

Reigate Park Church

Safeguarding Policy

(following URC Good Practice 6 guidelines)



Copies of the safeguarding Policy to be kept by the members of the Safeguarding Panel, each Junior Church Department, the Church Office & placed on the Website for reference.

R.P.C. Safeguarding Policy
(Revised January 2024)

1. **The Safeguarding Panel**

There should be a minimum of 5 people who have overall responsibility for safeguarding the children and young people in the care of RPC. This group is responsible for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of children and young people attending Church and Church-related activities. This includes the appointment of volunteers through informal discussion and completion of appropriate checks.

This panel (hereafter SP) should consist of:

- ✝ The Minister(s)
- ✝ The Junior Church Co-ordinator and Deputy.
- ✝ The Safeguarding Officer (hereafter SO) and Deputy from within the Church who have counselling or similar skills and are sympathetic to young people.

The Junior Church Co-ordinator and Deputy will deal with the day-to-day matters, including finding volunteers.

The SO and Deputy will deal with all safeguarding matters.

As a Panel they will ensure that the Church is kept up to date with Safeguarding procedures.

The Church Family, Parents, Junior Church Leaders and Helpers will be notified annually of the names of those on the Panel and when any changes occur.

Contact details for the SO and Deputy will be displayed in the foyer and other relevant noticeboards.

2. **Junior Church**

Appointment of Volunteers:

- ✝ All volunteers are responsible for a group of children and young people and are in loco parentis whilst the children and young people are in their care. Each group will have a coordinator, leaders and helpers.
- ✝ The roles are described in 'Commitment, Communication and Care' (CCC) (attachment 1)
- ✝ On finding a suitable volunteer, the SO will be given their name and oversee completion of appropriate reference and DBS forms, discussing any problems that arise with the SP. New volunteers' names will be put in newsletters and the Record. The Elders and Church Meeting will be informed in the Annual Report from Junior Church.
- ✝ Co-ordinators and leaders of each group should ideally be employees or practising members of Reigate Park Church.
- ✝ Helpers should be regular attenders at RPC.
- ✝ This document, the CCC and 'Notes for Leaders and Helpers' (attachment 2) to be read by all volunteers before starting. The Junior Church Co-ordinator or Deputy will have a conversation with prospective volunteers which will include:
 - a. Guidance on time involved to prepare and deliver activities.
 - b. The job itself and what it entails.
 - c. Past experience with Youth.
 - d. Agreement for a regular DBS check, or accepting the Update Service, and references.

- e. Training expected:
 - i. Safety procedures: building, accident, accident book and fire procedures.
 - ii. Safeguarding issues:
 - Basic safeguarding and refresher training.
 - The SO or Deputy must be contacted over all safeguarding issues or concerns and should have outside contacts for referring to if necessary.
 - iii. Support:
 - SP, Junior Church Co-ordinators, Group Co-ordinators, leaders and helpers.

Liaison:

- ✚ Group Co-ordinators should liaise with their leaders and helpers over training offered, children's welfare issues and social activities.
- ✚ The weekly recording sheet should be completed in full after each session and kept securely at Church.
- ✚ All child protection issues should be discussed with the SO or deputy.
- ✚ Where appropriate, family concerns may be shared with relevant group leaders.

Practicalities:

- ✚ Computers, Smart phones and Mobile Devices CANNOT be used with children and young people without the prior consent from a member of the SP.
- ✚ On-line communications with Young People:
 - a. RPC is aware that young people make extensive use of social networking sites, often below the set age-limits.
 - b. The closed RPC Youth Facebook page or similar social media groups will be monitored by two members of the SP.
 - c. Group leaders with appropriate training should be prepared to advise young people as appropriate on safe use of the internet.
- ✚ Photographs and other electronic images (to include cameras on all electronic devices):
 - a. All parents/carers are asked to sign a photo permission form (see attachment 3)
 - b. Photos (including during the service) can only be taken with permission of the Elders and can only be shared on social media by agreement.
 - c. If photographs are to be used outside the church, written permission MUST be sought from ALL parents of those under 16, and from the young people themselves if they are 16 or over.
- ✚ Use or possession of alcohol, illegal substances, solvents or offensive weapons, for example knives or acid by young people:
- ✚ There may be occasions where it is felt necessary to inform parents/carers of the young person's activity, and they should be encouraged to seek professional help from their doctor or a counsellor specialising in this area. It is important to adopt zero tolerance on all illegal substances.
- ✚ It is a criminal offence to allow anyone attending an activity run by an organisation to supply illegal drugs or use them on the premises. For the individual involved:

- a. Ask them to stop, warning them of the consequences if they do not e.g. suspension or ban from the group.
- b. Inform parents/carers if the young person is under 16 years.
- c. Inform the parents/carers if the young person is over 16 years (with their permission).
- d. Discuss with the young person the course of action (eg. informing the police).
- e. Write down the content of any discussion with the young person, including the action taken and keep this in a secure place.

✝ Sunday morning

- a. The Junior Church Co-ordinator or Deputy should ensure at the beginning of each service that ALL leaders have arrived and are ready.
- b. Parents must be made aware that the group leaders are only responsible for the children from the beginning of their session to the end of the church service. At all other times the children are the responsibility of the parents.

✝ Leaders should:

- a. Take the register at the beginning of every session noting the **full names** of visiting children.
- b. On completion of the weekly recording sheet, anything of a very delicate nature should be talked through immediately after the session with the SO, Deputy or another member of the SP.
- c. All children and young people's names should be noted and once a child has attended 3 times they should be given a registration form and photo consent form (attachment 3). Updated lists of children and young people in each group, together with any relevant information, will be given to each group at the beginning of each year and at any other time when it is deemed necessary.

✝ Leaders should be advised by Minister(s), Families Liaison, or Junior Church Co-ordinators if there are any complications within a family where extra care is needed, either socially, emotionally or financially. This should remain confidential.

✝ Leaders should avoid being on their own with a young person, especially where they cannot be seen by others (e.g. the Library). They should move to the Hall, Lower Stage Room (door open), Kitchen (door open) or Foyer & inform the Junior Church Coordinator or Deputy of this decision.

✝ Small groups of mixed sex young people should not be left on their own without supervision.

✝ On RPC premises during the service and on off-site trips, there should be:

- a. adequate leaders (depending on age of group, at least two adults, preferably 1 male and 1 female) and a ratio of 1:3 for 0-2 years, 1:4 for 2-3 years, 1:6 for 4-7years, 1:8 for 8-11years and 1:10 for 12-18 years) including, whenever possible, a suitably trained First Aider.

If leaders want to take groups off-site, a member of the SP should be informed and appropriate permission be given (attachment 4).

Safeguarding Procedures

What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred:

- a. You must report concerns as soon as possible to:

SO: Mrs Christina Papworth (01737 249766; email: safeguarding@reigateparkchurch.org)

who is nominated by RPC to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. She may also be required by conditions of the Church Insurance Policy to immediately inform the Insurance Company.

In the absence of the SO the matter should be brought to the attention of:

Deputy SO: Mrs Lynne Skinner (01737 249766; email: safeguarding@reigateparkchurch.org)

- b. If the suspicions in any way involve the SO then the report should be made to the Deputy SO:

Deputy SO: Mrs Lynne Skinner (01737249766; email: safeguarding@reigateparkchurch.org)

- c. If the suspicions in any way implicate both the SO and the Deputy SO, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

CCPAS Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (hereafter "CCPAS")

PO Box 133,
Swanley,
Kent.

BR8 7UQ tel:

01322 660011 or 01322 667207.

03030031111

Alternatively contact:

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 03004709100 (Mon-Fri, 9-5)

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team 01483 517898

Local Authority Children's Social Services 0300470100

Local Authority Adult Social Services 03002001005

Non-Emergency Telephone Number for the Police 101

Contact in the case of immediate risk of harm 999

www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/contacting-social-care/contact-childrens-social-care

Allegations against adult leaders or helpers should be reported to:

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

0300 1231650 Option3

Suspicions will only be discussed with members of the SP on a need-to-know basis.

It is of course the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies or seek advice from CCPAS, although we hope that members of the church will use the agreed procedure. If, however, you feel that the SO or Deputy has not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is open to you to contact the relevant organisation direct. We hope that by making this statement that we demonstrate the commitment of the Church to effective child protection.

✝ In the case of a young person reporting a problem/abuse by another young person or adult, each leader should:

- a. be prepared to let the young person talk without interruption until he/she has finished. Don't ask any questions. Write down immediately everything that has been heard and said. Date this and keep it for later consultation.

- b. reassure the young person that it was all right to talk, but say that you will have to take it to the SO.
- c. You cannot promise confidentiality. If the young person asks for this before he/she starts, then you must explain that for some things you are unable to remain silent.
- d. tell the SO or Deputy immediately what has happened.

✝ The SO will deal with all reported concerns as follows:

- a. When physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect is suspected, social services must be contacted in case of deliberate injury, or if there is concern about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- b. If the parents are suspected perpetrators then they must not be informed.
- c. Medical help must be sought if needed urgently, informing a doctor of any suspicions.
- d. Lesser concerns (eg poor parenting) may be talked over with parents to encourage them to seek help, if this does not place the child at risk of further injury.
- e. If sexual abuse is suspected, social services and/or police must always be contacted. Parents must not be informed. It is not the SO's role to investigate the matter personally, but to record and collate information and relay it to the appropriate authorities and to co-operate in any investigation.

✝ In the case of a young person accusing a leader of abuse, the person should contact Christina Papworth, Lynne Skinner or any other member of the SP immediately. The leader will automatically be relieved from duties whilst the matter is resolved in as confidential a manner as is possible.

✝ Reporting Convictions

Information about any convictions to be reported to Revd Roger Jones the Synod Safeguarding Link Person-children and young people: Tel.07525410083, [Email jones.ra @btinternet.com](mailto:jones.ra@btinternet.com)

✝ Working with Offenders

Where someone attending church is known to have abused children then, whilst extending friendship to that individual, the SO or Deputy will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep.

A strict formal contract may need to be drawn up to include such issues as which meetings that person may attend, where to sit in Church and not being alone with children or accepting offers of hospitality where children are present in the home.

Where someone attending church is known to be under suspicion of having abused children then the situation will be carefully monitored by the SO, Deputy and Minister.

✝ Helping Victims of Abuse

As a Church we are committed to supporting victims of abuse and encouraging them in their faith.

✝ Abuse of Trust

As a Church we undertake to follow the principles found within the Abuse of Trust guidance issued by the Home Office <http://ccpas.co.uk/Documents/AbuseOfTrustQRG.pdf>

This document is based on a model child protection policy supplied by the churches Child Protection Advisory Service – a project of PCCA Child Care. A copy of the policy and all amendments will be filed with CCPAS. This policy must not be copied by other churches/organisations without the written agreement of CCPAS.

Copies of the Good Practice Guide to be kept by the members of the Safeguarding Panel, each Junior Church Department, the Church Office & placed on the Website for reference.