport or handling money
- Refer people on to Pastors and/or the Pastoral & Ministries Assistant
- Report any safeguarding issues that arise
- Be aware of the risk of over-dependency in pastoral relationships (This can apply both ways).
- Avoid any behaviour that may give the impression of favouritism or of a 'special' relationship.

Be clear about the boundaries of their role. e.g. Where workers are providing mentoring or coaching roles this should be clearly defined.

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and supporting all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of our church.

Working with offenders

When someone attending, or wishing to work with or volunteer as part of the church, is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the Leadership will decide whether they are able to supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, or whether they need to offer them an alternate place of worship, dependant on the risk. In its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, the Leadership will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

Clear policies and a code of behaviour for the individual will be in place that the individual must follow. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future. Contracts with sex offenders will be drawn up which will give details of both the boundaries expected of the individual and the support offered to them. It will be tailored specifically to individual circumstances and informed by risk assessments from the statutory agencies.

Section 5

Practice Guidelines and Safeguarding Procedure

The 5 R's of Safeguarding

Everyone is responsible for: recognising, responding, recording and reporting. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for reporting.



Chain of Report:

1. Cause of concerns can be recorded and raised by anyone
2. Records should be passed directly to the Safeguarding Lead
3. If the record concerns the Safeguarding Lead, report to the deputy.
4. The GFMC Safeguarding Lead, will report to the necessary agencies or make the decision to just log the details for the time being if criteria is not met for referral.

Recording a disclosure

Effective Listening

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the person to talk in private but try your best to make sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.

- It is especially important to allow time and space for the vulnerable person to talk
- Above everything else listen without interrupting
- Show acceptance of what they say (even if the story may sound unlikely) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used to confirm what you heard is correct
- 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 you are always ready to listen
- Use language that is age-appropriate and clearly understandable for those with disabilities. If you need help communicating with a person with whom you aren't able

to communicate clearly e.g. if they are deaf or speak a foreign language, let them know you are going to ask someone to help.

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?- Don't investigate
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

Obtaining Information for Records

- Stay calm, listen carefully and allow the person to continue at his or her own pace;
- Make the person aware that you will probably have to share the information disclosed with others, particularly if a crime has been committed
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling you;
- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid 'leading' questions that will suggest a particular answer;
- Tell them what you might do next.

Recording Your Concerns

- You must make a report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within 24 hours
- A report in either a written or electronic form can be made and kept securely until it can be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Reporting a concern forms can be found in Appendix 5 and in the Safeguarding file in the church office.
- The record must where possible include the following:
 - The person's name;
 - The person's date of birth;
 - Address of the person;
 - An exact record of what they have said using their own words where possible;
 - Any action taken so far;
 - A description of any injuries that have been noticed;
 - The nature of any concerns or details of what was said or witnessed;
 - Your name and role in relation to the person
- The record must be signed and dated

Section 6

Operational Guidance

6.1 Risk Assessments

Taking care of children, young people and vulnerable adults involves taking responsibility for their well-being at all times, being prepared for unforeseen eventualities, anticipating situations where they could be harmed and taking steps to minimise the risks.

Church Premises

The church premises will be assessed for safety for children, young people and adults with care and support needs and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Elders & Trustees in written form. This will include fire safety procedures. The Elders & Trustees will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.

Other groups on church premises

The Elders & Trustees will follow the requirements of our Letting's Policy in agreeing to any lettings.

Events

Where organised events happen on or off church premises the event organisers are responsible for ensuring they have permission from the E&T for the event and, where a Risk Assessment is required, are responsible for producing a Risk Assessment which should be agreed in advance and signed off by the Chair of Health and Safety and/or the Premises Director. The Lead Pastor is the contact person should an incident occur during an off-site event. Church Suite will be used for contact details for those attending as a temporary record in case of need and then destroyed afterwards.

6.2 Keeping Records: Registration and Attendance Records

Records of children and young people attending mid week church groups will be kept on registration forms. The information will include names, addresses, telephone numbers, date of birth, an emergency contact number and any medical/special needs information including allergies. Full registration forms are not used in groups where parent/carer remain on the premises with their children e.g. Footprints, Sunday Clubs. Weekly attendance records are kept and these include the names of leaders and helpers present.

A copy of an Annual Registration Form can be found at **Appendix 5** for Youth and Children. It is the responsibility of each leader to keep the attendance record of the children and young people with whom they work. If appropriate, any young adults (under 18's) who are included as helpers must also be included in the register. Children 'visiting' (e.g. with grandparents/friends, etc.) must be registered with name, responsible adult and emergency contact number if appropriate, and marked at the side as 'visitor'. Any unaccompanied children must be registered and marked at the side as 'unaccompanied'.

6.3 First Aid

There will be a First Aid kit for use by all groups positioned in the kitchen. It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Committee to ensure that this is checked and restocked as necessary at regular intervals. All leaders will be aware of the location of the First Aid kit.

The Health and Safety Executive recommend that:

1. The minimum First Aid provision for a visit is a suitably stocked first-aid box and a person appointed to be in charge of First Aid arrangements.
2. First Aid box contents comply with current advice.
3. All minibuses are required by law to carry a First Aid kit.
4. All accidents and incidents requiring first aid or the administration of medication will be recorded in accordance with the GFMC Health and Safety Policy
5. The Church Office will maintain an up to date list of qualified first aiders. Training will be updated every 3 years.
6. The Leader responsible for any outing should ensure a first aid kit is taken. A portable first aid kit is available, kept in the kitchen.

If possible, there will be a trained First Aider on hand and, in the event of an accident within a group at the time of a church service; assistance from other members of the congregation with the particular

expertise can be sought. Particular care will be taken about the storage and administration of any drugs or medication for children and young people. If it is necessary to administer drugs or medication to any child or young person, permission and instructions in writing will be asked for from the parent/carer, as will agreement to 'no liability' of the leaders. In no circumstances will drugs or medication be administered otherwise.

All accidents no matter how minor will be recorded in accordance with the GFMC Health and Safety Policy and be collated in the Church office by the Church Administrator, including details of those involved and treatment/action taken. Entries will be signed and dated.

If a child has an accident which requires professional medical treatment this should be reported to the Church Administrator. They should then decide whether or not the RIDDOR form needs to be completed and the phone number contacted. For further guidance please view the procedures on www.hse.gov.uk/riddor

6.4 Filming and taking photographs

At **GFMC**, photographic permission is given for Church purposes only, which means photographs and videos can be used only for specific church events or publications, i.e. those for which the Church has ultimate oversight and responsibility. Do not take personal photographs of young people in your care. Do not put any photographs of young people on social media, tag them or publish them anywhere on the web.

If film or photographs are to be taken it must be made clear why the image(s) or film is being used, what it will be used for and who might want to look at the pictures. Permission should be obtained before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded. However, it is perfectly acceptable to ask parents/carers to let the organisation know if they do NOT want their child photographed or filmed. This should be included on the annual registration forms for children and youth groups and for events..

In addition to this:

When using photographs of children and young people, use group pictures and never identify them by name or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.

Since the introduction of GDPR in 2018, organisations must be careful if they want to take photographs or film footage of people, and how images are used. This does not mean that photographs should not be taken or filming prohibited but there are certain protocols that must be followed to comply with data protection legislation as well as safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. For more information on Data Protection see our Data Protection Policy.

6:5 Social Media

It must be noted by all leaders that the less contact that is had via social media the safer it will be for both leader and child. The more openness and accountability that is exercised with others, the safer it will be for both leader and child. GFMC Safeguarding policy on the use of social media is:

- Avoid private messaging where possible unless there is a prearranged mentor relationship.
- Do not give out your phone number to vulnerable adults or children without the knowledge of another leader.
- Have another leader you are accountable to if you are in a situation where you are private messaging a vulnerable adult.

- If an under 18 needs to be contacted for any reason the leader may **only** do so with the permission of their parents. There should always be another leader or a parent in the group t
- The only exception to this is where there was a pre-existing relationship and phone numbers were exchanged when both/all parties were under the age of 18.
- Always speak to someone if there's an issue with yourself or someone else and do this immediately.
- Stay public and accountable - you should explain this to any vulnerable adult or child who wants to chat and message you.

If a child or young person wishes to contact a leader, communication may be done via the Church Office staff, who can pass on any messages while keeping contact details private.

Church email addresses are in place for each age group:

children@garstangFMC.org.uk

youth@garstangFMC.org.uk

lifegroups@garstangFMC.org.uk

seniors@garstangFMC.org.uk

Children:

- **No use of social media between children and leaders.**
- Leaders may use email to parents to inform of events.

Youth:

- Leaders may use email to parents to inform of events
- Youth also has an Instagram account used solely to publicise events and information, never for private messaging. **No other form of social media may be used.**

Vulnerable Adults:

- Vulnerable adults may be added to WhatsApp groups for the sake of general information. These are useful for groups to organise dates for meetings and get information out
- Always try to have more than one leader in any group chat
- WhatsApp Communities is better for GDPR compliance and controlling information

Accountability

On all social media, are you prepared for the responsibility of anyone and everyone seeing everything you do? This includes what you like and comment on, as well as your posts. If you are uncertain don't allow contact. If you choose to allow people to follow you then be prepared to be accountable to the team. Do not underestimate the importance of your influence over young people and vulnerable adults as an example of Christian living. Remember that social media has a legal age limit of 13 in most cases.

Social Media Abuse

Further detailed information on forms of social media abuse and procedure to follow should it come to your attention that a child or vulnerable adult has been subject to online abuse can be found in our Social Media Conduct Policy.

6:6 Staffing

For work with children/young people

Unless a parent/carer remain with their child e.g. creche, there must always be at least two leaders (aged over 18, DBS cleared) for any group, or if several smaller groups meet together in the same facilities e.g. Sunday Clubs and Footprints, the leadership team can use discretion in deciding how many leaders each smaller group needs. At no time will anyone under 18 years of age act as a leader, but, when appropriate, a person under 18 years of age may act as an assistant under the supervision of a recognised leader. Within all groups it is hoped to attract and recruit both male and female leaders, but with mixed groups for those young people over 10 years of age, the aim will be to ensure, when possible, that both a male and female leader is present.

At times when the numbers of leaders is unexpectedly low (e.g. leaders fail to turn up due to illness) the remaining leader(s) must, if necessary, change or reduce the activities planned in order to maintain control of the session. If possible a parent could be asked to stay in such an emergency or be asked to contact another recognised leader. Where it is either necessary or appropriate for a leader to work alone with a group or in a one-to-one situation (e.g. counselling or confidentiality); the arrangements must be reported to the Pastor and, where appropriate, be agreed with the parent/carer.

The following ratios (NSPCC 2024 guidelines) will be followed with all church groups:
(An adult is a DBS cleared person aged over 18)

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

In particular circumstances, such as vigorous sports, trips, group visits etc. the ratios may need to be higher. The group leaders will recruit additional helpers for such one-off situations. In order to cater for those children and young people with particular special needs and to provide adequate care and supervision, the leadership ratio will need to be higher, allowing, where possible and appropriate, individual carers. These will be agreed with the parent/carer.

For work with vulnerable adults

Those who act on behalf of the Church should not meet or work alone with vulnerable adults where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept, noting date, time and place of visit.

Each worker will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training. This should include that members of the caring ministry team should not handle cash for the person they are visiting. However, in circumstances where the visitor is put on the spot, for example asked to do some shopping for someone who is unwell, they should feel able to carry out this task but should make a written note and inform the pastor or team leader as soon as possible. Where an adult in our congregation needs help with toileting or other personal care, a care support plan would need to be drawn up and agreed. Additional training needs of each worker will be considered on a case by case basis (e.g. food hygiene, first aid)

6.7 Transport and Lifts

Children and Young People:

Where it is necessary to transport children and young people to activities, transport arrangements must be included on the Parental Consent Form (Appendix 5). Ideally, if cars are being used there should be another adult in the car as well as the driver. Seat belts must be worn at all times and it is the driver's responsibility to ensure that each passenger is provided with a seat belt. If it is not possible for another adult to travel in the car, the child/ren should sit in the back and the group could travel in convoy so that assistance is close at hand if necessary. Each driver is responsible for the insurance of his/her vehicle and must agree for its use for a group activity. Driver's must have a valid driving licence. Children must normally use a child car seat until they are 12 years old or 135cm, whichever comes first. The only exception to this is in a medical emergency.

It is not generally encouraged to give children lifts home as this is the responsibility of the parent/carer. If a child is awaiting a lift home there should always be two leaders present. However if for any reason it becomes in the best interests of the child to receive a lift home for their safety then it is advised that 2 leaders where possible should take the child home. If a leader in an emergency situation has to take a child home on their own for the child's safety, the child should sit in the back and the leader must inform another leader or a parent when they have left to take the child home, and inform of their safe arrival. The leader will be of the same sex of the young person where possible.

When a mini-bus is used it is important to ensure that seat belts are fitted and in use. At all times another adult must travel in the vehicle with the driver. The use of mini-buses is only allowed where drivers are suitably qualified and have a full clean driving license. All employed members of the Church must be insured on their car for business purposes if they are transporting children.

Vulnerable Adults

Private arrangements. For example, if an elderly person asks someone to shop for them as a regular thing or transport them to medical appointments, this is a private arrangement and does not involve church, even if they both attend. However, if the church asks people to be transporters to medical appointments or to a church meeting and this is part of your church role then you can have an enhanced DBS check but not a check against the barred list. The DBS check is only required if the activity takes place more than 4 times in 30 days, so giving someone a lift weekly would fall into this category but occasional lifts would not.

6:8 Praying with Children and Young People

Children are easily frightened and are very susceptible to suggestion. They may also be upset by shouting and may easily believe that they are bad, wicked or corrupt. A child must NEVER be shouted at or be told that they are demonized, possessed or oppressed by the devil, evil spirits, etc.

It is very important not to miss problems arising from behavioural issues, learning difficulties, mental health problems, copied or unconventional behaviours, which will usually be the cause of the child's difficulties.

Those praying must never pray with, or be on their own with, a child or young person in an unsupervised situation. Therefore, all prayer between children and young people should be in a public setting or if taking place in the prayer room, with the door propped open.

All prayer ministry with children and young people must take place under proper leadership supervision.

Leaders should pray with a person of the same sex where possible. If a leader is of the opposite sex the leader should not lay hands on the child.

If you are doing prayer with laying on of hands with a child, this child should be of the same sex where possible, and this must be done only with the permission of the child, and only with a light touch on the arm or shoulder of the child.

If you feel you have a word of knowledge for a child, please discuss this with a leader or parent prior to any discussion with the child.

6:9 Touch

Touch or physical contact between adults and children can be quite healthy and acceptable in public places but discouraged in circumstances where an adult and child are on their own.

Keep everything in public, a hug in public is acceptable but this is not acceptable behind closed doors.

Touch must be related to a child's needs and not the leaders. Touch must therefore be age appropriate and initiated by the child rather than the leader.

Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the child or adult.

Children are entitled to privacy to ensure their personal dignity.

Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances, for example personal safety or to prevent serious harm.

When giving first aid, encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.

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

If a child initiates unusual levels of physical contact it is appropriate to gently deflect this so that contact then becomes appropriate. If this persists discuss this with a leader.

Concerns about abuse must always be reported to a suitable person.

6:10 Behaviour Management

It is reasonable for leaders to expect children and young people to show respect in the way they speak to and treat each other and the leaders, in sitting still and listening where appropriate, and in following instructions and joining in with activities.

We need to take into account the age of the children and young people we are working with. Expecting a child to sit still and listen quietly for more than a couple of minutes may be reasonable if the child is ten. It is not reasonable if they are two years old! Bored children are much more likely to misbehave – think about the programme and make sure it is suitable and appealing for your group.

Our discipline policy must aim to encourage and build up our children and young people. At the same time, we must remember that the children and young people themselves will have a better experience if they participate appropriately. This will sometimes mean being firm in requiring children or young people to follow the rules of the group.

It is unacceptable to physically reprimand a child. However, reasonable restraint may be used in the event of a child's uncontrolled behaviour placing themselves or others at risk of harm.

Disruptive children.

- Take the child aside and give them a warning – be clear what your expectations are and what consequences will follow if they are not met. A child who does not know the rules cannot be blamed for breaking them.
- If disruptive behaviour continues, give the child a “time-out” where they sit at the side of the room for a few minutes (the length of time can vary according to the child’s age). This is to give the child time to calm down and realise that their actions have consequences. At no point must a child be left in a separate room alone or humiliated in front of the other children.
- Remind the child how they must behave and return them to the group
- If disruptive behaviour still continues, warn the child that you will have to tell their parents. If they then continue to misbehave you MUST talk to parents about their behaviour as discipline consequences need to be acted upon if they are to carry weight
- As a last resort contact a child’s parents to come and collect them early, or contact a steward who will return the child to church
- In **exceptional** circumstances, parents may be requested not to bring the child to the next session. In the event of a longer break being thought necessary, a consultation with the safeguarding lead or pastor and a meeting with parents would be needed.

Group leaders are responsible for deciding, with the Children’s Director, what is and isn’t acceptable behaviour in their group context and making this clear to all leaders and children in the group. It may be that individual children have particular needs which mean that their behaviour must be handled differently – speak to the Children’s Director for advice.

Teenagers – Further Guidelines

Discipline issues with this age group are often based around respect – for buildings, other group members and leaders - and safety issues. Young people are generally able to understand these issues, and hence discipline becomes about explaining and calling them to account for not upholding these values.

Group leaders are responsible for deciding, with the Youth Director, what these values are and what is and isn’t acceptable behaviour in their group context. Including teenagers themselves in value-setting and rule-making can bring a greater ownership of these values and make calling them to account easier. Any discipline consequences need to be acted upon if they are to carry weight, so be sensible about what you promise!

Often, a firm and quiet ‘word’ with a young person that appeals to their understanding of the group values and safety risks will do, but occasionally other measures may be necessary. Removal of privileges for the young person or group as a whole, e.g. no tuck shop, can help quell general rowdiness. At certain times, it may be necessary to warn young people that the continued behaviour may result in a word with their parents / carers, and there may be cases where young people need to be removed from the group for the rest of the session and parents / carers called to collect the young people early. In exceptional cases, young people can be banned from a group for a session. In the event of a longer break being though necessary, a consultation with the safeguarding lead or pastor would be needed.

Youth Code of Conduct can be found in **Appendix 5**. This will be given to young people and parents at the beginning of the year and needs to be signed and returned as a condition of membership

Appendix 1

Definitions of abuse to a child

Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect.

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. Physical abuse can be either intentional or unintentional.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. vaginal, anal or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. It also includes when a child uses another child for sexual gratification or excitement.

Emotional/Psychological 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 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 causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Please note some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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 and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Spiritual Abuse

Any attempt to exert power and control over someone using religion, faith, or beliefs can be spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse can happen within a religious organisation or a personal relationship. Spiritual abuse is not limited to one religion, denomination, or group of people. Spiritual Abuse is not a separate category of abuse but is a form of psychological and emotional abuse. It is important when discussing such cases with statutory agencies to be clear that spiritual abuse is a form of

psychological and emotional abuse within a religious context. Also be aware within a church setting if the offender is part of the organisation spiritual language can be used to 'justify' or attempt to 'legitimate' inappropriate behaviour or manipulate another person. A child may not be aware of spiritual abuse because they are taught to believe and trust their elders and leaders.

Signs of Abuse to a child

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

Physical

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

Sexual

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

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-needing behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment
- Failure to grow
- Constant hunger
- Stealing or gorging food
- Untreated illnesses
- Inadequate care

* These also indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 220,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year

Definition of Abuse to Adults

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to a number of factors: 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 vulnerable person 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'.

Physical Abuse

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negate 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.

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 the use of coercion resulting in the individual giving coerced consent and forcing an adult into prostitution due to circumstance.

Domestic Abuse

Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. Domestic abuse can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, spiritual and emotional abuse, it can also include so called 'honour based' violence.

Neglect or Acts of Omission

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the vulnerable adult needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the vulnerable adult or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general well being or development is impaired.

Neglect can also occur when an individual fails to care for themselves when they are deemed capable of living independently. Certain difficulties such as grief or depression etc can increase the chances of an individual engaging in self-neglect.

Discriminatory Abuse

This is the inappropriate treatment of a vulnerable 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.

Organisational Abuse

This is the mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable 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.

Financial or Material Abuse

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.

Spiritual Abuse

Any attempt to exert power and control over someone using religion, faith, or beliefs can be spiritual abuse. Spiritual abuse can happen within a religious organisation or a personal relationship. Spiritual abuse is not limited to one religion, denomination, or group of people. Spiritual Abuse is not a separate category of abuse but is a form of psychological and emotional abuse. It is important when discussing such cases with statutory agencies to be clear that spiritual abuse is a form of psychological and emotional abuse within a religious context. Also be aware within a church setting if the offender is part of the organisation spiritual language can be used to 'justify' or attempt to 'legitimate' inappropriate behaviour or manipulate another person.

Signs of Abuse to an Adult

Physical

- No explanation or inconsistent explanation
- Injuries that are inconsistent with lifestyle
- Bruising, cuts, welts, burns or other marks on the body
- Clumps of missing hair
- Change of behaviour in the presence of particular people/person
- Signs of malnutrition
- Failure to seek medical treatment or regular changes of GP

Emotional

- Disturbed sleep or insomnia
- Change in appetite
- Lack of confidence or low self-esteem
- Signs of distress such as anger or tearfulness
- Keeping quiet or change in behaviour when a particular person/people are present

Sexual

- Pain, sores and bruising around the inner thighs, genital, anal or breast areas.
- Blood stained underwear
- Pain or discomfort when walking or sitting
- STI's or repeated water infections and pregnancy can be indicators if the person does not have capacity to consent to sexual activity

Domestic Abuse

- Low self esteem
- Feeling that abuse is their fault
- Physical evidence
- Verbal abuse or humiliation in front of others
- Fear of intervention
- Damage to home or property

- Isolation
- Limited access to money
- Absence of visitors

Neglect

- Hunger or dehydration
- Verbal abuse or disrespect
- Poor physical hygiene or appearance
- Inadequate provision of social, educational, recreational activities
- Bedsores or ulcers
- Dirty clothing or bedding
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss

Discriminatory Abuse

- Someone not receiving the same level of service as someone else
- Withdrawn or isolated
- Unexplained expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- Exclusion of people from services or activities
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction

Organisational Abuse

- Inadequate staffing
- Public discussion of personal matters
- Untreated injuries or medical problems
- Personal possessions going missing
- Not having enough food or clothing
- Communal use of personal items or lack of clothing or possessions
- Lack of flexibility or choice
- Wrong dosage of medication

Financial Abuse

- Loss of assets and proceeds being unaccounted for
- Bills not being paid when they usually are
- Expenditure being higher than the living conditions and lifestyle would suggest
- Unexplained withdrawal of money

Spiritual Abuse

- Ridiculing or insulting the other person's religious or spiritual beliefs
- Preventing the other partner from practising their religious or spiritual beliefs
- Using their partner's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate or shame them
- Forcing the children to be raised in a faith that the other partner has not agreed to or does not want
- Use of religious texts or beliefs to minimise or rationalise abusive behaviours (such as physical, financial, emotional or sexual abuse/marital rape)

Appendix 2 Garstang Free Methodist Church

Safeguarding Concern or Incident Report

Report Details

Date report made: _____

Reported by (name & role): _____

Person Involved in Incident

Full name: _____

Date of birth (DOB): _____

Address:

Family situation / relevant background:

Incident Details

Date and time of incident: _____

Location of incident: _____

Details of incident:

(Please state facts only — avoid opinions, assumptions, or interpretations. Use the exact words of the child/young person where possible.)

Actions Taken

- Spoken to group leader
- Contacted parents/carers
- Spoken to safeguarding lead
- Spoken to pastor
- Other (specify): _____

Actions to Be Taken / Follow-Up Required

- Ongoing monitoring of situation
- Contact parents/carers
- Seek advice from (specify): _____
- Referral to an organisation (specify): _____
- Other (specify): _____

Further Comments / Views of the Incident

Signed:

Leader entering this report: _____

Signature: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

Date record filed: _____

Need Help or Advice?

If you need help completing this form or guidance on next steps, contact:

Role	Name	Contact
Safeguarding Lead (GFMC)	Paula Wells	07969 125 771
Children Safeguarding Adviser	Mary-Jayne Carter	07736 315 374
Deputy Safeguarding Leads		Church email

Notes

This *Record of Concern* is for use by all staff and volunteers.

Printed copies are available in the **Safeguarding File** (Church Office) or can be completed **digitally**.

Guidance Notes for Completing This Form (Staff & Volunteers Only)

The church organisation has a duty of care under *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)* and the *Care Act (2014)*.

Key principles when recording information:

- **Do not investigate** or ask leading questions.
- **Make notes within one hour** of the disclosure or observation.
- **Be clear and factual** – avoid giving your opinion, feelings or assumptions.
- Use the **4 Ws and 1 H**: *When, Where, What, Why, and How*.
- Share this information **only** with your **safeguarding coordinator** in the first instance.
- Use the “Additional Information” section to note relevant background, historic concerns, or context.

Safeguarding Concerns Include:

Any incident causing or likely to cause **significant harm** to a child or vulnerable adult.

- *Children:* Physical, Sexual, Emotional, or Neglect.
- *Adults:* Additional categories may apply (see policy).

Include household information – it has been demonstrated as important to include information about significant adults in the household especially when concerns relate to children as this has been a recurrent risk factor in several serious case reviews.

Record the child/adult's own words or views to provide context and assess plausibility

Pass on information to the Safeguarding Lead – They hold ultimate responsibility in responding to any safeguarding concerns within our church therefore it is important that they have oversight of the actions being taken and make relevant and appropriate contact with statutory agencies if required. They are the most appropriate link between the organisation and external agencies.

Guidance Notes – Part 2 (For Safeguarding Lead & Deputy)**Consent Considerations:**

- For **children**, parental consent is needed before referring externally, **unless** it increases risk.
- For **adults**, consent is required before reporting unless lacking mental capacity or at risk of harm.
- Always seek advice from local authority social services if unsure.

Initial Assessment:

Record the category of concern and any external advice received (e.g., from school, ThirtyOne:Eight, CEOP, etc.).

Overview of Actions:

Summarise actions taken so far, responsible individuals, and any ongoing monitoring or pastoral care activities.

Appendix 3

Procedure and Allegation Processes

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child: Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse

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

1. Contact Children's Social Services (or safeguarding body) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
2. Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
3. Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
4. 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.
5. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services directly for advice.
6. Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse (including female genital mutilation otherwise known as FGM), the Safeguarding Lead will:

1. Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
2. Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

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

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will:

1. Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
2. 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, Safeguarding Lead will:

1. Identify support services for the victim i.e., counselling or other pastoral support
2. Contact ThirtyOne:Eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people:

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

1. Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
2. 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.
3. 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.

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

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

1. Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
2. 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 make, not the church.

Appendix 4a Garstang Free Methodist Church

Confidential Application and References Form

Children & Youth

This form is for volunteer leaders who are likely to be in regular and direct contact with children and young people under the age of eighteen. This includes all Kids Klub, Connect, Youth and Sunday Club and Footprint leaders and the overall leader for Creche and Toddle In. Helpers, those who will not take charge of planning and leading and will always work under supervision of leaders, are not required to complete an application form but will need to complete a DBS.

This form is strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law, will only be seen by those responsible for the appointment, and when appropriate, the child protection adviser. All forms will be kept securely under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any subsequent legislation.

Position applied for:

Please enter your personal details here.

Title

Forename(s)

Surname.....

Address

Town

Post Code

Telephone

Email

1. What previous experience do you have of looking after or working with children and young people Please express your reasons for wishing to do so.
2. Do you have a relevant qualification or undertaken appropriate training?
If yes, please give details.
3. Are you willing to ask for and receive training, instruction or advice in children's and young people's work / adult care and support if you need it? Yes / No

4. If you are applying for a role with children and young people do you believe you can provide warm and consistent care for children and young people? Yes / No

5. Will you, to the best of your ability, respect the background and culture of children in your care Yes / No

6. Are you committed to treating all children and young people as individuals and with equal concern? Yes / No

7. To your knowledge, has it ever been alleged that your conduct has resulted in any harm to a child in your care or an adult at risk? Yes / No

If yes, please give details, including the dates(s) and nature of the conduct, or alleged conduct, and whether you were dismissed, disciplined, moved to other work or resigned from any paid or voluntary work as a result

8. Have you any health problem(s) which might affect your work with children or young people under the age of eighteen? Yes / No

I have been regular in attendance at GFMC for 3 or more years Yes / No*

*If yes, you have been attending GFMC for 3 years or more, please now complete the form by signing and dating below and returning it to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, details below.

*If no you have been attending GFMC for less than 3 years, then 2 personal references are required to support your application. Please complete the additional reference form and return it with your signed and dated application form.

Declaration

I declare that all the information on this form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I agree to provide all necessary information in order for the church to obtain a DBS Certificate if required.

Signed Date:.....

Please return to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy in person or in a sealed envelope marked for their attention to the church office at the following address:

CONFIDENTIAL
Garstang Free Methodist Church,
Windsor Road, Garstang, Preston, Lancashire PR3 1ED

*GFMC will only retain and process information to which GFMC has a legitimate interest.
GFMC will not divulge Personal Information to a third party unless that party has a legal right to the information. Our Data Protection Policy is available to view on request.*

References in support of an application

Please provide the names and addresses of two unrelated people who have known you for at least two years who would be able to provide a personal reference.

Once completed, please return this form with your completed, signed and dated application form.

Referee 1

Title

First name

Surname

Address

Town

Post Code

Tel No

Email

Referee 2

Title

First name

Surname

Address

Town

Post Code

Tel No

Signe

Appendix 4b Garstang Free Methodist Church

Confidential Application and References Form Adults

This form is for volunteer leaders who are likely to be in regular and direct contact with adults including vulnerable adults. Helpers, those who will not take charge of planning and leading and will always work under supervision of leaders, are not required to complete an application form but may need to complete a DBS.

This form is strictly confidential and, except under compulsion of law, will only be seen by those responsible for the appointment, and when appropriate, the Safeguarding protection adviser. All forms will be kept securely under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any subsequent legislation.

Position applied for:

Please enter your personal details here.

Title

Forename(s)

Surname.....

Address

Town

Post Code

Telephone

Email

1. What previous experience do you have of looking after or working with adults/vulnerable adults?. Please express your reasons for wishing to do so at GFMC.
2. Do you have a relevant qualification or undertaken appropriate training?
If yes, please give details.
3. Are you willing to ask for and receive training, instruction or advice Yes / No

4. To your knowledge, has it ever been alleged that your conduct has resulted in any harm to a child in your care or a vulnerable adult? Yes / No

If yes, please give details, including the dates(s) and nature of the conduct, or alleged conduct, and whether you were dismissed, disciplined, moved to other work or resigned from any paid or voluntary work as a result (continue overleaf if required)

5. Have you any health problem(s) which might affect your work with adults / vulnerable adults? Yes / No
(give details overleaf if required)

I have been regular in attendance at GFMC for 3 or more years Yes / No*

*If yes, you have been attending GFMC for 3 years or more, please now complete the form by signing and dating below and returning it to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy, details below.

*If no you have been attending GFMC for less than 3 years, then 2 personal references are required to support your application. Please complete the additional reference form and return it with your signed and dated application form.

Declaration

I declare that all the information on this form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I agree to provide all necessary information in order for the church to obtain a DBS Certificate if required.

Signed Date:.....

Please return to the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy in person or in a sealed envelope marked for their attention to the church office at the following address:

CONFIDENTIAL
Garstang Free Methodist Church
Windsor Road
Garstang
Preston
Lancashire
PR3 1ED

*GFMC will only retain and process information to which GFMC has a legitimate interest.
GFMC will not divulge Personal Information to a third party unless that party has a legal right to the information. Our Data Protection Policy is available to view on request.*

References in support of an application

Please provide the names and addresses of two unrelated people who have known you for at least two years who would be able to provide a personal reference.

Once completed, please return this form with your completed, signed and dated application form.

Referee 1

Title

First name _____ Surname _____

Address

Town Post Code

Tel No

Email

Referee 2

Title

First name _____ Surname _____

Address

Town Post Code

Tel No

Email

Signed

Date

Appendix 4c



Garstang Free Methodist Church

Request for Reference

Date: [Insert date]

Dear [Referee's Name],

CONFIDENTIAL

[Insert Applicant's Name] has kindly volunteered to join the **Children's Team** at Garstang Free Methodist Church.

You have been named as a referee, and we would greatly appreciate your comments on their suitability for this role. The welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults is of the utmost importance to us. As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, we are required to seek references for all individuals—paid or voluntary—who work with these groups within the church.

Please could you complete and return the attached reference form at your earliest convenience. You may respond by **email** or **post**, according to your preference.

- **Email responses** should be sent to: **Pastor Andy Woof** — andy@garstangfmc.org.uk
- **Postal responses** may be sent to: [Insert postal address]

All information provided will be treated with the strictest confidence. However, please note that under data protection legislation, an applicant has the right to request access to their reference.

Thank you for taking the time to assist us in ensuring that Garstang Free Methodist Church remains a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Yours sincerely,

Children and Young People's Ministry
Garstang Free Methodist Church

Appendix 4d Garstang Free Methodist Church

Checklist for Safer Recruitment of New Leaders

Volunteer

Ministry Leader/ Leader.....

All adults taking on new roles with the possibility of access to under 18s or to vulnerable adults will be required to comply with the Church's appointments procedure.

All leaders require an application form and DBS and may require references (see application forms in Appendix 1a and 1b).

Helpers do not require application forms as they will always work under supervision, but may require DBS (Group leader to confirm with DBS Lead recruiter)

It is the responsibility of the person recruiting (referred to as "Group leader") to follow this procedure and make sure that a volunteer does not assume a leadership role until this procedure is completed.

Task	Date Completed	Initials
1. Informal interview Following an expression of interest, Group leader has brief informal interview with volunteer in which they: i). Set out the vision of the team for which they are applying ii) Inform them what is expected of both leader and volunteer including reference to the GFM Safeguarding Policy iii). Follows the procedure for DBS, Application forms and References		
2. DBS procedure The Group leader confirms with the DBS lead recruiter whether a DBS is required. If required the Group leader: i) Informs the DBS Lead Recruiter of the name of the prospective volunteer who will be contacting them for a DBS check ii) Informs the volunteer of the contact details of the DBS Lead Recruiter and explains that he/she must contact the DBS Lead Recruiter and arrange for a DBS check.		

<p>iii) The DBS Lead Recruiter informs the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy of the outcome of the DBS application who then informs the Group Leader.</p> <p>If satisfactory the volunteer is then able to begin working unsupervised with children and / or adults with care and support needs and is informed of the six month probation period by the Group Leader. In the event of a blemished DBS follow procedure in Appendix 4</p>		
<p>3. Application procedure</p> <p>If required, the Group leader:</p> <p>i) Gives the volunteer the relevant application form (Appendix 4)</p> <p>ii) The completed application form is received back, checked and signed by the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy and securely filed.</p>		
<p>4 References.</p> <p>If references are required (if applicant has not been a regular attender at GFMC for at least 3 years) then the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy:</p> <p>i) Applies for the two personal references using the proforma reference request letter in Appendix 4 with any additions or deletions needed to personalise</p> <p>ii) Informs the Group Leader when satisfactory references have been received</p> <p>iii) Securely files the references</p>		
<p>PLEASE NOTE References (if required) and DBS (if required) must be received and verified as satisfactory within 3 months</p>		
<p>When the 6 month probation period is passed, and both leader and volunteer are satisfied, the volunteer is then clear to work until their DBS form needs renewing in three years time.</p>		

Appendix 4e Thirtyone:eight - Blemished Disclosures Advice

What is a Blemished Disclosure?

When the applicant has received the DBS/relevant criminal records certificate. This will mean that there is either a caution or conviction/s listed on the certificate or notes on the certificate where a concern has been raised. It is possible that when the applicant applied and completed a self-declaration form they disclosed previous convictions or cautions and therefore the Lead Recruiter will be aware at an early stage that there is a concern.

Why action is needed.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Recruiter to see and review the certificate and the information contained on it because it may mean that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children and/or adults.

How to take action.

The individual should have completed a self-declaration form. It is important to compare what information was provided on the form with what information is given on the disclosure so the honesty and integrity of the individual can be ascertained. If the person hasn't completed an application and self-declaration form it is difficult to ascertain whether they deliberately chose not to disclose information in the hope that it wouldn't appear on the certificate.

If the applicant is on the 'Barred List' and has applied for a position, they should not in any circumstance be allowed to undertake a role working with children or adults at risk of harm. If this situation arises the organisation should contact the CCPAS Helpline or statutory agencies and seek advice.

NB - if an individual believes the information on the disclosure is inaccurate they have redress through the DBS/SCRO and Access NI disputes system.

In order to help the organisation make a decision as to whether the applicant is suitable for the position a risk assessment should be completed. You may have to meet with the applicant to answer some of these questions. Any risk assessment based on a blemished disclosure should cover the following:

The nature of the post/position

- Does the role involve 'one to one' contact with children or adults at risk and are there long periods where the person is unsupervised? NB: Drivers by virtue of the post are likely to have one to one contact.
- How much supervision will be given for the post?
- Does the post involve providing any personal or intimate care?
- Does the post involve any direct responsibility for finances?

Information contained on the disclosure

- Has the individual committed a criminal offence, and how serious was this? An indication can be seen with the name of the offence, and disposal at court- though this isn't always the case.
- The length of time since the offence was committed.
- Was the offence committed whilst the individual was a juvenile?
- Has the offence been decriminalised by parliament, or been re-classified?
- Where was the offence committed? (Some activities are offences in some parts of the UK, whilst not in others).
- How relevant is the offence to others safety, (this can include certain driving offences, drug related offences as well as those of a sexual or violent nature)?
- Is there a pattern of offending, or an escalation of offending?

Appendix 5a Garstang Free Methodist Church

Registration & Consent Form

for Regular Youth Group Meetings

Please complete this form in full and return it to the **Garstang Free Methodist Church Office** or the **Youth Leader**.

Date Completed: _____

YOUR CHILD'S DETAILS

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

School Year: _____ **School / College:** _____

YOUR DETAILS (Parent / Guardian)

Name: _____ **Relationship to Child:** _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Mobile No: _____ **Home No:** _____

Work No: _____ **Email:** _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Please provide **two alternative contact numbers** to those listed above.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Contact Number 1: _____

Contact Number 2: _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION

GP's Name: _____
Address: _____

Postcode: _____
Phone No: _____

Does your child suffer from any medical condition requiring medical treatment (including medication)?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide details:

Is your child allergic or sensitive to any medication, insect bites, food, plasters, or anything else?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide details:

Is your child taking any form of medication on a regular basis?

Yes No

If Yes, please give full details (type of medication and dosage):

Does your child have any special dietary needs?

Is there anything else the group leaders should be aware of?

(e.g., special educational needs, family circumstances, etc.)

MEDICAL CONSENT

I agree to my child being given any medical, surgical, or dental treatment, including general anaesthetic and blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present.

INSURANCE COVER

I understand that the group is insured in respect of legal liabilities (third party liability), but that my child has no personal accident cover unless specifically advised otherwise in writing by the organiser. I also understand that any extension of insurance cover is my responsibility.

DECLARATION

I consent to my child, named on this form, taking part in youth activities at Garstang Free Methodist Church.

I declare that they are in good health and physically able to participate in all activities, other than what I have declared above.

Photos & Videos of children (unnamed) may be used for GFMC communication purposes from time to time.

Please tick if you **DO NOT consent** to the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> Church internal notice boards Photos	<input type="checkbox"/> Church internal notice boards Videos
<input type="checkbox"/> Church website Photos	<input type="checkbox"/> Church website Videos
<input type="checkbox"/> Church AV presentations Photos	<input type="checkbox"/> Church AV presentations Videos

I am aware of the levels of insurance cover.

I am aware that I am responsible for the arrival and collection of my child at group meeting times.

I will ensure that any changes in circumstances are notified to the organiser.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Data Protection Notice

Garstang Free Methodist Church (GFMC) will only retain and process information to which it has a legitimate interest. GFMC will not divulge personal information to a third party unless that party has a legal right to the information.

Our Data Protection Policy is available to view on request.

Youth Code of Conduct

All attendees must follow these rules. Failure to do so may result in a strike or a temporary/permanent ban.

1. **Respect** – Show respect to leaders and other members. Respect others' beliefs and be considerate during talks.
2. **Language** – Refrain from using swear words or expressions such as "oh my God."
3. **Behaviour Towards Others** – No harassment, intimidation, or bullying.
4. **Illegal Substances** – Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, nicotine, or any illegal substances are strictly prohibited.
5. **Weapons** – Possession of weapons (e.g., pocket knives, lighters) is not permitted.
6. **Property** – Respect church property inside and outside. Remain on the premises during Youth hours (20:00–21:30).
7. **Social Media** – Do not take or share photos/videos/recordings of leaders or members without consent.

Possible Consequences:

- Conversation with Youth Leader
- Conversation with Parent/Guardian
- Being sent home (parent/guardian contacted)
- Suspension from Youth

Youth Leaders' Code of Conduct

1. Respect all Youth members and leaders at all times.
2. Follow instructions from the designated *Responsible Person*.
3. Only play music with clean lyrics and appropriate content.
4. Act in the best interests of Youth members, ensuring safety and security throughout meetings.
5. Be familiar with the *Garstang Free Methodist Church Safeguarding Policy*.
6. Fulfil assigned roles and complete any necessary preparation for Youth meetings.

Appendix 5b Garstang Free Methodist Church

Parental / Carer Registration & Consent Form

for Regular **CHILDREN** Group Meetings

*Please complete this form in full and return it to the
Garstang Free Methodist Church Office or the group leader*

Date Completed: _____

<i>Please tick the groups your child will attend during the academic year</i>	Sunday Church groups <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Clubs <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Creche <input type="checkbox"/> Footprints	Midweek groups <input type="checkbox"/> Kids Klub <input type="checkbox"/> Connect <i>Children come to Toddle In with their parents or carers – those groups have a separate registration system.</i>
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SECTION A – YOUR CHILD'S DETAILS

Your child's name _____

Child's date of birth _____

Their home address _____

Postcode _____ Home tel. no. _____

School Year _____ School/Nursery _____

SECTION B – YOUR DETAILS

Your name(s) as parents/guardians _____

Your relationship to the child _____

Mobile no. _____ Work no. _____

Email. _____

EMERGENCY DETAILS

- a) I agree to my child being given any medical, surgical or dental treatment, including general anaesthetic and blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present.
- b) I may be contacted by telephoning the no(s) given on page 1, or the following no(s)

My address (if different to child's) _____

- c) Please state an alternative contact point

Name of contact _____

Address of contact _____

Telephone no(s) _____

- d) Family Doctor (name) _____ Doctor's phone no _____

Doctor's surgery address _____

2. MEDICAL INFORMATION

Does your child suffer from any condition requiring

medical treatment, including medication?

Yes/no

If YES, please provide details _____

Is your child allergic or sensitive to any medication (eg penicillin)

insect bites, food, plasters or anything else?

Yes/no

If YES, please provide details _____

Is your child taking any form of medication on a regular basis? Yes/no

If YES, please give full details, indicating the type of medication and dosage.

Do you give your consent to this medication being administered to your child? Yes/no

Please ensure that you supply adequate supplies of medication and dosage to the person in charge,

Does your child have any special dietary needs? _____

Is there anything else the group leaders must be aware of, eg any special educational needs, family circumstances etc?

INSURANCE COVER

I understand that the group is insured in respect of legal liabilities (third party liability) but that my child has no personal accident cover unless I have been specifically advised of this in writing by the organiser, I also understand that any extension of insurance cover is my responsibility

3. DECLARATION

I consent to my child, named on this form, taking part in such activities and declare my child to be in good health and physically able to participate in all activities, other than what I have already declared.

Photos & Videos of children (unnamed) may be used for GFMC communication purposes from time to time.

Please tick if you **DO NOT consent** to the following:

- Church internal notice boards Photos
- Church website Photos
- Church AV presentations Photos

- Church internal notice boards Videos
- Church website Videos
- Church AV presentations Videos

I am aware of the levels of insurance cover. I am aware that I am responsible for the arrival and collection of my child at the group meeting times. I will ensure that any change in the circumstances will be notified to the organiser.

Signature of Parent / Carer _____

Date _____

Name in block letters _____

PRIVACY STATEMENT

GFMC will only retain and process information to which GFMC has a legitimate interest. GFMC will not divulge Personal Information to a third party unless that party has a legal right to the information. Our Data Protection Policy is available to view on request.

Appendix 5c Garstang Free Methodist Church

Parental / Carer Consent Form for OFF SITE and NON-REGULAR Activities

Please complete this form in full and return it to one of the youth leaders at
Garstang Free Methodist Church

Outing/event:	Named trained first aiders are:	Named drivers are:
SECTION A – YOUR CHILD'S DETAILS		
Your child's name		
Child's date of birth		
Their home address		
Postcode	Telephone no	
Any significant changes since the annual registration form was completed Any further information that may be relevant for this specific trip; _____ _____		
SECTION B – YOUR DETAILS		
Your name(s) as parents/guardians		
Your relationship to the child		
Emergency Contact Details 1)		
2)		
I hereby consent to the above mentioned child to take part in this activity		
Signed	Date	
<i>GFMC will only retain and process information to which GFMC has a legitimate interest. GFMC will not divulge Personal Information to a third party unless that party has a legal right to the information. Our Data Protection Policy is available to view on request.</i>		

Appendix 6

Get Help

Thirtyone:eight (Safeguarding Advisory Organisation):

PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ

Tel: 0303 003 1111 Email: info@thirtyoneeight.org

Local Authority children: 0300 123 8720 Adults: 0300 123 6721

Local Authority duty team 0300 123 6722 (children & adults)

Police Tel: 101

Outside agencies:

NSPCC Helpline- 0808 800 5000

Refuge Helpline (Domestic Violence)- 08082000247

Childline- 08001111

Association for Post-Natal Illness Helpline- 020 7386 0868

Samaritans- 116 123

Shout- Crisis Text line- Text SHOUT to 85258

Papyrus Young Person having thoughts of suicide Helpline 0800 068 4141

Text 882 247 Email: put@papyrus-uk.org