

# **River of Life Community Church Safeguarding Children Policy**

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## River of Life Community Church Safeguarding Children Policy

River of Life Community Church has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people they come into contact with. The need for guidelines and procedures is important to ensure that this is done with understanding and clarity. The Leadership & Trustees of River of Life Community Church fully endorse and support the safeguarding policies for children, and adults at risk, that are implemented across the charity's projects and congregations.

The definition of a child for this policy is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

We uphold the legislation regarding children such as

- The Children Act 1989; and government guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018/2024 updates.

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) also lays out responsibilities for the voluntary, charity and faith-based organisations to have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place.

As of April 2022, it is illegal (England and Wales) for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old under their care or supervision. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, has been broadened to include "sport" and "religion". This includes anyone who: 'coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs someone under 18, on a regular basis, in a sport or a religion'

All staff and volunteers are made aware of this policy, and the process for reporting concerns, by issuing the policy at induction and having regular safeguarding training.

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## **1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

River of Life Community Church is committed to keeping the welfare of any child or young person who is involved at any point of our services paramount, ensuring that they are valued, listened to and respected.

All children or young people, whatever their gender, disability, racial or ethnic background, religious beliefs or sexual orientation have a right to a safe and caring environment when participating in any activities run by River of Life Community Church) and to equal protection from any form of exploitation or abuse.

Everyone working or volunteering with us, including its trustees, employees, agency staff and volunteers is responsible for ensuring all children are safe.

We consider anyone aged under 18 to be a child for the purposes of this child protection policy. This includes the children of adult members, or service users of River of Life Community Church).

We will promote the welfare of all children participating in our services by:

- Implementing a robust recruitment and selection process with new staff or volunteers.
- Identifying a designated lead person for each project for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and clear referral process.
- Providing training for all who work with us so that they are clear about their responsibilities especially regarding safeguarding best practice.
- Ensuring that any concerns of possible abuse are referred appropriately and co-operating with the work of statutory agencies as necessary.
- Structuring our services to help children to protect themselves and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Identifying and implementing good practice in relation to the care, protection and welfare of children.
- Encouraging parents and carers to be involved with the programmes and develop a relationship with River of Life Community Church which promotes their child's welfare.
- Providing a whistleblowing policy that allows for an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour.
- Developing a listening culture where children feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.

## **2: Roles and Responsibilities**

River of Life Community Church aims to establish clear roles and responsibilities for all its staff and volunteers and clarify what is expected from **everyone** in the organisation regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.

### **a) The Church Leadership and Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide:**

- A Safeguarding policy for protecting children, and a procedure for what to do if there are concerns about a child's welfare.
- A named person for dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse and step-by-step guidance on what action to take.
- A rigorous recruitment and selection process for paid staff and volunteers who work with children.
- A written code of behaviour that outlines good practice when working with children.
- A training plan and regular opportunities for all those in contact with children to learn about safeguarding and health and safety.
- A whistle-blowing policy that allows for an open and well-publicised way for adults and young people to voice any concerns about abusive or unethical behaviour.
- Information for young people and for parents or carers about their safeguarding policy for protecting children, and where to go for help.
- A protective culture that puts children's interests first – children must feel confident that if they have concerns someone will listen and take them seriously.
- Guidance on taking children away on trips and on internet use: social networking policy, use of photographs and guidance on chatrooms, websites.
- Policies on bullying, cyberbullying and on health and safety.
- Policies and guidelines for those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored.
- Working practices when dealing with sex offenders in church.
- Pastoral support for those affected by abuse.

### **b) Children's Workers/Youth Leaders will ensure:**

- All volunteers working with children and young adults are safely recruited, using DBS checks where appropriate.
- All volunteers have been interviewed pertaining to their suitability to lead/help with the group they have applied to work with and 2 references have been taken up.
- Adults awaiting DBS checks or references are sensitively supervised, never left alone with a child or children and always have a safely recruited/DBS cleared member of the team in the room or toilet area with them.
- Volunteers receive induction training regarding policies and specific group practices before they start on rota.
- All roles will be subject to a 3-month probationary period, after which a review with the ministry leader will take place.
- All volunteers complete Level 1 Safeguarding training as soon as possible and ongoing training is monitored. This may be training received from other organisations, from the

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Safeguarding Coordinator or update training sessions from Children/Youth Leader. Training should be recorded for each volunteer.

- Records of DBS dates, and training received by volunteers, are up to date.
- Adults are not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- Parents/carers are clear when responsibility for their child's care transfers from them to the children's worker and is returned to them at the end of the session.
- Parents of all children attending our groups complete a Registration and Consent Form giving contact details, outlining medical needs, any food allergies and giving consent, or denying permission for photographs to be taken.
- Parents can nominate other adults to collect their child if they are unable to collect them.
- Children with special needs are fully integrated and protected within the church community.
- Children's Workers/Youth Leaders attend further training regarding child protection.

### **c) Volunteer workers will always:**

- Abide by the policies outlined in this handbook, and by the specific guidelines of their groups individual working practices. The day-to-day practicalities will vary within different groups but will never conflict with the core values and guidelines contained in this handbook.
- Attend regular safeguarding training. This may mean attending a course run by the Safeguarding Coordinator and/or periodic training from the Children's Worker or Youth Leader. If you have attended safeguarding training in other organisations, then please inform your leader. This will assist us in tailoring training for you accordingly.
- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age, watching their language, tone of voice, body language and non-verbal signals.
- Control and discipline children and young people without using physical punishment or derogatory names. The behaviour policy or code of conduct will be adhered to and promoted with the children/youth.
- Report any concerns to the ministry leader or the church leadership if necessary.

### **3. Definitions of harm - taken from Working Together Guidance 2018/2024**

#### **Abuse**

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### **Physical abuse**

A form of abuse which 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.

#### **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 (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

#### **Neglect**

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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-

givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

*This is not an exhaustive list and it must be recognised that it is not the role of staff or volunteers to make an assessment of whether children or young people have suffered harm. Staff, volunteers and designated safeguarding leads do have a duty to report any concerns about harm in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Guidelines and Procedures.*

#### **4. Other forms of abuse**

There is a brief overview at the end of this policy of other forms of abuse that can affect the children that come under our care and use our services. Having an awareness of these other types of abuse is useful, they are areas of abuse that are growing in significance as more cases come to light.

**See Appendix 2:** *Other forms of abuse for more information, along with contact numbers to get specific help and support.*

#### **5. Recognition of harm**

##### **Recognising physical abuse**

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury;
- Several different explanations provided for an injury;
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment;
- The parents / carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury;
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment;
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a 'cry for help' and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury);
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments;
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

**All bruising** in non-mobile children should be considered to be non-accidental and should be referred for an assessment.

**Bite marks, scars and fractures** are all indicators of concern.

**Burns and scalds** can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine);
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements;
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area;
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of its own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks);
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.
- Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

### **Recognising emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay;
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment;
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach;
- Aggressive behaviour towards others;
- Scapegoated within the family;
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in preschool children;
- Low self esteem and lack of confidence;
- Withdrawn or seen as a 'loner' - difficulty relating to others.

### **Recognising sexual abuse and exploitation**

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and exploited and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and a full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child / family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional / behavioural.

### **Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:**

- Inappropriate sexual conduct;
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age;
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation;
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts;
- Indiscriminate choice of sexual partners;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for - e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties);
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education;
- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol.

### **Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:**

- Pain or itching of genital area;
- Blood on underclothes;
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed;
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted infections, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing.

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**A child under 13 years** is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child aged under 13 years is very serious and should be taken to indicate that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm. Cases involving children under 13 years old will always be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, penetrative sex with a child under 13 years old is classed as rape. Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm. There should be a presumption that the case will be reported to Children's Services/MASH.

Sexual activity with a child aged **under 16 years** is also an offence. Where it is consensual it may be less serious than if the child were aged under 13 years but may, nevertheless, have serious consequences for the welfare of the young person. Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13-15 as to whether there should be a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to Children's Services/MASH.

Sexual activity involving a **16- or 17-year-old**, even if it does not involve an offence, may still involve harm or the likelihood of harm being suffered. It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16- or 17-year-old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them.

### **Recognising Neglect**

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting.

Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care;
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause;
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss;
- Child thrives away from home environment;
- Child frequently absent from school;
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent;
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods.

**The harm or possible harm of a child may come to the church's attention in a number of possible ways:**

- Information given by the child, his/ her friends, a family member or close associate.
- The child's behaviour may become different from the usual, be significantly different from the behaviour of their peers, be bizarre or unusual or may involve 'acting out' a harmful situation in play.
- An injury which arouses suspicion because;
  - It does not make sense when compared with the explanation given.
  - The explanations differ depending on who is giving them (e.g., differing explanations from the parent / carer and child).
  - The child appears anxious and evasive when asked about the injury.
- Suspicion being raised when a number of factors occur over time, for example, the child fails to progress and thrive in contrast to his/her peers.

- Contact with individuals who pose a 'risk to children' ('Guidance on Offences Against Children', Home Office Circular 16/2005). This replaces the term 'Schedule One Offender' and relates to an individual that has been identified as presenting a risk or potential risk of harm to children.
- The parent's behaviour before the birth of a child may indicate the likelihood of significant harm to an unborn child, for example substance misuse, or previous children removed from their carers.

## 6. Acting on concerns – recording what you see, or are told by a child

If a member of staff or a volunteer has **minor concerns** about a child's welfare, they should record this following our **Reporting Concerns Procedures** (see Appendix 3).

There will be children who are not suffering from significant risk of harm or abuse, perhaps you notice small one-off concerns, but over time it might be that a pattern of small concerns become a worry. Those children who are in need of extra support and care can be helped through support offered to parents who may be struggling with a wide range of issues. Poor parenting can come from many pressures on families, and with the help of universal services in the area, go on to improve and provide a good home for their family. Tracking concerns in our **Reporting Concerns Procedure** system will monitor this.

However, if there is no improvement due to the parent not engaging, and a child continues to struggle and not thrive then this will need to be recorded more formally and may need to be referred to Children's Services. (See Appendix 4 for a copy of the Safeguarding Incident Report Form).

No professional, staff or volunteer should assume that someone else will pass on information which they think may be critical to keeping a child safe.

### Managing a disclosure

If a child tells you they are suffering from abuse, then you will need to manage that disclosure sensitively and record what you were told ready to refer it to the police or children's services as needed. Remember to record what the child told you in their own words, stay as close to what you were told without adding your opinions.

- Listen to what the child has to say with an open mind.
- Do not ask probing or leading questions designed to get the child to reveal more.
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, as well as what was said.
- Do not ask children to write a statement.
- Never promise the child that what they have told you can be kept secret; explain that you have responsibility to report what the child has said to someone else.

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- The designated lead for child protection in the church, or their deputy, must be informed as soon as reasonably possible.
- 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.

If any member of the team believes a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, then they should record the information on a **Safeguarding Incident Report Form** (see Appendix 4) and pass the form to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. The DSL(D) will share it with the local authority Children's Services (Working Together 2018).

**NOTE:** If deemed necessary, any member of the team can contact the local Children's Services directly.

### 7. Referring or reporting concerns about a child

The designated safeguarding lead or their deputy will act on behalf of River of Life Community Church in referring concerns or allegations of harm to:

Customer First (Social Services)	0800 9171109
Emergency Services (Police)	999
Children & Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Hub	0345 600 2090
Urgent Mental Health Crisis Support	NHS 111

We commit to ensure that any significant concern will be passed on to the appropriate agency, such as the police or Children's Services.

#### Urgent referrals relating to Child Protection

If anyone at River of Life Community Church believes that urgent action is needed because, for example, a child is in immediate danger please call children's services or 999 if necessary.

It is not the role of the designated safeguarding lead to undertake an investigation into the concerns or allegation of harm. It is the role of the designated safeguarding lead to collate and clarify details of the concern or allegation and to provide this information to our local children's services whose duty it is to make enquiries in accordance with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

If there are situations where the nominated people are not available to take the concern to the relevant agencies, then every member of the public has a duty to report a concern, so please feel free to contact Children's Services or the Police directly.

#### Seeking Medical Attention

If a child has a physical injury and there are concerns about abuse:

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If medical attention is required then this should be sought immediately by phoning for an ambulance, attending the Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit depending on the severity of the injury. You should then follow the procedures for referring a child protection concern to Children's Services as before. Any safeguarding concerns should be shared with the Ambulance staff/ Medical and Nursing staff in order that they can appropriately assess and treat the child and share relevant information.

### **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 Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will contact Children's Services as before but will not tell the parents or carers unless Children's Services have advised the church to do so.

### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

If there are concerns regarding sexual abuse or a disclosure from a child regarding sexual abuse, then the Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will immediately contact the police or children's services. This must not be shared with the parent/carer and the professional agencies will take over this process.

**If there is concern about an adult also suffering from abuse in the situation you are dealing with for the child**, then the Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy must be informed and if necessary, will contact Adult Safeguarding Services (Customer First) on 0800 9171109

The procedures remain the same for recording and reporting: a record must be made of the concerns seen, or of the disclosure of abuse recorded. A call must be made to the Adult Safeguarding Team, or the emergency services if they need medical attention or a crime has been committed.

Please refer to our Safeguarding Adults Policy for further information under the Care Act 2014. This also includes the many different forms of abuse adults face such as domestic violence, financial abuse, hate crime and institutional abuse, and others.

### **Consent (See Appendix 1: 7 golden rules on information sharing)**

*Professionals* should seek to discuss any concerns with the family (including the child where appropriate) and where possible seek their agreement to making referrals. This should only be done where such discussion and agreement seeking will not place the child at an increased risk of significant harm.

It should be noted that parents, carers or child may not agree to information being shared, but this should not prevent referrals where child protection concerns persist. The reasons for dispensing with consent from the parents; carer or child should be clearly recorded.

In cases where an allegation has been made against a family member living in the same household as the child and it is your view that discussing the matter with the parent would place the child at risk of harm, or where discussing it may place a member of staff / volunteer at risk, consent does not have to be sought prior to the referral being made.

## **8. Recruitment and selection**

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It is important when recruiting paid staff and volunteers to adhere to River of Life Community Church's recruitment policy. This will ensure potential staff and volunteers are screened for their suitability to work with children and young people.

River of Life Community Church recognises its staff and volunteers being essential to its success. As well as appointing staff and volunteers with the right skills and attributes to fulfil our aims and values, we also provide a robust recruitment and selection process to ensure all who are appointed are safely recruited to work with both vulnerable adults and children.

We work with the standards and processes outlined by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

A person who is barred from working with children or adults will be breaking the law if they work or volunteer or try to work or volunteer with those groups.

River of Life Community Church understand they should never knowingly employ someone who is barred to work with these groups as they would be breaking the law. If there is an incident where a member of staff or volunteer has to be dismissed because they have harmed a child or adult, or would have been if they had not left, River of Life Community Church will notify the DBS. Our full recruitment and selection process is available on request and is covered in safer recruitment training.

### **Recruiting ex-offenders**

We do not discriminate against those who have other criminal offences that do not bar them from working with children. We will always assess the risk in any situation and look to place those that have previous convictions or cautions in roles that best suit them.

### **9: Code of Practice/Behaviour Code**

River of Life Community Church issues a code of conduct to all staff and volunteers during their induction period outlining expectations of conduct during their time serving or ministering. The code of conduct we adhere to is at **Appendix 5**.

### **10. Managing offenders who pose a risk**

For those that do pose a risk to children or adults through convictions that include sexual or violent crimes, River of Life Community Church will work with all agencies and the advice given either by police or probation, or Multi Agency Public Protection Agency advice (MAPPA). Each offender will be issued a behaviour contract confirming how their attendance at church will be managed. This might involve having an escort, restrictions on movement around the building along with further assessments made for other events such as Church BBQ's or home groups.

### **11. Allegations against staff members / volunteers**

If any member of staff or volunteer has concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another individual working within the group or organisation including:

- Behaving in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child or

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- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

The member of staff who has a concern about a team member, or to whom an allegation or concern is reported should not question the child or investigate the matter further.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer for River of Life Community Church or their deputy will report the matter to the Designated Officer within Children's Services at the Local Authority. This position was formally known as Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the term is still often in use.

River of Life Community Church will always report any member of staff or volunteer they have concerns about to the appropriate authorities depending on the seriousness of the situation. We will take all advice offered to us and co-operate fully.

## **Appendix 1: Responsibilities**

**The person with lead responsibility for safeguarding within River of Life Community Church**

**is:**

**Robert Nicholas**

**& their deputy is Alién Rojas**

**Our trustee with responsibility for safeguarding within River of Life Community Church is:**

**Alién Rojas**

## Appendix 2: Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing

In July 2018, the government published revised practice guidance “*Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers*”. Below are the 7 golden rules of information sharing that this guidance recommends in line with the new data protection laws.

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

## Appendix 3: Other Forms of Abuse

### Domestic Violence

Definition – (Home Office, 2013) *For the purpose of this policy domestic violence is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.*

Under the Serious Crime Act 2015, the government announced a new domestic violence law criminalising patterns of coercive, controlling and psychological abuse. The new offence carries a maximum sentence of 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

Section 68 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 came into force on 5 April 2023 and removed the 'living together' requirement for the controlling or coercive behaviour offence, which means that the offence applies to partners, ex-partners or family members, regardless of whether the victim and perpetrator live together.

Children are hugely affected by domestic abuse and violence, often going on to become victims of the violence themselves. However, the impact emotionally to children has been seen to cause significant harm to them. A high percentage of serious case reviews, and those children on child protection plans have domestic violence as a key concern.

### Forced Marriage

Children from some communities in the UK are still being forced into marriage at a very young age and those of any age, especially those without mental capacity to make a choice. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. This includes taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place); marrying someone who lacks mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured or not); Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order. Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison.

### Honour Based Abuse

Honour based abuse is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.

It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, honour based violence might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion;
- want to get out of an arranged marriage; want to get out of a forced marriage;
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based abuse however it can also affect men and boys. Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

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- domestic abuse
- threats of violence
- sexual or psychological abuse
- forced marriage
- being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go
- assault

(Safe.Met.Police.UK)

Honour based abuse will commonly start when children try to live and fit in a more westernised culture, starting relationships which causes shame and distress to the family. Take any concerns a person may have about their safety seriously and seek professional help immediately. Do not try to resolve this in anyway yourself.

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to: practice FGM in the UK; take girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM, whether or not it is lawful in the country of destination; aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad.

If you are concerned a child may be taken abroad for FGM, or that it may have already occurred please contact support helplines in Appendix 5.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation**

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention/affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

*"Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability".* (From 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation', Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children.

### **County Lines**

County lines is 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 (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

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Children and young people may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime (see below). County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.

Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs (National Crime agency, 2018). Young people do the majority of the work and take the most risk.

Dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines” are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police. Gangs use the phones to receive orders and contact young people to instruct them where to deliver drugs. This may be to a local dealer or drug user, or a dealer or drug user in another county.

Once a child is part of a county lines gang their loyalty and commitment will be tested. The gang will begin to trap the child by making them feel powerless to leave. This might include threats of violence if they leave, making the child feel like they are betraying their new ‘family’, or telling the child they will get in trouble if they seek help because they have committed a criminal offence (Children’s Society, 2019).

For more information on these and other related abuses go to the NSPCC website link below [Protecting children from county lines | NSPCC Learning](#)

### **Trafficking**

Human trafficking is essentially the recruitment, movement or receipt of a person by deception or coercion into a situation of exploitation, this may include:

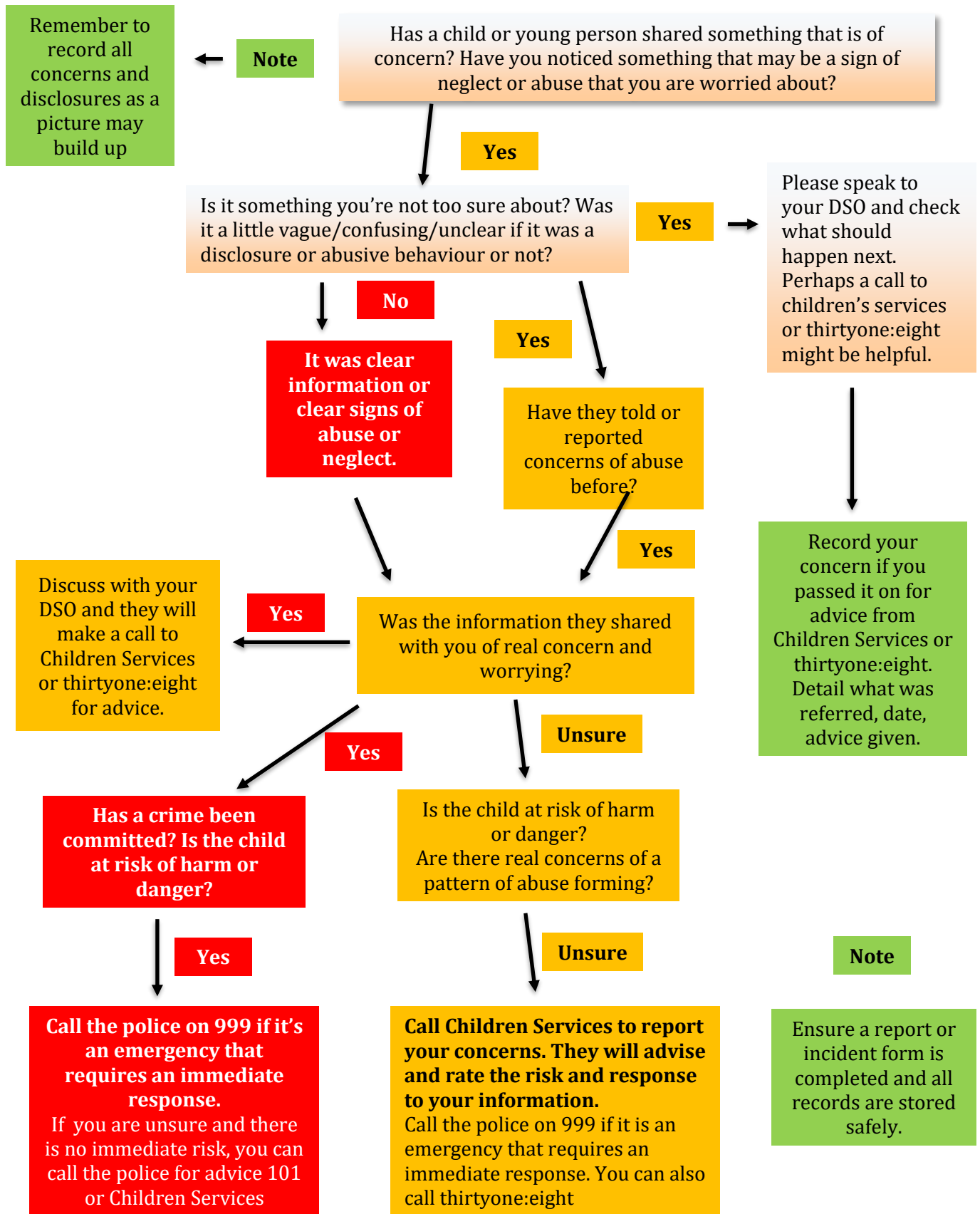
- prostitution (or other forms of sexual exploitation)
- forced labour
- slavery
- servitude, or
- the removal of organs<sup>1</sup>.

[Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

**Exploitation by radicalisers** who promote violence involves the exploitation of susceptible people who are drawn into violent extremism by radicalisers. Violent extremists often use a persuasive rationale and charismatic individuals to attract people to their cause. The aim is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. The Prevent Strategy, launched in 2007, seeks to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It is the preventative strand of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

[Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)  
[CONTEST 2023 leaflet \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### Appendix 4: How to Report a Concern - Flow Chart



**Appendix 5: Safeguarding Incident Report Form**  
**Part 1 (for use by any staff – must be handwritten and legible)**

Child's name:	Date of birth (if known):	Location of incident:
Date & time of incident:	Date & time (of writing):	
Name (print): ..... Job title/role:		
Signature: .....		
Record the following <u>factually</u> : Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. <i>(please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Complete body map if injury/marks seen)</i>		
What is the child's perspective?		
Your opinion, where relevant <i>(how and why might this have happened?)</i>		
Any other relevant information/ Previous concerns etc. <i>(distinguish between fact and opinion)</i>		
Note actions, including names of anyone to whom your information was passed and when		

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.

**Please pass this form to the DSL without delay**

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**Part 2 (for use by DSL)**

Information received by DSL:	Date:	Time :	From whom:		
Any advice <b>sought</b> , if applicable	Date:	Time:	From: name/organisation:		
	Advice received:				
Action taken with reasons recorded <i>(e.g. MARF completed, monitoring advice given to appropriate staff, CAF etc)</i>	Date:	Time completed:	By whom:		
Outcome	Date:	Time :	By whom:		
Further Actions	Action	Date completed:	By whom:		
Parent/carer informed?	<b>Y</b>	Who spoken to:	Date:	Time:	By whom:
	<b>N</b>	Detail reason:			
Is any additional detail held, if so where?					
Prior safeguarding history	No of previous records of concern:				
	Has the child been subject of CAF/Early Help assessment?				
	Currently on CP Plan (CPP) / Child in Need Plan (CiN)				
	Previously on CP Plan (CPP) / Child in Need Plan (CiN)				
	Is child known to other agencies?		Y / N		
Name of DSL:			Signature:		

**Part 3 - Record of concern (to be completed by referrer. Only complete and return relevant pages)**

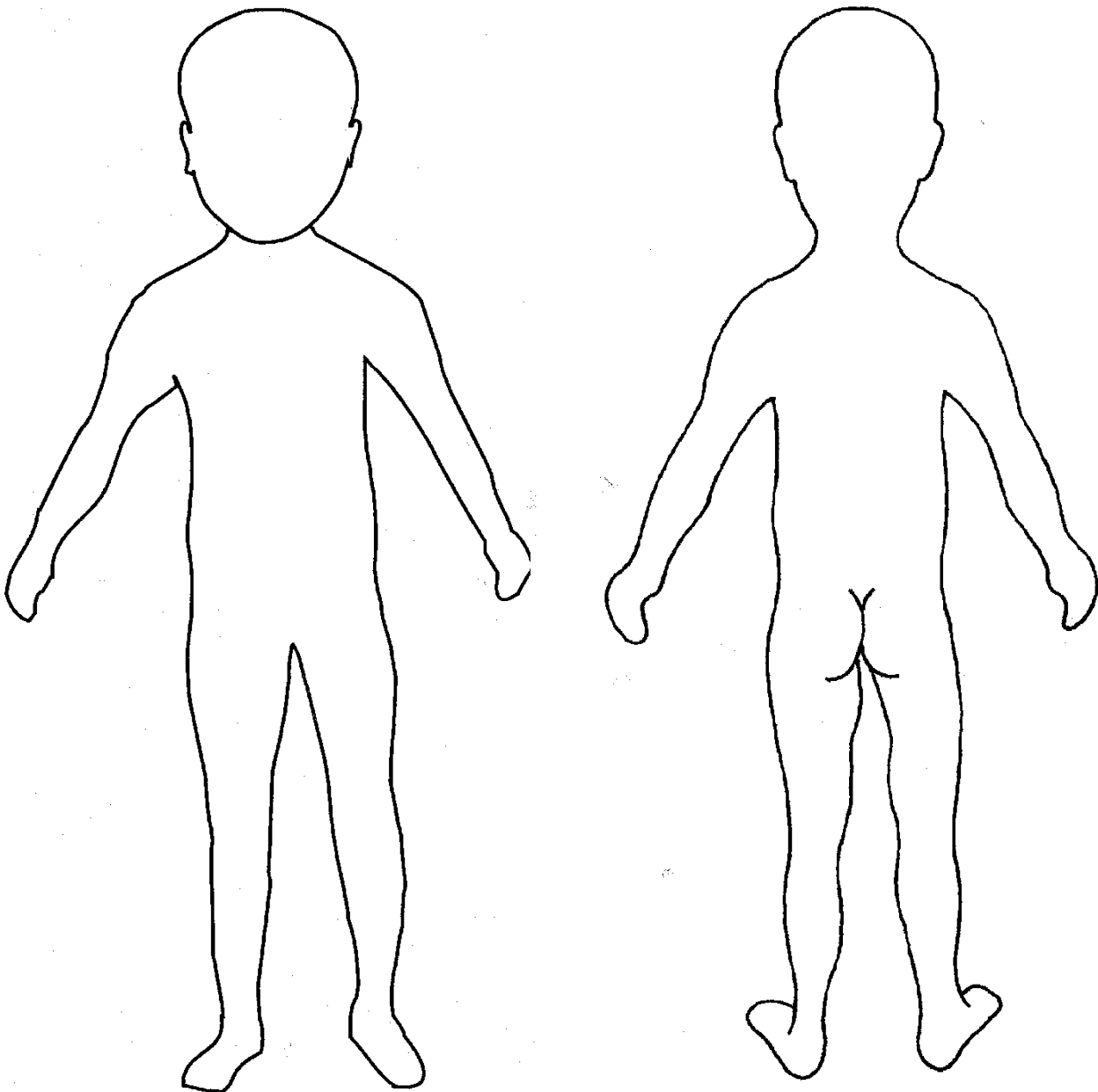
**BODYMAP**

**(This must be completed at time of observation)**

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Staff: \_\_\_\_\_ Job title/role: \_\_\_\_\_

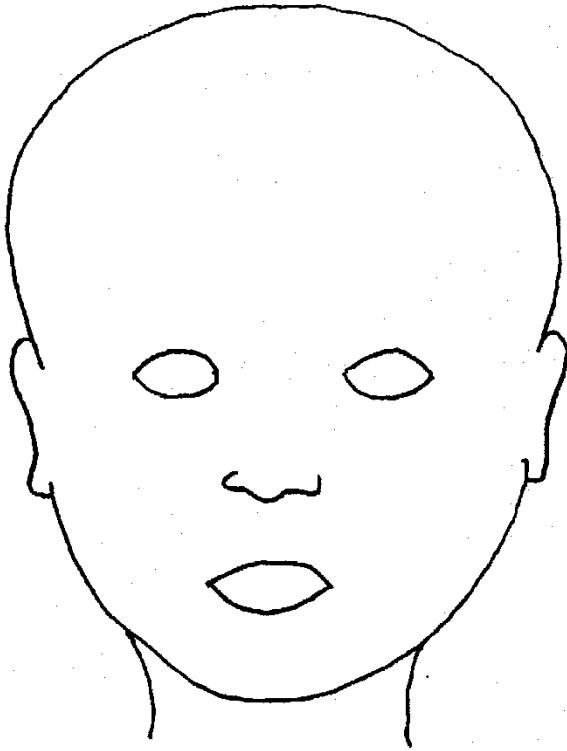
Date and time of observation: \_\_\_\_\_



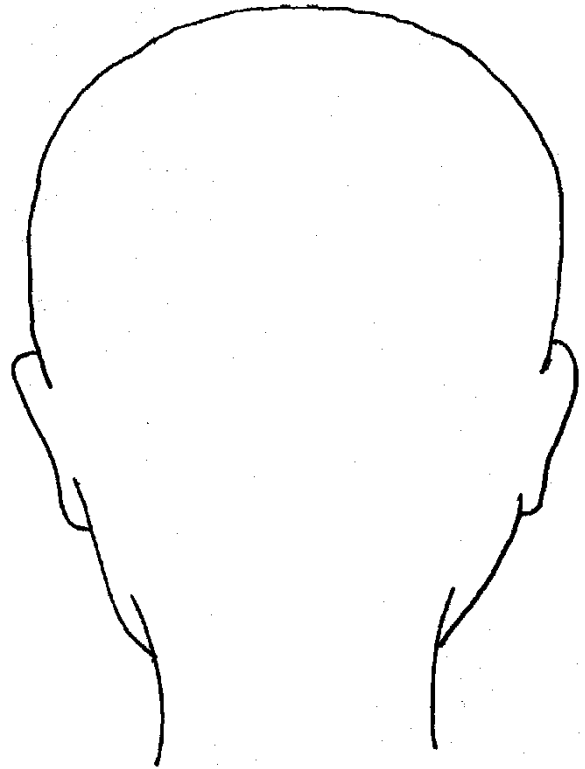
River of Life Community Church Safeguarding Children Policy

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

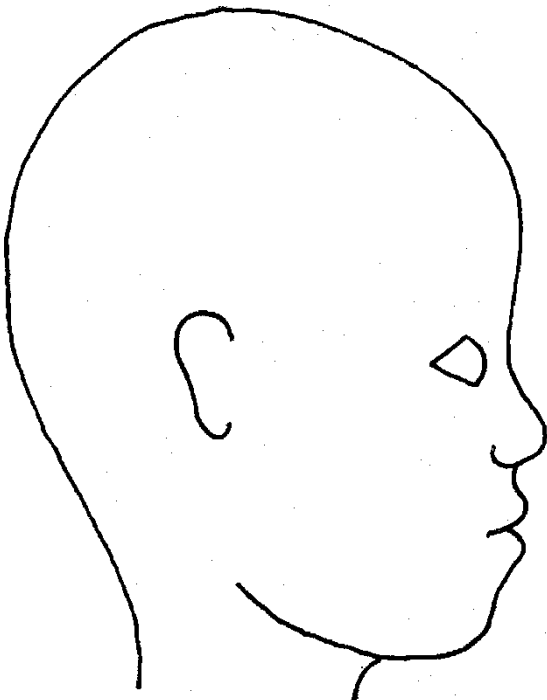
Date and time of  
observation: \_\_\_\_\_



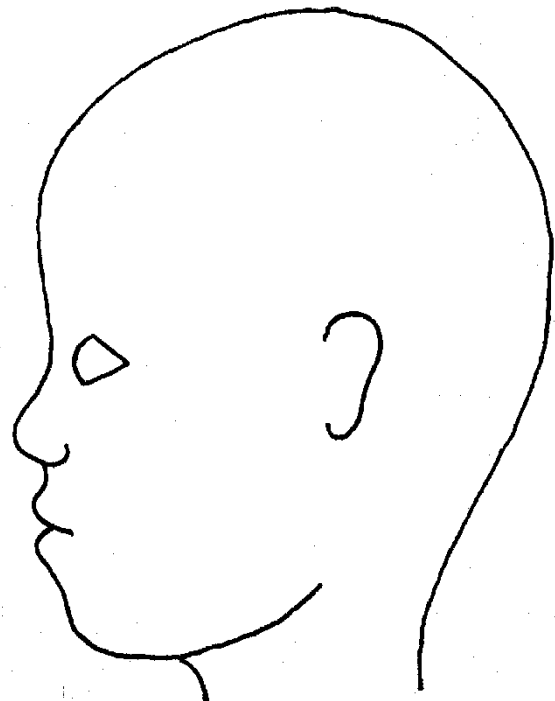
**FRONT**



**BACK**



**RIGHT**

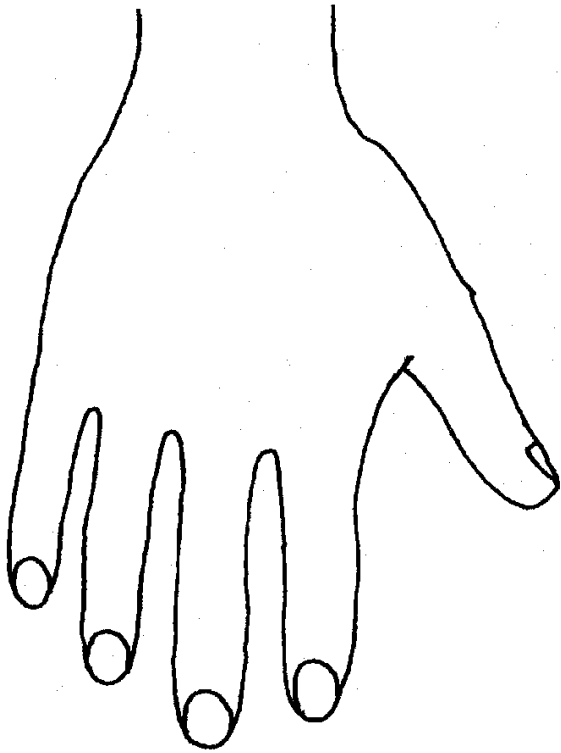


**LEFT**

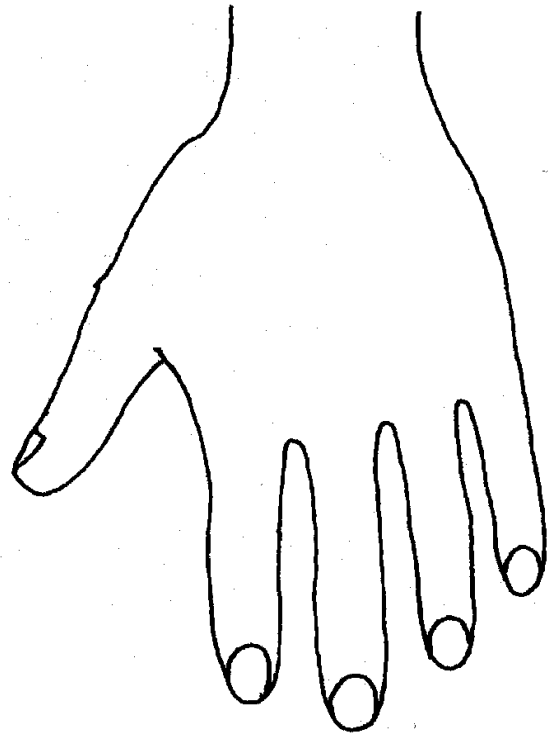
River of Life Community Church Safeguarding Children Policy

Name of child:

Date and time of observation:

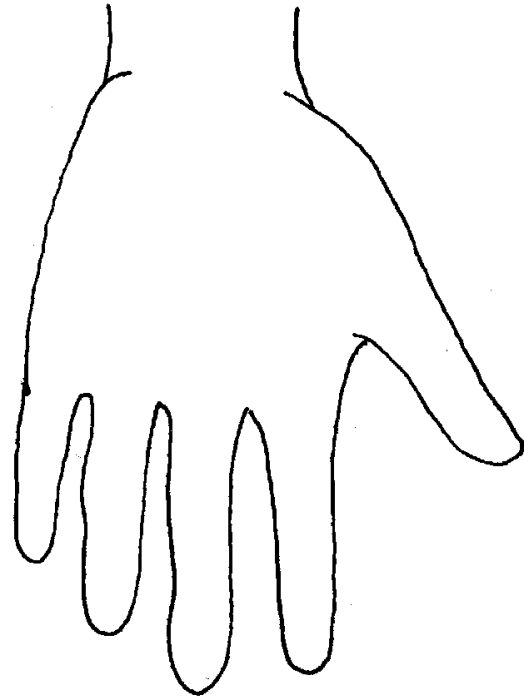


R



L

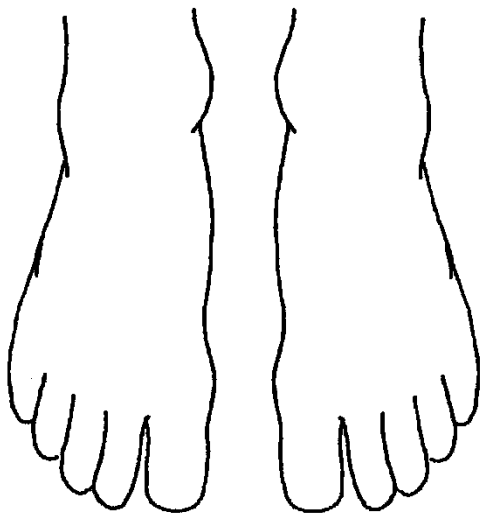
BACK



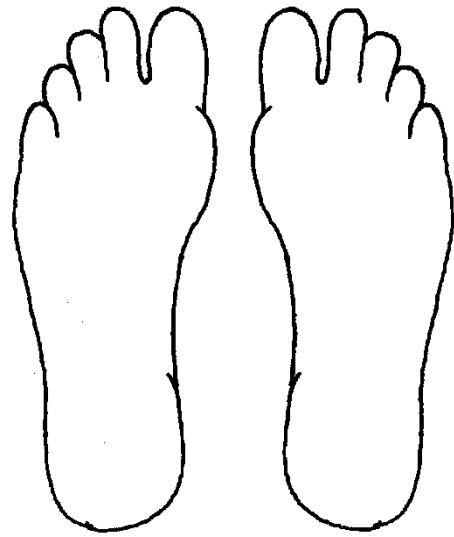
River of Life Community Church Safeguarding Children Policy

Name of child:

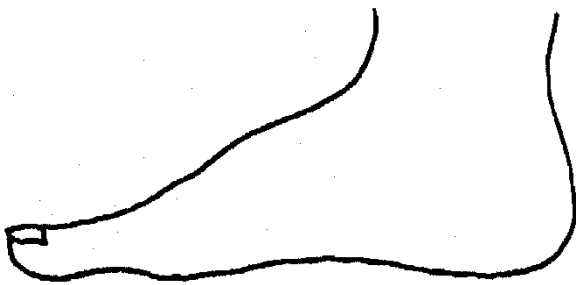
Date and time of observation:



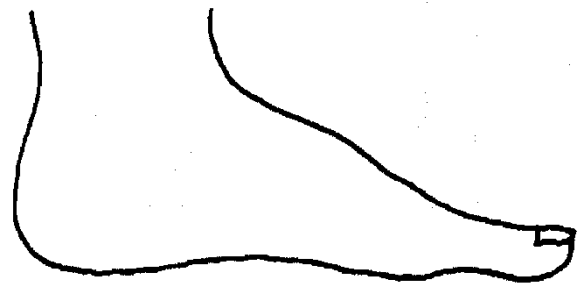
R TOP L



R BOTTOM L



R

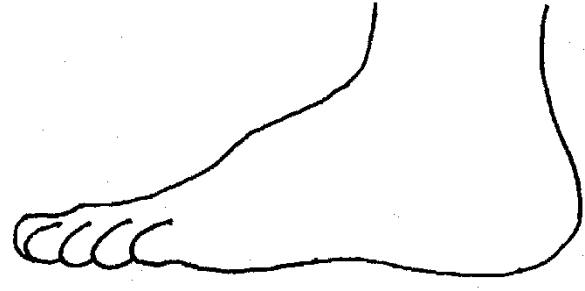


L

INNER



R



L

OUTER

Printed Name:

Signature and Job title of staff:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 6: Safeguarding Code of Conduct

### RIVER OF LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH

The following are a guide to helping create a safe and protective culture for young people, staff and volunteers. For full guidance in relation to child protection procedures please refer to the River of Life Community Church Child Protection Policy.

#### Practice to be encouraged:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- Involve young people in the decisions that affect them
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young people (e.g. not sharing tents, shower facilities or having an inappropriate or intimate relationship)
- When organising events and meetings for children and young people, or their attendance at events/meetings, the following information/documentation should be requested by River of Life Community Church staff in relation to each child or young person attending the event/meeting:
  - A Consent Form for all events or specific activities;
  - Contact details for the family/guardians, including emergency contact numbers;
  - Information relating to any special issues, needs or requirements (e.g. medical, health, diet, language assistance)
- Use a reporting form to keep a clear note of any incidents or concerns
- If physical contact is necessary (e.g. in an emergency), tell the young person clearly what you are doing and why, seek their permission and give choices where possible. If possible, have another worker present.
- Every activity, event or session should be risk assessed to maintain the safety of young people

#### Practice to be avoided:

- You should not give lifts in your car to individual children or young people or travel alone with young people. Where not doing this would compromise Health and Safety Policy (e.g. leaving a young person alone at a venue) you should attempt to phone the parent/guardian of the young person to confirm what you will be doing. You should also ask the young person to sit in the back seat.
- You should not take young people to your home or that of another worker
- Workers should avoid situations where they are alone with young people. Where a private meeting with a lone child/young person is unavoidable it should be held in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting. If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second staff member/volunteer
- Workers should not use their own 'personal' electronic communications (e.g. mobile phones, social networking sites) for contacting young people, unless agreed by the management committee.

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### **Unacceptable practice:**

- Invading the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing.
- Inappropriate physical or sexually provocative games
- Sharing sleeping accommodation with an individual child or young person
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun
- Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- Scape-goating or ridiculing a child or young person
- Allowing inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language to remain unchallenged
- Any form of physical punishment
- Illegal use of drugs
- Use of alcohol during an event
- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Racism or sectarianism of any form
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures

**Statement:** I am signing this Safeguarding Code of Conduct to agree that I have read and understood what is expected of me.

**Name:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

## Appendix 7: Useful contact numbers and websites

<b><u>Organisation</u></b>	<b><u>Tel</u></b>	<b><u>Website/ Email</u></b>	<b><u>Notes</u></b>
Childline	0800 1111	<a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>	24 hour line for children and young people to talk about things worrying them
NSPCC – Child Protection helpline	0808 800 5000	<a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a>	24 hour line for adults worried about the safety of a child
Thirtyone:eight	0303 003 1111	<a href="http://thirtyoneeight.org">thirtyoneeight.org</a>	Offers help, information and advice to churches and other faith organisations.

<b>Type of Abuse</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Email/ Website</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Domestic Violence	Women’s Aid	0808 2000 247	<a href="http://Womensaid.org.uk">Womensaid.org.uk</a>	24 hour National DV helpline
Forced marriage and HBV	Forced Marriage Unit	020 7008 0151	<a href="http://Safe.met.police.uk">Safe.met.police.uk</a> <a href="mailto:fmufcdo.gov.uk">fmufcdo.gov.uk</a>	Website has links to other support organisations
Female Genital Mutilation	Foreign and Commonwealth Office	0207 008 1500	<a href="mailto:fgm@fco.gov.uk">fgm@fco.gov.uk</a>	If you are concerned that a British citizen may be taken overseas for the purpose of FGM
Female Genital Mutilation	NSPCC FGM helpline	0800 028 3550	<a href="mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk">fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk</a>	
Female Genital Mutilation	Forward		<a href="http://www.forwarduk.org.uk">www.forwarduk.org.uk</a>	Provide support, counselling and safe space for girls and women to talk about their FMG experiences.
Human Trafficking	NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre	0808 800 5000	<a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a>	Monday – Friday 09:30am - 4:30pm
Human Trafficking	Salvation Army Trafficking helpline	0300 3038151	<a href="http://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/rescue">www.salvationarmy.org.uk/rescue</a>	24 hour/ 7 days a week. Call this number if you suspect someone is a victim of Human Trafficking.
Human Trafficking	NRM – National Referral Mechanism for Human Trafficking		<a href="http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk">www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk</a>	National Crime Agency gives more details on their website of referral agencies that can be used to support those affected by Human Trafficking