KENNET VALLEY FREE CHURCH

The Safeguarding Policy

CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – DETAILS OF THE ORGANISATION	**PAGE 1**
SECTION 2 – PREVENTION	**PAGE 4**
SECTION 3 - PRACTICE GUIDELINES	**PAGE 6**
SECTION 4 – RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE	**PAGE 7**
SECTION 5 – PASTORAL CARE	**PAGE 11**

SECTION 1

Details of the Organisation

Name of Organisation: Kennet Valley Free Church

Address: **Carters Rise, Fords Farm, Calcot, Reading RG31 7YT**
Tel No: 0118 942 1591

Senior Leaders: Graham Cooke (PASTOR)
Contact details: tel. 0118 954 2673 graham.cooke@kvfc.org.uk
Tom Wederell (PASTOR)
Tel. 07967 898609 tom-KVFC@hotmail.com

Safeguarding co-ordinator: Luke Bulpitt
Contact details: tel. 0790 5261424 Luke.bulpitt@btinternet.co.uk

Membership of Denomination/Organisation:
Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

Charity Number: 1174002
Insurance Company: Congregational

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

Kennet Valley Free Church is an independent evangelical church. That means that we are not aligned to any one brand of Christianity, but welcome people from all sorts of church backgrounds – and from none. We are ordinary people who follow Jesus Christ. We consider the Bible to be very important and relevant for today. We help and encourage one another in the Christian life and want to share the good news about Jesus with our neighbours and friends.

To this end we meet on a Sunday morning to worship God and to learn more about Him. During this time we have:

- A creche where volunteers look after children aged between 0-3 years old
- Junior Church where volunteers teach children from the bible in age appropriate classes for children aged between 4-11
- "Bubble" where volunteers teach youths aged between 11-14 from the bible.

We run three clubs for children on Thursday and Friday evenings in which volunteers supervise playing of games and activities, mixed with learning more about Jesus. These are:

- Adventurers for children aged 4 -7
- Explorers for children aged 7-11
- NRG for youths aged 11-18

We also run a regular bible study group for youths aged 14-18 called Crowded House which meets in the homes of members of the church fortnightly. From time to time we run other occasional bible study groups for secondary school age children

which take place either in the church building or in the homes of church members.

We run a weekly group for mothers and toddlers called “Tiddlers” where volunteers supervise parents and carers who bring their pre-school age children for a time of songs and games.

Occasionally we organise overnight stays or holidays, usually for a weekend, for youths aged 11-18 and every summer we run a Holiday Bible Club for children aged 4-11 for one week during the summer holidays when activities, games and teaching from the bible occurs every weekday morning.

We do not currently run any group or activities specifically for adults who have care and support needs.

We employ a full time Youth and Children's Pastor to co-ordinate and oversee our activities with children and young people – Charlie Baines: Charlie-KVFC@hotmail.com .

Kennet Valley Free Church is a member of thirtyone:eight (https://thirtyoneeight.org/) an independent Christian safeguarding charity which helps individuals, organisations, charities, faith and community groups to protect vulnerable people from abuse.

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. They have a right to be protected from *“all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”*[1] As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are

[1] Convention on the Rights of the Child

committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to international conventions.
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers
- regularly review the operational guidelines attached as annexes to this policy and oversee compliance with those guidelines.
- ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
- support the Safeguarding Coordinators in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.

SECTION 2

Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

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

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

1. *Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and*

educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

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

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

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse are included in Appendix 1 to our policy, and details of how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in Section 4 of our policy:

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers[2] will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)

[2] All references in this document to "workers" includes unpaid volunteers who work with children in any of the activities run by the church.

- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Safeguarding training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will complete appropriate Safeguarding training when appointed unless they have already completed relevant training as a result of another appointment. Thereafter workers will undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs. The Code of Conduct is Appendix 2 to this policy.

Section 3

Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for the activities we are involved with, and these are attached as Appendix 3 to this policy.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding to those we wish to protect, to those involved in working with children and adults, and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Section 4
Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Instead the following procedures should be adhered to:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to the safeguarding co-ordinator Luke Bulpitt by telephone or email (details above in section 1); who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.

- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to

Karen Albanese (hereafter the "Deputy") by telephone (07854804616) or email (kazzaa40@hotmail.co.uk).

- If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to the THIRTYONE:EIGHT PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0303 003 1111. Alternatively by contacting Social Services or the police.

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact social services in the area the child or adult lives.

- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
    - Chair of trustees who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
    - Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.

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

- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.

- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) 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 demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

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

Detailed procedures where there is a 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, Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

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

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

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

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

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

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

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

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker

- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for

Adult Services to decide not the church.

SECTION 5

Pastoral Care

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 the place of worship / organisation.

Working with offenders / those under investigation

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the leadership in October 2026. It will be reviewed annually in anticipation of the church's October Business Meeting.

Signed by: **Position:** PASTOR

Graham Cooke

Signed by: **Position:** PASTOR

Tom Wederell

Date:

APPENDIX 1

KENNET VALLEY FREE CHURCH

DEFINITIONS / SIGNS OF ABUSE

Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)'.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms 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 a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

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

illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may 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 the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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

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

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, 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.

Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Adults)

The following definition of abuse is laid down in 'No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse (Department of Health 2000):

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

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it'.

Physical Abuse

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

Sexual Abuse

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

Psychological or Emotional Abuse

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the vulnerable adult's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

Financial or Material Abuse

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

Neglect/Self Neglect

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

Discriminatory Abuse

This is the inappropriate treatment of a vulnerable adult because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

Organisational Abuse

This is the mistreatment or abuse of a vulnerable adult by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

Signs of Possible Abuse (children & young people)

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

Physical

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

Sexual

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

with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional

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

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc.

*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

Signs of Possible Abuse (vulnerable adults)

Physical

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems unattended

Sexual

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosure or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming

Psychological

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of the carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes

- Unexplained paranoia

Financial or Material

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents
- Sudden inability to pay bills
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property

Neglect or Omission

- Malnutrition, weight loss and /or persistent hunger
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
- No callers or visitors

Discriminatory

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance of care

Institutional

- Lack of flexibility or choice over meals, bed times, visitors, phone calls etc.
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids
- Missing documents and/or absence of individual care plans
- Public discussion of private matter
- Lack of opportunity for social, educational or recreational activity

APPENDIX 2

KENNET VALLEY FREE CHURCH

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKERS

Kennet Valley Free Church behaviour code for working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers[3].

The code of conduct aims to help protect adults at risk of harm, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The role of workers (staff and volunteers)

When working with children and young people or adults at risk of harm, you are acting in a position of trust for Kennet Valley Free Church. You will be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

Good practice

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare

[3] All references in this document to "workers" includes unpaid volunteers who work with children in any of the activities run by the church.

- Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged
- Listen carefully to those you are supporting
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures)
- Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary
- Work in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations
- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the safeguarding co-ordinator
- Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay taking action

Unacceptable behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details to an individual exclusively
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct

If you have behaved inappropriately you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the line manager will consult the safeguarding coordinator as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave the group in which you have been working. We may also

make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the safeguarding coordinator, group leader or line manager (in the case of a paid staff member).

Declaration

I agree to abide by the expectations outlined in this document and confirm that I have read the relevant policies that assist my work with vulnerable groups.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

In the event of a Safeguarding concern contact:

Luke Bulpitt (Safeguarding Officer) 07905261424 luke.bulpitt@btinternet.com

Karen Albanese (Deputy Safeguarding Officer) 07854804616 kazzaa40@hotmail.co.uk

APPENDIX 3

KENNET VALLEY FREE CHURCH

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

RECORD KEEPING

Contact Details

General information about a child involved in activities at KVFC should be obtained when they begin attending activities and renewed annually throughout the time they attend activities at the church. This should include contact details of parents / carers; medical needs; special dietary requirements / allergies. Similarly parent / carers must be provided with details of the group including contact telephone numbers.

Register

A register of those attending a club or activity should be maintained together with a register of workers. If any participant leaves before the end of the activity this should be recorded on the register. The register should also record the names of all workers present during the activity and note any occasion where others are using the church building at the same time.

Incident / Accident recording

Any unusual incident[4], accident involving injury to anyone, behavioural concern or safeguarding concern must be recorded in writing and securely stored. Where there is a safeguarding concern the record should be passed to the safeguarding coordinator to store in a secure place. Where there has been an accident causing a child or vulnerable adult an injury the nature of the incident should be explained to their responsible adult at the end of the session or if that is not possible a letter should be sent. (the situation is different for

[4] An unusual incident might include sexualised comments made by a child, a fight between children, bruising or injuries noticed on a child.

safeguarding concerns where it may not always be appropriate to notify the responsible adult)

GIFTS REWARDS AND FAVOURITISM

Gifts should only be given to children or vulnerable adults as part of a policy agreed amongst a group's leaders and for the purpose of supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. Such gifts must be given openly and not be based on favouritism.

While there may be occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to workers care must be taken to ensure that workers do not accept any gift that might lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. It is unacceptable for a worker to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Any worker who receives such a gift should inform the leader of their activity.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

General Rules

Everyone attending an activity organised by KVFC will be treated with dignity and respect. This will be demonstrated by the actions of our workers, the language they use and their attitude.

Workers must never engage in rough games with children (e.g. play fighting) and must never engage in sexually provocative contact, games or comments (e.g. holding hands with a young person of the opposite sex).

Wherever possible, a worker should not be alone with a child. Where this is unavoidable the worker should inform a colleague of what they are doing either by speaking to them directly or by telephone if that is not possible.

A worker of their own sex will always be available to a child / young person attending an activity held at KVFC. For Holiday Bible Club, Adventurers, Explorers and NRG this will mean we will always have at least one male and one female worker present and available. For Junior Church, Bubble and creche during the Sunday morning service this will mean that both male and female workers will be present and available in the Church.

Crowded House is a bible study group which takes place in the home of members of the

church. This group will always be led by a worker who has been through the application process in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy.

Other adults

Only workers assigned to the group in question are allowed to participate in the activity. Other adults should not be allowed free access to the group (e.g. a member of the church who is not a worker assigned to Junior Church should not be in a Junior Church class on a Sunday morning). In the creche during a Sunday morning service parents / carers may wish to stay and supervise their own children. Where this does happen they cannot assume responsibility for caring for other children. Occasionally an adult may want to observe a group before deciding whether to apply to become a worker involved with that group. This should only happen with the knowledge and permission of the group leader who will assume responsibility for supervising the adult.

Where a parent would like to stay and watch their child's group's activity the following principles should apply (taking into account that for some children with special needs it may be appropriate for their parent/ carer to stay with them for an extended period):

- Parents can be permitted to observe groups but not take part. A distinction should be made.
- It can help certain children settle into a group, if the child knows that a parent/carer is there. After the settling in period, if a parent/carer wishes to continue to stay, consideration could be given to them becoming a helper/worker but they would be required to undertake the same recruitment and selection procedure as with any other worker.
- Whilst a person watching may be a parent/carer for one or more of the children, to the rest of the children they are strangers.

Workers under the age of 18

The minimum age of a worker in any of the church's activities is 16. Children aged 14 and over may on occasion be involved in helping the leaders of a group but will not have a supervisory role over children. At no time should a child under the age of 16 be left in charge of children of any age.

ADULT TO CHILD RATIOS

In the creche during the Sunday morning service there must be at least one worker for every three children who are not being supervised by their own parent(s).

In Junior Church, during the Sunday morning service there must be at least one worker for every 13 children In the Bubble age group (11-14) there must be at least one worker for

every 15 children.

In the Thursday night group (Adventurers) there must be one worker for every 10 children.

In the Friday night groups (Explorers and NRG) there must be at least one worker for every 10 children.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Care for a child or vulnerable adult with special needs or disabilities must be agreed with the child / young person / adult and their parents and carers and should be recorded in writing. The arrangements to be agreed should include, where appropriate, personal care (e.g. whether the child will need help toileting).

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Sometimes children and young people become angry, upset or disruptive. Occasionally their behaviour may endanger themselves or others. The Government has developed national standards in relation to early years and day care and the following guidelines have been adopted by KVFC:

If someone is being disruptive:

- Ask them to stop.
- Speak to them to establish the cause(s) of the upset.
- Inform them they will be asked to leave if the behaviour continues.
- Warn them if they continue to be disruptive, this might result in longer-term exclusion from the group.

If they are harming themselves, another person or property then others in the group should be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring. At the same time, and with a second worker present, request them to STOP. If your request is ignored, you might need to warn the individual that you will consider calling the Police. As a last resort, in the event of them harming themselves, other people or property, physical restraint may be needed until the Police to arrive.

The workers involved should always record what happened in writing as soon as possible after the incident. This should include:

- What activity was taking place.
- What might have caused the disruptive behaviour.
- The person's behaviour.
- What was said and how the worker and others responded.
- A list of others present who witnessed the incident.

The report should be given to the leader to be kept securely with the register. The worker may also wish to retain a copy. Parents should be informed if their child has been restrained.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

- Do not compare a child, young person or adult with another in the group; rather encourage and affirm and, if possible, give them responsibility for appropriate tasks.
- Build healthy relationships and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect others to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
- Take care to give the quieter and/or well behaved attention and resist allowing the demanding individuals to take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
- NEVER smack or hit anyone and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary.
- Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely.
- Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure everyone understands what action will be taken if not adhered to.
- Every person is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.

For those who are continuously disruptive:

- Have them sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
- Encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- Challenge them to change their behaviour whilst encouraging their strengths.
- Warn them you may speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour, they may be sent outside the room (under supervision), be banned from attending the group for a period of time.
- Bans from attending groups may also be imposed for bad behaviour which occurs outside of the group or where a leader has concerns about future bad behaviour

UNEXPECTED ATTENDANCE AT ACTIVITIES

Where a young person wants to join in with one of the Friday night groups apparently without the knowledge of their parents (e.g. children playing outside), their name, age, address and telephone number should be obtained and their visit should be recorded in the register. The child should be asked if a parent / carer is aware where they are and what time they are

expected home – if this is before the group ends they should be encouraged to return home or their parent / carer contacted to ensure they are happy with the arrangement. On leaving they should be given a leaflet with contact details for the group and told they **must** obtain their parent's / carer's permission to return the following week. They should not be permitted to return to the group until a form has been completed by their parent or carer.

SLEEP OVERS

Sleepovers should be discussed and arranged in advance by the workers so that agreements can be made on the best way of caring for the children given the venue, number of children, age and gender mix etc. Workers must be aware of the possibility of abuse by adult and child alike and accept the need to be watchful.

The following issues need to be considered when organising a sleep-over:

- Parents/carers must complete a medical consent form and an activity consent form in respect of their children's medical care, travel and collection arrangements, sleeping conditions, food, other specific activities (e.g. games).
- Parents/carers should be given written details of the arrangements for the night with the contact number of an identified children's worker, not simply the phone number of the premises.
- Specific responsibilities should be designated to workers to ensure clarity of roles.
- Make sure there is a qualified first-aider in attendance.
- Males and females should sleep separately. If there is a mixed sex group, female and male leaders will be needed.
- Adults should not sleep in the same room as the children unless it is considered the group needs to be supervised at all times. It may be more appropriate to appoint an adult to conduct random night patrols.
- Appropriate night attire must be brought.
- Changing and showering facilities should be single-sex and separate for children and adults. If there are limited facilities, timetables need to be drawn up.

All medical information and emergency contact numbers must be easily accessible and workers should have access to a telephone or mobile phone.

TRANSPORTATION

Advice for transporting children, young people or vulnerable adults is as follows:

- Wherever possible driving is restricted to those who have been through the church's recruitment procedures for workers.
- All drivers must have read the safeguarding policy of the church and agree to abide by it.
- The driver should hold a full driving licence, the vehicle must be adequately insured and the vehicle road worthy.

- It is reasonable to expect that drivers may be alone with a child for short periods. Consideration should therefore be given to dropping off the least vulnerable last and routes planned accordingly. Two workers in a vehicle does not in itself guarantee safety - there have been incidents where workers have acted abusively together.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in the vehicle with someone they are transporting. If, for example, a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk there and then, but arrange to meet them at a location where there are other adults around with the knowledge of the group leader. (Remember they may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- At collection or dropping off points no child or young person should be on their own and the driver should make sure they are collected by an appropriate adult. This may also apply to a vulnerable adult, depending on the nature of their vulnerability and/or disability.
- Consideration will be given to instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular individual e.g. where there has been a disagreement or they have romantic feelings for a driver.

If parents or carers do some transporting, they must be made aware that such arrangements are their own responsibility and not the church's.

FILMING AND TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS

Permission must be obtained from both children and adults before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded. However, it is perfectly acceptable to ask parents/carers to let the church know if they do NOT want their child photographed or filmed. The worker should write to parents or carers in advance to explain what is happening and leave the onus on the parent/ carer to contact them if they have any objections. In addition to this:

- It must be made clear in the letter why the image(s) or film is being used, what it will be used for and who might want to look at the pictures.
- When using photographs of children and young people, use group pictures and never identify them by name or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.

Written and specific consent from parents or carers should be obtained before using photographs on a website.