Venture CHURCH

Creating places where everyone is, and feels, safe.



Child and Adult SAFEGUARDING POLICY (2026)

Venture Church (formerly Milton Keynes Christian Centre) has a mission to 'Bring people to Jesus and equip them to live courageously as fully devoted followers of Christ'. Encapsulated in this is our value that people matter to God and so they must matter to us. This means everyone who comes into contact with our ministry is recognised as an individual and we commit to keep them safe and safeguarded from harm.

Through the course of our activities as a ministry, we encounter people from all walks of life and with different backgrounds and needs. We have a responsibility to support everyone we encounter but especially those with additional care and support needs, whether they be children or adults. We want to work with our communities to identify any risks of harm or abuse to those who are vulnerable and help prevent or reduce those risks by working as a Safeguarding organisation, along with our statutory Safeguarding partners. In this way, we can ensure that everyone feels safe and is able to fully experience all that God has for them.

As an organisation, we understand that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we have engaged in training a wide range of our staff and volunteers in both children's and adult Safeguarding. This is now core to our recruitment of both staff and volunteers in the ministry. We have a safeguarding team that comprises a Safeguarding lead and a team of Safeguarding co-ordinators who ensure that there is always someone available to report or raise any concerns with. Our processes for managing these Safeguarding concerns are documented in the attached policy document which will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure we remain cognisant of National and Local statutory requirements.

I would implore all members of staff and volunteers at Venture Church to take the time to read and familiarise themselves with this policy document and together we can ensure Safeguarding truly is everyone's responsibility.

God bless,

Tayo Kufeji
Chair of Governance Board

12 For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. 13 He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. 14 He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.

Ps 72:12-14

Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy

As well as our Policies, within this document and appendices you will find lots of useful, practical information about how we can all work together to make Venture Church a place where people are, and feel safe.

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Organisation Details

VENTURE CHURCH (MK) – one church, two locations

VENTURE CHURCH -OLDBROOK
Strudwick Drive
Oldbrook
Milton Keynes
MK6 2TG

VENTURE CHURCH - KENTS HILL (Sundays only)
Kents Hill Park School
Timbold Drive
Kents Hill
Milton Keynes
MK7 6BZ

Charity No.: 1119304
Tel No: 01908 670655
General Email address: hello@venture.mk
Safeguarding Email address: safeguarding@venture.mk
Report a Concern: Online Concern Form
Senior Leader: Mark Sherratt
Email: mark@venture.mk

Governance Board Chair and Safeguarding Champion: Tayo Kufeji

Email: tayokufeji@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To contribute to the personal safety of all children/young people and adults who attend any of our services or activities within the church by promoting safeguarding awareness, good practice and sound procedures, enabling all to be, and feel, safe.

POLICY STATEMENT

Venture Church is a contemporary city church with a range of community-oriented activities for children and young people. We are one church based at two locations – Oldbrook and Kents Hill. All references to 'Venture Church' refer to both locations.

The Governance Board [hereafter referred to as GB] recognises the importance of its ministry and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all who are entrusted to Venture Church's care. Venture Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all people who access our facilities.

This policy is influenced and informed by the following government guidance and legislation as set out in the following documents:

- What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being abused (2015)
- Working Together (2026)
- The Children's Act (2004)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Care Act (2014)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Child sexual exploitation: Definition and Guide for Practitioners (2017)
- Keeping Children Safe In Education (2026)

We also work in partnership with ThirtyOne:Eight (https://thirtyoneeight.org/), an independent, Christian safeguarding charity.

The GB is committed to ongoing Safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.

1. BASIC FOUNDATIONS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Promoting good working relationships and practice within the various activities/ministries at Venture Church is important in ensuring everyone is supported and activities are run safely and to minimise the risk of unfounded or false allegations. For the purposes of this document, the term 'children and young people' relates to all those aged under 18 years. An adult with care and support needs is defined as 'an adult who is or may be in need of community services by reason of disability, age or illness; and is or may be unable to take care of or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation' The Care Act 2014.

- We believe everyone should be valued, safe and happy. We will endeavour to ensure that those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- Everyone, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Staff/volunteers are trained to understand the nature of abuse and to be alert to matters of concern.
- All staff/volunteers working at Venture Church have a responsibility to report concerns to a member of the Safeguarding Team

Additionally, in relation specifically to children:

- "This child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families". Working Together (2026).
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect. What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being abused (2015).
- All Staff and Volunteers 'involved in coaching, teaching, training, supervising, or instructing in a religion' – Sexual Offences Act 2003, are deemed to be in a Position of Trust – See Appendix 3.

ACHIEVING OUR AIMS

- Adopting safeguarding guidelines through procedures and training for staff/volunteers.
- Intentionally sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with all who work, volunteer or attend events at Venture Church.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving those who are affected appropriately.
- Following carefully the procedures for safe recruitment and selection of staff/volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff/volunteers through support, supervision and training.
- Reviewing our policy and good practice regularly.

HOW WE ORGANISE SAFEGUARDING AT VENTURE CHURCH

If any of us suspects that abuse has taken place, either now, or historically, we have a personal responsibility to report our concerns to one of the Safeguarding Coordinators. You can find their contact details on posters around the building and on the Venture Church website (venture.mk/safeguarding).

If you can't reach a Coordinator please use the following:

- Online reporting form, just follow this link: Reporting Form (link also available on Venture Church website) or scan the QR code:
- In regard to children: Milton Keynes MASH - 01908 253169, or their Out of Hours contact - 01908 265545
- In regard to adults, Milton Keynes Adult Social Care - 01908 252835, or the Out of Hours contact - 01908 725005
- In an emergency call 999

If you have a concern about one of our Coordinators, you should contact the Safeguarding Team Lead (Bev Verity), the Safeguarding Champion on the Governance Board (Tayo Kufeji) or the other agencies as mentioned above. We also have a Whistle Blowing policy (Appendix 9) which means you can make a report confidentially.

All Coordinators are trained to be able to deal with any concerns that come to them, with the additional support of the Safeguarding Team Lead as required. They will immediately assess the report and decide what action to be taken which may involve outside agencies.

Serious incidents will be reported to the Governance Board who hold ultimate responsibility for safeguarding at Venture Church.

MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM

Venture Church has a dedicated Safeguarding team who oversee all activities and ministries of the church. Our Safeguarding team is made up of a Safeguarding Coordinators and a centre wide Designated Safeguarding Team Leader. They will make themselves available for consultation with staff, volunteers, visitors or their families.

If you have any concern or query, however small, always pass it on to a member of the Team. They will take all appropriate measures to ensure the safety of those involved. Remember – if you thought it, report it.



Bev Verity
Team Lead
07944 780818



Sharon Obisesan
Coordinator
07951 405612



Laura Conway
Coordinator
07867 742009



Kathryn Engela-Higham
Coordinator
07368 314430



Mathew Okesola
Coordinator
07795 822997

2. UNDERSTANDING ABUSE

WHO IS IT THAT ABUSES A CHILD?

Children are very rarely abused by a stranger. More often than not it is someone close to the child, for example a parent, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative or friend of the family. Sometimes the abuser is someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker, or a church worker or leader. It is very important that we understand this and dispel the common myths and assumptions about who might abuse a child. It is all too easy to think that it can "never happen here" or that "the kind of people" who abuse children don't go to church or its activities. This would be an error of judgement and would minimise our effectiveness in looking after the children in our care.

Having said that "abusers are rarely strangers", sometimes paedophiles and others who set out to abuse children join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children. That is why we have stringent controls on who can access our children and have careful processes for looking after them whilst they are in our care.

WHO ABUSES ADULTS WITH ADDITIONAL CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS?

What is true for children is also true for adults with additional care and support needs. There are however, situations where strangers or members of the community that have strong prejudices towards these individuals, or are ignorant of the person's needs, might abuse the person concerned.

"It is very important to stress that most people do not abuse others. Many people who work with children or adults with additional care and support needs have a desire to do so for genuine reasons and in turn they play a very important role in protecting them" *ThirtyOne:Eight*

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ABUSE?

If we were to take a survey amongst those reading this document, there may well be as many definitions of abuse as there are people. Our individual understanding is affected by our experience, education, and any past training we have received.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has a helpful definition which can serve as a starting point:

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons and may be:

- A single act or repeated acts
- An act of neglect or a failure to act
- Multiple acts - for example, an adult at risk may be neglected and also be financially abused

(Social Care Institute for Excellence)

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

There are four main categories of abuse, in relation to children, detailed in Government guidance in England. *(Working Together 2026)*

Physical abuse

This happens when a child is *deliberately* hurt, causing physical harm. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or suffocating. It's also physical abuse if a parent or carer makes up or causes the symptoms of illness in children.

Emotional abuse

This represents behaviours that are the "*persistent* emotional mistreatment of children such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects of the child's emotional development". This may include the lack of love and affection, threats, verbal attacks, taunting, being made fun of or shouting. The definition also extends to behaviours that might make the victim feel worthless, unloved and inadequate or to be exposed to interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities for the gratification or gain of others. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse. Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and non-contact abuse, for example via the internet. It may involve them being forced to watch, participate or contribute to the production of sexual images, in person or using digital communications.

Neglect

These are acts of omission that represent the *persistent* failure of responsible people to meet the basic essential needs of a child or adult with care and support needs. This includes ignoring medical, emotional, or physical needs, failure to provide healthcare, support or educational services, withholding medication, adequate nutrition and heating or failure to act to keep a child safe.

In addition to the above, the following definitions relate specifically to abuse of adults:

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident, or pattern of incidents, of controlling coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse by one adult against another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members. Children and Young People can suffer this form of abuse and are considered victims if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse and they are related to the victim or the offender.

Financial abuse

Is the attempted or actual misappropriation or misuse of a person's money, property, benefits, or other assets, by means of intimidation, coercion, deception, or other ways to which the person does not or cannot consent to.

Self-Neglect

Is when an adult lives in a way that puts their own health, safety or well-being at risk.

Modern Slavery

Modern slavery (or Human Trafficking) is the recruitment, movement, and holding of a person by improper means, such as force, threat or deception, for the purposes of exploitation or abuse.

Discriminatory abuse

When a person is treated unfairly, bullied, or abused because of, what are known as, a 'protected characteristics. It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Organisational abuse

This occurs when a person is abused or mistreated within an institution such as a care home or hospital, or by an organisation providing care in the person's own home.

Spiritual Abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves.

There are many other forms of abuse including, but not limited to, Female Genital Mutilation, Fabricated or Induced Illness, Child Sexual and/or Criminal Exploitation, Child on Child Abuse, Forced Marriage.

3. CALL TO ACTION - If you've thought it, report it

5 Helpful R's to remember:

R – Recognise

R – Respond

R – Record

R – Report

R – Reflect

HOW MIGHT WE RECOGNISE ABUSE?

The following lists are some of the things that we should consider warning signs and symptoms of abuse. However, they are only a guide and are not necessarily proof of abuse but may be indicators of it. By keeping our eyes and ears open we might notice changes in behaviour, possibly including:

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.
- A previously bright and bubbly child suddenly has become quiet and withdrawn.
- Nervousness/watchfulness.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.

- Changed or inappropriate relationships with peers and/or other adults.
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

Other things to look out for and not ignore:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them, or where differing explanations have been received. Injuries, which occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries and illnesses, which have not received medical attention.
- Instances where children are kept away from the group or school inappropriately.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Any signs of neglect, under nourishment or inadequate care.
- Any allegations made by a child or adult concerning sexual abuse.
- A child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotation.

One or more warning signs may be evident. Many symptoms of distress in a child or an adult with care and support needs can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too.
It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be considered. Any concerns should be raised with a member of the Safeguarding Team.

"All children and adults with additional care and support needs have the right to be protected from harm. We need to recognise the impact that abuse has on the victims" *(ThirtyOne:Eight)*

YOUR ROLE

Always consult as soon as possible with one the Safeguarding Team. Do not go 'charging in' as you may unwittingly alert an abuser which may lead to further manipulation or harm being caused to those you are trying to help. You may even inadvertently destroy important evidence. Of course, any action that takes place in front of you that is potentially, or actually, harmful, requires challenging immediately. Under no circumstances should a volunteer/worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse

RESPONDING TO ABUSE

General allegations

- Share your concern with a Safeguarding Coordinator. It's always better to speak with one of them than ignore something, however small your feel the issue may be. They may possibly be holding other pieces of a puzzle and the information you have could be more important than you realise.
- If emergency medical, or other help is required, this should be sought immediately by contacting the emergency services via 999.

Allegations of sexual abuse

- Contact a Safeguarding Coordinator immediately. DO NOT speak to the parents or carers, or anyone else if there is any possibility that they may be involved or safety may be compromised.
- If no Coordinators are available, contact local Social Services (out of hours and emergency numbers are also available)
- The role of the church is not to investigate but rather document details of the allegation and then pass this on to the relevant Social Care Department.

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

- It is important NOT to make promises that you may not be able to keep. Do NOT say you will keep confidential what a child/young person or adult is about to tell you, as you may have a duty to share it with a member of the Safeguarding Team, or other outside agency.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others.
- Stay calm and listen carefully to what the child/young person or adult is saying.
- Allow the child/young person or adult to continue at their own pace.
- Helpful things to say:
  - 'I believe you (showing acceptance of what the child/young person says).'
  - 'Thank you for telling me.'
  - 'It's not your fault.'
  - 'I will help you.'

  Do not say:
  - 'Why didn't you tell anyone before?'
  - 'I can't believe it!'
  - 'Are you sure that this is true?'
  - Never make promises you may not be able keep.
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Reassure the child/young person or adult that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- In the case of an adult you must seek consent to refer to other agencies, if the adult has capacity to make such a decision in an informed way. Adults have a right to choose if they want to take an allegation further and although you might feel it is a bad decision not to it is ultimately their decision and you can only offer your support to that adult.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.

RECORD AND REPORT YOUR CONCERNS

- You must report your concerns immediately to one of the Safeguarding Team, they will advise what your next steps should be. They will also ask you to complete a Cause for Concern form for which they will send you a link to access this online. Follow all the guidance notes within the form to help you complete it accurately. Cause for Concern forms can also be accessed directly from our website (venture.mk/safeguarding) and via the following QR code (which is also on posters around the building).

  In the absence of a Safeguarding Coordinator or if the suspicions in any way involve a Safeguarding Coordinator, then the report should be made to the Safeguarding Team Leader – Bev Verity (07944 780818).
- In the absence of a form, make notes as soon as possible (ideally within one hour of being told).
- Write down exactly what you witnessed or what the child/young person or adult has said, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately before you were told (for example, what activity was taking place).
- Record dates, times and when you made the record.
- Keep all your handwritten notes secure.
- Do not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated in this policy.
- It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the children's or adult's social care. If for any reason, a member of the Safeguarding Team is not available or you believe they have not responded appropriately to your concerns, then it is up to you to contact outside Statutory agencies directly. (See below for contact details)

Remember, even if the abuse is no longer happening it is still important to report, as the abuser may be abusing others. The child or adult may also need help to overcome the effects of the abuse.

REFLECT ON WHAT HAS HAPPENED

- Have you done all you could in a situation?
- Do you feel the Safeguarding Team have done all that is needed. Please challenge and question if you do not believe this to the case.
- Take time to look after 'you'. Some situations can be 'heavy' to carry, especially if we know those involved. Seek help from the Safeguarding Team who will be able to offer you support or signpost you to those who can.

4. PROMOTING A SAFER CULTURE TOGETHER

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The GB is committed to the safe recruitment of all staff/volunteers and that they will be trained and supported in their roles. All staff/volunteers will be required to fulfil certain procedures, depending on their role (detailed requirements can be found within the specific Ministry's Handbooks and procedures), but in general, a new volunteer will:

- Be given a clear role description, setting out expectations for their work and conduct.
- Be interviewed or met with for an informal chat (depending on the role). This gives us a chance to get to know the person, and them to know us too!
- Complete an application form
- Supply details for referees who will be contacted by email or writing (however telephone references can be sought as the last measure).
- If required for their role, complete a DBS application, producing all required ID documents and giving a formal declaration of any criminal convictions on a Self-Declaration Form. NOTE: applicants who have been in the UK for less than 5 years will in addition be required to complete an Overseas Police Check from their originating country. If this is not possible, we will take up references from their previous church leader or employer (in that country) and will endeavour to check the authenticity of these organisations.
- Go through safeguarding policy and procedure on induction, followed by full safeguarding training. Plus, a raised awareness of safeguarding in team meetings to remind them of procedures and important concepts.
- All applications and references will be reviewed, and any concerns raised will be investigated.
- Any issues that arise through the DBS will be investigated by the Safeguarding Lead and a full risk assessment undertaken to decide whether an applicant is able to serve. A blemished DBS will not necessarily prevent someone from serving.
- As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their job role and out. They will also receive further training as necessary.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

The Leadership Team is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all staff and volunteers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. At induction, and thereafter every 3 years, all staff and volunteers will attend a foundation level safeguarding course. At all staff/Ministry Team meetings a specific area of safeguarding will also be included as a reminder and opportunity to clarify procedures.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF/VOLUNTEER

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 Team Leader, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the appropriateness of 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.

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

The Safeguarding Team Leader will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services regarding the appropriateness of 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.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries, the organisation will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the organisation must reach a decision based upon the available information. This might suggest that, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child/young person or adult must remain of paramount importance throughout.

PASTORAL CARE - SUPPORTING THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

The GB is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory and other voluntary agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of Venture Church. Please make contact with our Pastoral Team if you need any help or support.

WORKING WITH EX-OFFENDERS AND THOSE WHO MAY POSE A RISK

When someone attending the Venture Church is known to have abused, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to children or adults with care and support needs; the GB 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.

APPENDIX 1- What we believe

About God

We believe in one God who eternally exists in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. God the Father is the Creator and Ruler of the Universe. We believe that He is limitless in power, knowledge, wisdom, love, and holiness. We also believe that He has revealed himself as Father to those who believe in Him.

Read more: Genesis 1:26,27; 3:22; Exodus 15:11; Psalms 90:2; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; 1 John 4:8

About Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was born of a virgin, had a miraculous ministry, lived a sinless human life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all men and women by dying on a cross. He rose from the dead after three days and in so doing demonstrated His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory where He sits, interceding for His people, at the right hand of the Father. He will return again to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Read more: Matt 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30, 1 Peter 2:22; Acts 1:9-11, 2:22; 10:38; Romans 1:3,4; 8:34; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:25, 9:12; Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; 15:22-24; 51-57, Revelation 20:1-6.

About The Holy Spirit

He is present in the world to make men and women aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer spiritual gifts as He determines for the benefit of other believers and as a witness to non-believers. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.

Read More: 2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; 2:4; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 19:6; Romans 12:4-13; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; 12:1-11 Ephesians 1:13; 5:1; Galatians 5:25.

About The Bible

The Bible is God's Word to all people. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

Read more: 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Psalm 119:105,160; Proverbs 30:5

About Human Beings

We believe that men and women were created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him. People are the supreme object of God's creation but became alienated from a relationship with God

through sinful disobedience. As a result, men and women are totally incapable of coming back into a right relationship with God by their own effort.

Read more: Genesis 1:26-31; 3:1-7, Psalms 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a, 59:1-2; Romans 3:23, 5:12-21

About Salvation

We believe that salvation is a gift of God to mankind. Men and women can never make up for sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness, through his substitutionary sacrifice, can people be saved from sin's penalty. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into their life by faith. This is known as the New Birth, and is an instantaneous and complete operation of the Holy Spirit upon initial faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read more: Romans 6:23, 10:8-15; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; 1 Corinthians 15:3-40; Galatians 3:26, 5:1; John 3:5-6; 14:6; Ephesians 2:8,9; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:1

About The Church

We believe the Church is the Body of Christ, the family of God made up of every Christian on earth. It is expressed through local congregations of Christians. It is a community where the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to use their gifts in reaching non-Christians with God's salvation message, and in helping each other grow spiritually. The Church is led by the Holy Spirit through the leaders He has established.

Read more: Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 2:19, 4:11-13 10.

About Eternity

Through faith in Jesus Christ we will live eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. We believe that hell is the place of eternal separation from God for all who reject Christ as Saviour.

Read more: Matthew 25:41,46; John 3:16, 5:28-29; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Revelation 20:15, 21:1-5;

APPENDIX 2 - General Guidance

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (for example, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all children/young people and adults with additional care and support needs equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child/young person or adult with care and support needs first.
- Respecting others' 'personal space'. Remember, not everyone enjoys a hug.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, empowering children/young people to share in the decision-making process.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible.

- Ensuring that staff/volunteers work in pairs for accountability. In the instance of a spouse/related party this will not count as an accountable person, an addition third person will be expected to be present when working with children or young people.
- Ensuring that, when mixed groups are taken away, they are always accompanied by a male and a female member of staff/volunteer (but remember that same-gender abuse can also occur).
- Being an excellent role model, including not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children/young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.

Confidentiality

No member of staff or volunteer is permitted to divulge any information concerning a child or adult with care and support needs, his/her family or anything a child/adult may tell them to anyone other than the designated people previously mentioned. This is to protect the interests of the child/adult.

Healthy Boundaries

It may sometimes be necessary for staff/volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children/young people or adult with additional care and support needs, particularly if they are young or disabled. These tasks should be carried out only with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and of the child/young person or adult with care and support needs involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices, where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing or where there is physical contact – for example, lifting or assisting a child/young person to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

APPENDIX 3 - Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and adults at risk are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022 it is illegal (England and Wales)(Northern Ireland) 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.

APPENDIX 4- Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

The giving of gifts or rewards to children, young people or adults with care and support needs supports positive behaviour or can reward particular achievements. This may be for a whole group or an individual.

Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism, we should be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be seen as a gesture to bribe or to groom a young person. Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to workers, for example, on special occasions or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

APPENDIX 5 - Guidance On Touch

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child, young person or adult's needs, not the volunteer or staff member.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult, rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that may be sexually stimulating.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to personal privacy and the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in circumstances such as a medical emergency.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc.), encourage the child, young person or adult with care and support needs to do what they can themselves but, in their best interests giving appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.

APPENDIX 6 - Social Media Policy

Venture Church realise that social media and networking websites have become a regular part of everyday life and that many people enjoy membership of sites such as Facebook, Instagram or X. However, we are also aware that these sites can become a negative forum for complaining or gossiping and care must be taken not to breach our confidentiality policy or offend anyone when using these services.

The following policy has been designed to give staff and volunteers clear guidelines as to what Venture Church expect of them when accessing these sites.

Guidance for Personal Use

If you have your own personal profile on a social media website, you should make sure that others cannot access any content, media or information from that profile that (a) you are not happy them to have access to; and (b) which would undermine your position as a professional, trusted and responsible person.

As a basic rule, if you are not happy for others you work/serve with to see particular comments, media or information simply do not post it in a public forum online.

When using social media sites, staff/volunteer members should consider the following:

- Changing the privacy settings on your profile so that only people you have accepted as friends can see your content.

- Reviewing who is on your 'friends list' on your personal profile. In most situations, you should not accept friend requests on your personal profile from people you do not know. (This includes young people, parents, etc).
- Ensuring personal blogs have clear disclaimers that the views expressed by the author are theirs alone and do not represent the views of Venture Church. Make your writing clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Venture Church.
- Ensuring you are always respectful towards:
  - Venture Church
  - Other Staff Members and volunteers
  - Parents and Families (including children and other relatives)
- At all times, in or out of serving hours, you are an ambassador for Venture Church. Be aware that your actions captured via images, posts or comments online can reflect on the centre.
- Parents or children should not be referenced online without their express consent. This includes all photos, videos and other media.
- Any employee/volunteer who becomes aware of social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful should make of the Safeguarding Team aware.

Use of Social Media, email and texting

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

- Communication by electronic means or by texting will not be used with children under the age of 11. All communication in these forms will be via their parents. The rest of the principles relate to communication with children and young people aged 11 and over. The key point is that communication should be in a context of transparency and accountability.
- Electronic communication and texting should only be used for reasons relating to work and not for general socialising purposes.
- Other leaders should be aware of the situations in which these means of communication are being used.
- Leaders, workers and volunteers should not invite children or young people from church activities to their personal social networking page but may respond to requests where appropriate, as long as the child or young person is in secondary school.
- Where possible, group pages should be used on social media for communicating.
- Care should be exercised in posting to Facebook, X, etc as comments made on the spur of the moment may not always come out as intended and can be passed on extremely quickly around a large audience.
- Communication by electronic means or texting with young people should never take place during school hours and should be kept within the hours of 9am – 9pm.
- Where possible, email and messaging should take place to and within groups rather than individuals.
- Leaders, workers and volunteers should give very careful consideration as to whether it is necessary to give personal mobile phone numbers to children and young people.

APPENDIX 7 - First Aid Procedure

Only recognised first-aiders may administer first aid. Always contact a member of Venture Kids, Venture Youth or the Welcome Team who will assist you. Consent will be gained from parents/carers in relation to specific events with details of procedures that will be in place.

APPENDIX 8 - Fire Evacuation Procedures

We have specific Evacuation Procedures at all our events, please follow instructions that will be given by the person leading that room or meeting. However, in general in the event of a fire:

- A member of staff will raise the alarm immediately and the emergency services will be called at the earliest possible opportunity.
- NOTE: All children and young people will be immediately escorted out of the building and to the assembly point using the nearest marked exit. Children will remain in the care of the volunteers/staff supervising at the event until everyone is accounted for. No attempt will be made to collect personal belongings, or to re-enter the building after evacuation. Cont'd ...
- The entire premises will be checked by the Fire Safety Officer and the register will be collected, providing that this does not put anyone at risk. On exiting the building, the Fire Safety Officer will close all accessible doors and windows to prevent the spread of fire.

APPENDIX 9 - Whistle Blowing Policy

Venture Church holds the welfare and safety of every child/young person or adult with care and support needs as their paramount objective, there may be occasions where this may not be happening. It is vital that all staff and volunteer members talk through any concerns they may have with the Ministry Head at their event or another Senior Staff Member at the earliest opportunity to enable any problems to be ironed out as soon as they arise.

Disclosure of information

If you become aware of information which you reasonably believe tends to show one or more of the following, you MUST disclose.

- That a criminal offence has been committed or is being committed or is likely to be committed
- That a miscarriage of justice that has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be, endangered
- That the environment, has been, is being, or is likely to be, damaged
- That information tending to show any of the above, is being, or is like to be, deliberately concealed.

Disclosure procedure

- If this information relates to safeguarding then the safeguarding policy should be followed.
- Where you reasonably believe one or more of the above circumstances listed above has occurred you should promptly disclose this to a member of the CLT or the GB so that any appropriate action can be taken.
- Staff and volunteers will suffer no detriment of any sort for making such a disclosure in accordance with this procedure.

- Any disclosure or concerns raised will be treated seriously and will be dealt with in a consistent and confidential manner and will be followed through in a detailed and thorough manner
- Any management employee who inappropriately deals with a whistleblowing issue (e.g. failing to react appropriately by not taking action in a timely manner or disclosing confidential information) may be deemed to have engaged in gross misconduct, which could lead to dismissal.

APPENDIX 10 - Useful contacts outside of Venture Church:

- MK Council Safeguarding https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/adult-social-care/safeguarding-adults-and-children
- MK Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub: 01908 253 169/70 (children)
- Emergency social work team- out of hours: 01908 265 545 (children)
- Social workers 01908 252835 (adult)
- Emergency Social work team – out of hours: 01908 725005 (adult)
- Social services office: 01908 691 691 (child & adult)
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000 (children)
- ChildLine: 0800 1111 (children)
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice line: 0800 028 0285 (children)
- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) offer specialist support and advice in connection with online crime against children. https://www.ceop.policeuk/Safety-centre
- ThirtyOneEight - victim support line 0303 003 1111