



Trinity Community Church

Safeguarding Policy, 2025

Measures taken by Trinity Community Church to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of children, young people & adults at risk, and allow them to be free from abuse, harm & neglect whilst engaging in the life of the church.

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Section 1: Introduction

1. Church details

Name: Trinity Community Church (TCC) Hinckley

Location: 61 Stockwell Head, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1RD

Email: office@tcchinckley.org

Web: www.tcchinckley.org

Charity Number: 1132149

Company Number: 07001529

Affiliated to FIEC (Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches)

Insurance policy: Ansvar CHP CHP2323657

2. Purpose of this policy and procedures

This is an important document for our church to ensure safeguarding is at the very heart of our service and activities. It reflects the safeguarding needs of the children, young people and adults at risk whom we minister to within our church, to allow all to be free from abuse, harm and neglect whilst engaging in the life of the church.

The procedures set out in this document are for everyone who is connected with our church right from a first time visitor to a member of staff. It may have more relevance to those who have regular contact with children, young people and adult at risk of harm, but is written to be clear and accessible to all who may have concerns or hear allegations of, or uncover, evidence of abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk who is connected with TCC. We want all connected with TCC to know what to do and who to raise such concerns with and what steps will be taken to investigate and notify all relevant authorities.

3. Summary of useful information

Report all concerns, disclosures, allegations and evidence of abuse about a child, young person or adult at risk of harm to the designated Safeguarding Coordinator within 24 hours.

Write notes as soon as possible (e.g. within an hour), writing down as exactly as possible what was said or seen, putting the scene into context and giving the time and location.

Abuse often takes the form of physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect and there are usually different signs and indicators of such abuse that might be a cause for concern.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of children, young people and adults at risk, to allow them to be free from abuse, harm & neglect.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to health or development
- ensuring children, young people and adults at risk of harm grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children, young people and adults at risk of harm to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.

Guiding principles of safeguarding

All Elders, Staff members, Ministry Leaders and Helpers with specific responsibilities for working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm within the church should:-

1. Listen to and respect what children, young people and adult at risk of harm have to say
2. Pay attention to their writings and drawings
3. Observe children's general demeanour, appearance, attitudes, relationships, etc.
4. Listen to what their parents and other adults have to say
5. Attend an annual child protection training event which will remind of the key issues and responsibilities

5. Policy statement

The purpose of this policy statement is:

To protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm who are part of or are connected to or receive help from TCC - whether their connection to TCC is their own, or through their parents or guardians.

To provide staff, Ministry Leaders, and Helpers, as well as children, young people and their families, and adults at risk of harm, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding.

This policy applies to anyone working or serving on behalf of TCC, whether paid members of staff, elders, trustees, ministry leaders, helpers, interns and and young helpers.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/england>.

TCC have adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with the statutory guidance available at the link above.

6. Scope

This policy relates to all activities of the church.

This policy provides a framework to manage the Safeguarding aspects of the church proactively and ensure that control measures and actions are applied to enable the Church to flourish and develop as God enables it.

We believe that:

- Children, young people and adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk, to keep them safe and protect them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. All have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children, young people and adults at risk of harm are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, adults at risk of harm, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting their welfare.

We will seek to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a nominated safeguarding lead for children, young people and adults at risk of harm (our Safeguarding Coordinator), a Deputy and by being members of Thirtyone:eight who are available for external safeguarding advice.
- Adopting safeguarding best practice through this policy/procedures.
- Providing effective management for staff and Ministry Leaders and Helpers through supervision, support, and training so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow this policy/procedures confidently and competently.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and Ministry Leaders and Helpers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/fororganisations]
- Where possible, sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children, young people and their families
- Making sure that children, young people and adults at risk of harm and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, adults at risk of harm, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against Staff, Elders, Ministry Leaders and Helpers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, adults at risk of harm, Staff, Ministry Leaders and Helpers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where Staff, Ministry Leaders, Helpers, children, young people, adults at risk of harm and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

7. Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure the adoption and regular review of systems and procedures to manage and improve the effective operation of the church by identifying and responding to Safeguarding issues wherever possible.

8. Terminology

Throughout the policy certain terminology will be used. The following is a list of the terms in frequent use and a brief summary of what they mean.

Adult at risk (Vulnerable adult) – A person aged 18 years or over who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Child (Children) – A person age 17 or younger. A person under the age of 18 (by definition of the Children's act 1989).

Church (The Church) – Trinity Community Church (TCC) Hinckley

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) – A government agency concerned with preventing unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is the person who should be notified when it has been alleged that a professional or volunteer who works with children has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she or he may pose a risk of harm to children; behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicated they may not be suitable to work with children.

Elders / Leadership – The group of people who are in overall charge of Church affairs.

Event – An activity that may involve children or adults at risk.

Helper or Volunteer – an individual engaged in an activity which involves spending time on an activity, for and/or on behalf of the church, for which they are unpaid (except for travel and other approved out of pocket expenses). They do not have a contract and must not be a substitute for an employee.

Members - this is a regular attendee of the church but who does not serve in the capacity of a Ministry Leader or Helper, working regularly with children or adults at risk of harm within the church.

Ministry Leader - A person who leads and oversees a small group of Helpers (or Volunteers) working with children or adults at risk.

Parent – The person who has legal responsibility for a child be this a parent, guardian or otherwise.

Safeguarding - Safeguarding is the action that is taken by TCC to promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

Safeguarding Team – A group of church members to whom the elders have delegated responsibility of managing Safeguarding. One of whom is the designated Safeguarding Officer and the other the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

Staff – Employed and paid Ministers and other paid staff members.

Thirtyone:eight – An independent Christian safeguarding charity that helps places of worship, faith groups and other organisations create a safe environment for children and other vulnerable people. It also provides the on-line DBS management service used by the church.

Trustees - They are the Trustees of the charity of Trinity Ministries Hinckley and the Directors of the company.

Young Helpers - Children who have been approved by a ministry leader to assist in the carrying out of a ministry.

9. Definitions of abuse

The four definitions of abuse detailed below are based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)'.

Physical Abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse: 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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Spiritual Abuse: Spiritual Abuse is not a separate category of abuse but is a form of psychological and emotional abuse. TCC must be aware that spiritual abuse is often an integral element of other experiences of abuse within the Christian and other faith contexts and must be considered when investigating disclosures of other forms of abuse. Spiritual abuse may occur on its own, or alongside other forms of abuse, such as physical, sexual or domestic abuse. It may be used to 'legitimise' or facilitate other forms of abuse.

Spiritual abuse shares some of the hallmarks of bullying and harassment, including intimidation, manipulation and inducing fear. However, what makes this distinct are the elements associated with religious belief including coercion through religious position, membership of the religious community, scripture, biblical discourse and spiritual threats. Within safeguarding, spiritual abuse of a child is a form of emotional abuse, and spiritual abuse of an adult is a form of psychological abuse. This distinction is important to ensure that any incidents of spiritual abuse can be addressed within the statutory definitions and categories of abuse that are currently in use, which are different for children and adults.

The key aspect of spiritual abuse is the religious context in which the abuse occurs and the ways in which people are controlled through the misuse and abuse of religious scripture, divine position, spiritual threats and fear of spiritual consequences and the suggestion of God as complicit. All or some of these features can be used to control or coercion.

In addition, TCC. Elders and Staff, as well as those engaged in various adult and child ministry contexts must:

- Listen carefully, avoid interrupting and allow a full disclosure without feeling they must defend the Church or the individual.
- Respond in a non-judgemental manner, demonstrating that the disclosure of spiritual abuse is being taken seriously.
- Avoid minimising what they are being told or showing disbelief or denial.
- Be aware that victims may have experienced harmful teaching.
- Avoid suggesting the use of Matthew 18 (resolving disputes by speaking directly to the person). It is harmful to suggest that someone speaks to their abuser about their abuse.
- Be aware that a disclosure of spiritual abuse may also be part of a disclosure of other forms of abuse.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

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.

This list is not exhaustive. Amongst others, abuse can also take the form of:

Bullying and cyberbullying - when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable

Sexting - when a young person or adult at risk receives or sends an explicit image, video or message. It's also known as nude image sharing.

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse - where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development.

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) - is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision or cutting.

Child trafficking and modern slavery - recruiting, moving, receiving and harbouring children or adults at risk for the purpose of exploitation

County lines - a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding team

The Elders delegate Safeguarding oversight to the Safeguarding Team. The Safeguarding Team will comprise at least:

Safeguarding Coordinator - Alison Steele

Tel: 07979 244073 Email: ali@tcchinckley.org

who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

In most instances the Safeguarding Coordinator will contact the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice and may also contact Social Services. They may also need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern.

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator - Adam Dewfield

Tel: 07543 825226 Email: adam@tcchinckley.org

Senior Leader for Safeguarding and Child Protection: Stuart Dean

Tel: 07963 062617 Email: stuart@tcchinckley.org

Key Safeguarding responsibilities are to:

- Take responsibility for the administration and implementation of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Lead the embedding of safeguarding principles throughout the church and encourage forward planning to assess potential Safeguarding issues
- Provide training for all relevant members of staff and volunteers
- Regularly review the effectiveness of Safeguarding policy and procedures and suggest any necessary changes. Note: Changes to an existing policy need to be approved by the elders.
- Identify and evaluate Safeguarding risks faced by the church and recommend and implement internal controls to mitigate those risks
- Report at least annually to the Elders to advise on the Safeguarding effectiveness of the church and changes to Policy and Procedures

Elders

Under God, the Elders are the highest leadership authority the church has. The Elders are routinely chaired by the Pastor.

Key Safeguarding responsibilities are to:

- Ensure a Safeguarding strategy is in place (usually in the form of Policy, Procedures and delegated authority to a Safeguarding team) and review that strategy at least on an annual basis.
- Approve major decisions affecting the church's Safeguarding needs
- Appoint people to the Safeguarding team
- Review the Safeguarding teams' approach to Safeguarding management and form an opinion on whether or not the Safeguarding team has met its obligations
- Approve Safeguarding policy and procedures and changes made to them

Staff

Key Safeguarding responsibilities are to:

- Embed Safeguarding practice in those people and ministries they manage
- Identify and discuss Safeguarding issues across the church as a whole
- Take responsibility for implementing Safeguarding procedures in their ministries
- Report Safeguarding events according to the Safeguarding procedures
- Feedback Safeguarding procedural weaknesses and ways of improvement to the Safeguarding team

Ministry leaders, helpers and members with responsibility for specific ministries, events or activities.

Key Safeguarding responsibilities are to:

- Take responsibility for identifying and managing Safeguarding issues in relation to their areas of responsibility
- To make safeguarding a priority for those people and ministries they manage

Section 3: Safeguarding management

Pre-school: Parents or carers must be present in the building or at the event. When attending groups, their attendance must be signed in. They must only be released to authorised persons. (As good practice we recommend giving new parents or carers a welcome sheet informing them of how the group functions, who to contact at TCC should they have any safeguarding concerns, and clarifying that they are responsible for their children during the session.)

Reception to year 6: Parent or carers may/may not be present in the building. When attending groups, their attendance must be signed in and parents or carers contact details recorded. They must only be released to authorised persons.

School year 7 to 13: May be dropped off by parents or carers for church activities and allowed in the public spaces of the building. When attending groups, they must provide details of a responsible person who can be contacted if needed.

Activities and Ministries of the church are risk assessed before proceeding. (This may not always be written down.) If children or adults at risk are/could be involved then the Safeguarding policy applies.

All Ministry Leaders including Helpers are required to have a satisfactory and up-to-date TCC DBS check.

All Ministry Leaders including Helpers are required to have appropriate and up-to-date TCC Safeguarding Training.

No applicant will be allowed to work until the safer recruitment procedure is fully completed.

1. Thirtyone:eight and DBS management

TCC uses Thirtyone:eight for:

- Online DBS applications
- Advice and guidance on safeguarding issues

The Safeguarding team are responsible for the implementation and management of TCC's DBS process. This is usually delegated to the Thirtyone:eight/DBS Manager. The Thirtyone:eight/DBS Manager is responsible for communications with Thirtyone:eight on DBS matters. TCC does not apply for disclosures on behalf of other organisations Only TCC DBS checks are valid. DBS checks from other organisations or workplaces are not acceptable.

All TCC DBS checks are: Standard DBS including Children or Adults barred list check. DBS checks are to be renewed every 3 years. DBS checks are out of date when they are 3 ½ years old.

ID checks (part of the DBS approval process) may be carried out by the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Deputy or other designated people. Original ID documents must be provided.

2. Volunteers who cannot be DBS checked

- Those who do not have the right to work in the UK
- Those aged 17 or under

3. DBS checks

DBS checks are ministry dependent and may be regulated.

Regulated Activity is a term used to describe certain job functions carried out by an employee as defined by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). These requirements are important as they determine eligibility for an Enhanced Level DBS check and a check of the DBS Barred Lists. Regulated Activity is broken down into two separate groups 'Activity with Children' and 'Activity with Adults'

Applicable TCC ministries include but are not limited to:

- Child workforce - Crèche, Tiddlywinks Leaders and Helpers
- Child workforce - Sunday School, Children and Youth activities
- Adult and Children - Elders
- Adult workforce - Women's and counselling ministry, pastoral care ministry

Thirtyone:eight/DBS Manager should be able to advise on whether someone's DBS may be possible to be moved between children and adult ministries or whether additional DBS checks are required.

4. Controls

DBS and Safeguarding Training report: The DBS check and Safeguarding Training status of those Leaders and Helpers in regular Children, Youth and At Risk Adult ministries will be assessed at least every six months and a report provided to the Senior staff showing those whose status is not conforming with the policy and the mitigating/remedial actions being taken.

5. Minimum children Staffing levels

The minimum staff levels below are for regular Sunday activities and can be used as a standard when considering other activities.

The following best practice is recommended by the NSPCC at <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children>

TCC Group	Child's Age	Minimum staff levels
<i>Notwithstanding these minimum levels, each group must have at least 2 Adults present</i>		
Crèche	0 -2 years	1 leader or helper to every 3 children
	2-4 years	1 leader or helper to every 4 children
TCC Kids (KS1)	5-7 years	1 leader or helper to every 6 children
TCC Kids (KS2)	7-11 years	1 leader or helper to every 6 children
Ignite	7-11 years	1 leader or helper to every 6 children
Connect	11-14 years	1 leader or helper to every 8 children
Connect +	14-18 years	1 leader or helper to every 10 children

If the minimum levels are not met then the ministry leader should investigate and take action accordingly.

More supervising adults may be required if, for instance:

- the children have specific support needs
- a risk assessment identifies behaviour as a potential issue for the group
- children are being taken off site
- children are undertaking physical activities
- if needed for safe fire evacuation

Adults who assist occasionally or on a one-off basis who have not been appointed formally using the safer recruitment procedures must be under the care of a Leader at all times.

A gender balance should be maintained wherever possible, particularly in mixed gender groups.

6. Training

Safeguarding Training will be renewed at least every 3 years. Training is out of date after 3½ years.

The Elders are committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development for all Staff, Ministry Leaders and Helpers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone.

The Safeguarding team are responsible for the implementation and management of Safeguarding Training.

7. Young Helpers

- will be under the care of a Leader at all times
- will not be given responsibility for other people
- will not be left alone with other people
- will not be asked to take other people to the toilet
- will be given training suitable for them to carry out their role

8. Working in partnership

The following partners must have their own safeguarding policy that meets Thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

- Any organisation carrying out events on TCC premises
- Organisations used for TCC events e.g. away days, weekend aways or Camps.
- The partner's policy must be approved by TCC before the ministry can take place.
- Other partners (e.g. people carrying out ministry or events on TCC's behalf) must adopt TCC's safeguarding policy.

Section 4: Recognising and responding to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

1. Recognising abuse and neglect

Definitions of some forms of abuse (a more detailed definition is included in section 1.9)

- Physical Abuse: is causing physical harm to a child or adult.
- Emotional Abuse: is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse emotional effects.
- Spiritual Abuse: is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context.
- 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.
- 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.

A person may abuse:

- by inflicting harm
- by 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.

Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect

The following behavioural signs may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

Physical signs of abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention.
- Neglect – undernourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains.
- Bruises, burns, bites, fractures, etc which do not have an accidental explanation.

- Cuts, scratches, substance abuse.

Emotional signs of abuse

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

Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawings.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams, or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia.

2. Documenting concerns

Write notes as soon as possible (e.g. within an hour), writing down as exactly as possible what was said or seen, putting the scene into context and giving the time and location. Dates and times of events should be recorded as accurately as possible, together with a note of when the record was made. This record should then be signed and given to the Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible, who should then make a note of the time and date they receive the information.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will in most cases share the information with the Senior Leader for Safeguarding and Child Protection unless the abuse relates to them. Both will be quick to discuss the matters raised and obtain advice from Thirtyone:eight. Serious allegations, disclosure or evidence of abuse will always be referred to the relevant government officials.

Any information about individual children or adult at risk of harm or their families must be treated with the utmost confidentiality and discretion.

A Safeguarding file will be kept in a secure, lockable, non-portable cabinet, including a copy of the relevant safeguarding policies and procedures and records of any concerns, incidents, allegations or disclosures of abuse. Access to this file will be limited to the Safeguarding Coordinator and Senior Leader for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

3. Procedure - for responding to allegations of abuse

If any staff member, ministry leader, child or youth worker or member of the church receives an allegation or disclosure of abuse, or sees evidence of abuse, they should:

- Bring those concerns to the attention of the Safeguarding Coordinator within 24 hours and discuss the issues with NO-ONE ELSE.
- If the child, young person or adult at risk of harm requires immediate medical treatment, you should ensure that appropriate treatment is made available.
- Not discuss the allegation with the person alleged of the abuse but inform the Safeguarding Coordinator.
- If the allegation of abuse concerns another child, young person or adult at risk of harm this too should be taken seriously and be passed on to the Safeguarding Coordinator and not discussed with anyone else.
- If a child, young person or adult at risk of harm has a safeguarding concern, whilst they may approach any children or youth leader, they may also approach the Safeguarding Coordinator themselves.
- If the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Coordinator as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.
- Under no circumstances should a Ministry Leader or Helper carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.

The Safeguarding Coordinator can be contacted as follows:

Safeguarding Coordinator - Alison Steele

Tel: 07979 244073 |Email: ali@tcchinckley.org

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

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator - Adam Dewfield

Tel: 07543 825226 | Email: adam@tcchinckley.org

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Coordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

Senior Leader for Safeguarding and Child Protection: Stuart Dean:

Tel: 07963 062617 | Email: stuart@tcchinckley.org)

If the suspicions implicates all of these three persons then the report should be made in the first instance to:

Thirtyone:eight

PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0303 003 1111.

www.thirtyoneeight.org.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

Leicestershire County Council

Children's Social Services | Tel: 0116 278 7111

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families>

Adults' Social Services | Tel: 0116 305 0004

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-of-an-adult>

Police Protection Team Tel: 0116 248 4842 | Out of Hours: 0116 222 2222

In an emergency contact 999 or if unsure 101

Detailed Procedures

4. Procedure - where there is 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 Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.

- NOT tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by 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, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by 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.

5. Procedure - where there is concern that an adult is in need of protection:

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

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

- Contact Adult Social Services who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

6. Procedure – for allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/ young people

If an accusation is made against an Elder, member of Staff, Ministry Leader or Helper whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the person(s), also making a referral to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if necessary.
- Consider whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service which manages the list of those people deemed unsuitable for working with children or adults at risk.
- Where you are liaising with a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), discuss with them about the need to refer to the DBS. If a LADO is not involved, you need to contact the DBS if the situation is that the nature of concern leads you to end the employment of the person or would have made this decision in circumstances where they have left voluntarily.

Leicestershire County Council LADO

Allegations Line: 0116 305 4141

LADO email for Referrals and New Enquiries: CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk

Please note that the LADO service is available office hours only: Monday-Thursday, 8.30am-5.00 pm and Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm. Outside of office hours, please contact the Leicestershire First Response Children's Duty Team. Tel: 0116 305 0005

7. Procedure – for allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults at risk.

Contact the Adult Social Services who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Social 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 Social Services to decide, not the church.

8. Procedure - If there is concern regarding spiritual abuse.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will:

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

Section 5: Staff, Ministry Leaders and Helpers – recruitment, care & supervision

1. Safer recruitment

All Staff are to be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment as follows:

- Where the role is advertised - advertisements will contain a statement that a disclosure and barring check (DBS) will be requested in the event of an individual being offered a job
- A written job description and person specification for the post is provided
- Those applying complete a common or standard application form which will include:
 - a self-declaration form
 - a statement that a disclosure and barring check (DBS) will be requested in the event of an individual being offered a job
 - a statement that a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining the position
- Prospective candidates are interviewed
- Safeguarding is discussed at interview
- At least 2 references are obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A DBS check has been completed
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable induction training program is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant satisfactorily completes a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of this safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns

Volunteers are to be appointed as follows:

All potential volunteers should:

- normally have been members of TCC for a minimum of 6 months.
- provide the names of two referees and references which should be verified and taken up. (See appendix for reference form)
- complete a confidential self-declaration form (see appendix for form)
- undergo a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check.
- be approved by the leadership team at least annually.
- agree to undertake appropriate training as necessary.
- receive a copy of this safeguarding policy

At the potential appointment of a new volunteer the Safeguarding Officer (or an administrator) will arrange the above. The Safeguarding Officer will then review the forms (self-declaration, DBS check & references) for approval. Once approved, the proposed

group leader and the volunteer will be informed by the Safeguarding Officer. As some of the material is of a sensitive nature it is to be kept strictly confidential.

2. Staff, Ministry Leaders and Helpers feedback and review

The leadership will take a pastoral interest in Staff, Ministry Leaders and Helpers and be mindful of their personal circumstances.

Each are encouraged to feedback thoughts and concerns at any time and the leadership is open to receiving, considering and acting on such feedback.

The leadership will on occasion review Staff, Ministry Leaders and Helpers roles with them either personally or as a group and/or invite feedback on their experience and circumstances.

3. Code of Conduct (Working safely)

All communication made by persons in the church whether that be staff, ministry leaders or helpers should be in a context of transparency, accountability and with ministry purpose.

All other relevant TCC policies should be applied in conjunction with this Code of Conduct.

3.1 You should:

- Operate within TCCs principles and guidance.
- Display a character, conduct and lifestyle consistent with Biblical standards.
- Treat all children, adults at risk and adults with respect and dignity.
- Ensure that there are at least two adults present during activities with children and young people, or at least that you are within sight of others.
- Ensure that another adult is informed if a Leader or Helper needs to take a child to the toilet.
- Be aware that physical contact with a child or young person may be misinterpreted.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour in a responsible way.
- Report all allegations/suspensions of abuse.
- Recognise that special caution is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.

3.2 You should not:

- Ever hit a child.

- Touch inappropriately or play sexually provocative games.
- Show favouritism to any one child, young person or group.
- Give lifts to children on their own or on your own. If two adults are present, neither should sit in the back with a child.
- Invite a child or young person to your home alone without parental permission.
- Permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying.
- Allow unknown visiting adults unsupervised access to children. A known person should always accompany visitors.

3.3 Use of Social Media, email and texting

All those involved in working with children and young people will exercise care in the use of social media and adopt the principles set out below.

Children under the age of 14:

- One to one communication by electronic means or by texting will not be used. All communication in these forms will be via their parents.

Children aged 14 and older:

- Electronic communication and texting should only be used for reasons relating to church ministry and not for general socialising.
- All leaders and helpers should be aware of the situations in which these means of communication are being used.
- No one should invite children or young people from church activities to their personal social networking page but may politely respond to requests appropriately advising that all such requests will be ignored. Where existing networks exist between children aged 14 and older and anyone from TCC, the leadership would strongly recommend that these online networks cease.

Care should be exercised in posting to Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc as comments made on the spur of the moment may not always come out as intended and can be passed on extremely quickly around a large audience.

Individual and group photographs may only be posted to social media where parental permission has been granted.

Software or applications using webcams, photo/video messaging or any kind of messaging which keeps no records e.g. Snapchat should not be used to communicate with young people.

The principles for the use of social media will be communicated to children aged 14 and over.

Please note, no photos of children and/or young people are to be taken in any context without specific written consent from all parents in the group/s.

Section 6: Pastoral Care

1. Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care (working with statutory agencies as appropriate) and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of TCC.

2. Working with offenders

When someone attending TCC is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults at risk, the Leadership will, possibly in conjunction with statutory authorities:

Supervise the individual concerned

Offer pastoral care

Set boundaries for that person which will be monitored to ensure they are kept

Section 7: Safeguarding Policy Management

1. Safeguarding Controls Review

Safeguarding Controls will be developed on an ongoing basis by the Safeguarding Team and reviewed at least annually for completeness and suitability of purpose.

2. Monitoring and Review of policy

The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team who will make change recommendations to the Elders as appropriate.

3. Breach of policy

The Elders will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the policy. Any instance of breach of policy will be investigated, assessed and may result in change to systems, policy and/or training and, where appropriate, disciplinary action may be taken.

4. Policy exceptions

Exceptions to the policy will be by recommendation of the Safeguarding Team and must be approved by the Elders.

5. Access to policy

The Policy is available by request from the Safeguarding Team.

Approval of policy

**This policy has been approved and adopted for
the church by the Trustees & Elders
on XXXXXXXX and will be reviewed annually.**

Appendix 1

Trinity Community Church Self-disclosure form for staff or volunteers working with children

Name of person:

Previous name(s):

Please include date(s) each name was used:

Address:

Telephone/mobile number:

Date of birth:

Gender:

Have you ever been known to any Children's Services department or police as being a risk or potential risk to children? YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Have you been the subject of any investigation and/or sanction by any organisation or body due to concerns about your behaviour towards children? YES NO

If yes, please provide further information and include details of the outcome:

Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary sanctions or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards children? YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Do you have any unspent convictions in the UK or overseas?

YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Confirmation of declaration

I agree that the information provided here may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and I understand that an offer of employment or voluntary service may be withdrawn or disciplinary action may be taken if information is not disclosed by me and subsequently comes to Trinity Community Church's attention.

In accordance with TCCs procedures, if required I agree to provide a valid DBS certificate and consent to TCC clarifying any information provided on the disclosure with the agencies providing it.

I agree to inform TCC within 24 hours if I am subsequently investigated by any agency or organisation in relation to concerns about my behaviour towards children or young people.

I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of the criminal record check and information supplied by third parties may be supplied by TCC to other persons or organisations in circumstances where this is considered necessary to safeguard children.

Signature of candidate / volunteer:

Print name:

Date:

Appendix 2

Trinity Community Church (TCC) Reference form for positions working with children

Name of candidate	
Position applied for	

The above named person has expressed an interest in working with TCC and has given your name as a referee. The post involves substantial access to and responsibility for children.

As a church committed to the welfare and protection of children, we wish to know if there is any reason at all to be concerned about this candidate's suitability for this type of role.

If you are happy to complete this reference, any information will be treated confidentially and in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance. Information will only be shared with the persons conducting the assessment of the candidate's suitability for the role. We would appreciate you being open and honest in your evaluation of this person.

In what capacity is this person known to you?

How long have you known this person?

Please comment on the candidate's suitability and overall ability to work with children and young people:

This post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children, we wish to know if you are aware of any reason why this person might not be suitable to work with children.

YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Are you aware of any previous substantiated allegations, sanctions and/or disciplinary action taken against this person where there were concerns relating to children's safety or protection?

YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Are you aware of any current or ongoing allegations or investigations, or of any disciplinary sanctions that remain against this person? This may or may not be related to children's safety and protection.

YES NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Please add any further information or comments that you feel are relevant to the person in this proposed role.

Your details and declaration

Name

Organisation & position (if relevant)

Contact number

Email

Signature

Date

Appendix 3

Trinity Community Church Policy Statement on Domestic Abuse

Policy for responding to Domestic Abuse

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. Trinity Community Church is committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- Recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

We recognise that:

- All forms of domestic abuse cause damage to the survivor and express an imbalance of power in the relationship;
- All survivors (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;
- Domestic abuse can occur in all communities;
- Domestic abuse may be a single incident, but is usually a systematic, repeated pattern which escalates in severity and frequency;
- Domestic abuse, if witnessed or overheard by a child, is a form of abuse by the perpetrator of abusive behaviour;
- Working in partnership with children, adults and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of any child or adult suffering abuse.

We will endeavor to respond to domestic abuse by:

In all our activities:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting both survivors and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In our publicity:

- Raising awareness about other agencies, support services, resources and expertise through providing information in public and women-only areas of relevance to survivors, children and alleged or known perpetrators of domestic abuse.

When concerns are raised:

- Ensuring that those who have experienced abuse can find safety and informed help;
- Working with the appropriate statutory bodies during an investigation into domestic abuse, including when allegations are made against a member of the church community.

In our care:

- Ensuring that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse;
- Identifying and outlining the appropriate relationship of those with pastoral care responsibilities with both survivors and alleged or know perpetrators of domestic abuse.

If you have any concerns please contact:

Safeguarding Coordinator - Alison Steele

Tel: 07979 244073 Email: ali@tcchinckley.org

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator - Adam Dewfield

Tel: 07543 825226 Email: adam@tcchinckley.org

Senior Leader for Safeguarding: Stuart Dean (Pastor)

Tel: 07963 062617 Email: stuart@tcchinckley.org

Appendix 4

Trinity Community Church Policy on recruiting ex-offenders

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Trinity Community Church (TCC) complies fully with the code of practice (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly.

TCC undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

TCC can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that TCC are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).

TCC can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

TCC is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, volunteers and users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability.

Appendix 5

Child Advocate Role at Trinity Community Church, Hinckley

Current Advocate: Louise Russell

In a church setting, a child advocate plays a vital role in safeguarding by representing the best interests of children and young people, ensuring their voices are heard, and promoting a culture of safety and well-being. This role includes acting as a point of contact for children, providing support and guidance, and advocating for their needs within the church's policies and procedures. Other aspects of the role include:

- **Speaking for children:** Act as an advocate for children who may be at risk.
- **Reporting abuse:** Report concerns of abuse to the relevant authorities, such as the police or Children's Social Care.
- **Ensure children are protected:** Ensure that children in the church community are protected and valued.
- **Model love:** Encourage children to grow in their knowledge of God's love, and model that love through teaching and caring for them.

Key Responsibilities of a Child Advocate in Church Safeguarding:

- **Representation:**

Advocates speak on behalf of children, ensuring their views are considered in decisions related to ministry, worship, and pastoral care.

- **Support and Guidance:**

They provide support and guidance to children who may be struggling or have concerns, offering a safe space to share their feelings.

- **Advocacy:**

Advocates advocate for children's needs within the church's structure, including with the Eldership and other leadership roles.

- **Communication:**

They facilitate communication between children and other members of the Children's Church Team, ensuring that all parties involved are aware of the child's perspective.

- **Training and Awareness:**

Advocates may participate in safeguarding training to enhance their skills and knowledge, helping them effectively identify and respond to concerns.

- **Collaboration:**

They work collaboratively with other members of the Safeguarding Team, including the safeguarding officer, Pastor and statutory agencies, to ensure coordinated action and support for children.

- **Policy Implementation:**

Advocates help ensure the church's safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively, promoting a safe environment for all.

- **Record Keeping:**

They ensure accurate and confidential recording of safeguarding matters, following thirtyone:eight and church guidelines.

Importance of Child Advocates:

- **Empowerment:**

Child advocates empower children by giving them a voice and enabling them to express their needs and concerns.

- **Protection:**

By actively listening and advocating for children, advocates play a crucial role in preventing abuse and promoting a culture of safety.

- **Trust and Confidence:**

Advocates build trust and confidence among children, making them more likely to come forward with concerns and seek help.

- **Improved Outcomes:**

By ensuring children's needs are met, advocates contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people involved in the church.

In essence, a child advocate is a champion for children, ensuring their voices are heard and their safety and well-being are prioritised within the church environment.

We steward our power by speaking and serving with strength (1 Peter 4:10-11). The Bible also emphasises the role and responsibility of leaders—and of believers in general—to care for the poor, the stranger, and the oppressed (Psalm 72; Exodus 22:21-23; Romans 13).

A named, identified person who will act as a safe person to speak to about any concerns a young person or child may have at TCC.

Your Specific Role if a concern is raised by a child:

1. You will listen to the young person or child.
2. Thank them for sharing, do not promise to keep what they have said a secret but reassure them that they have done the right thing by sharing their concern.
3. Write down what has been shared (date and time) and give this information to the Safeguarding Officer (Ali Steele) as soon as possible.
If the SGO is not available inform the Deputy SGO (Adam Dewfield).
Or call the 31:8 helpline for guidance.
If you feel that the child is in imminent danger call 999.

Other Duties:

1. **A child advocate can offer advice and support to a child or young person.** The main purpose of a child advocate is to enable children to express their wishes and feelings. The aim of child advocacy is to encourage empowerment of children and uphold their human rights.
2. **Pray for children**
The Child Advocate can pray for children in their community by name, asking God to protect and guide them. Prayer can provide comfort and strength to children who are struggling.
3. **Advocate for policies**
Where appropriate the Child Advocate can advocate for policies and initiatives that promote the well-being of children and families.
4. **Encourage courageous advocacy**
Trinity Community Church, Hinckley encourages children to become courageous advocates who speak out against injustice. This can involve identifying a problem, investigating it, and working out how to improve it.
5. **Participate in awareness days and training**
The Advocate should participate in regular Safeguarding Training.

Appendix 6

Relevant contact information

Safeguarding Coordinator - Alison Steele

Tel: 07979 244073 |Email: ali@tcchinckley.org

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator - Adam Dewfield

Tel: 07543 825226 |Email: adam@tcchinckley.org

Senior Leader for Safeguarding and Child Protection: Stuart Dean:

Tel: 07963 062617 |Email: stuart@tcchinckley.org)

Thirtyone:eight

PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ

Telephone 0303 003 1111

www.thirtyoneeight.org.

Leicestershire County Council

Children's Social Services

Tel: 0116 278 7111

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families>

Adults' Social Services

Tel: 0116 305 0004

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-of-an-adult>

Police Protection Team

Tel: 0116 248 4842

Out of Hours: 0116 222 2222

In an emergency contact 999 or if unsure 101

Leicestershire County Council LADO

Every Local Authority has a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them or could cause them harm.

Contact 0116 305 4141 to leave a message for LADO or email CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk.

Please note that the LADO service is available office hours only: Monday-Thursday, 8.30am-5.00 pm and Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm

Outside of office hours, please contact the Leicestershire First Response Children's Duty Team: 0116 305 0005