



BISHOP'S STORTFORD VINEYARD

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

2021/2022

Contents

Organisation details.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Church Details.....	3
Working with Parents	4
Procedures to Follow in the Event of Child Abuse.....	4
What is child abuse?	4
Who abuses children?	4
Suspicion of abuse: What is suspicion of abuse?	5
Disclosure of abuse: What do we mean by disclosure?	5
Recommended step-by-step guidelines to follow in the event of Suspicion or Disclosure of Child Abuse.....	5
Extreme circumstances.....	6
Allegations against volunteers, members of leadership staff or trustees.....	6
What will happen next?	6
Adults who have been abused as children	7
Adults who confess to Abusing Children	7
Managing Convicted or Known Abusers.....	7
Steps we are taking to implement our Policy	8
Disclosure & Barring Service Disclosures.....	8
Handling Confidential Information	8
Appointment of Children’s Workers	9
APPENDIX 1: Definitions of Abuse	11
APPENDIX 2: Signs and symptoms of Abuse.....	11
APPENDIX 3: Cause for concern form.....	13
APPENDIX 4: Alleged Incident Form – Children and Young People	14
APPENDIX 5: Code of Conduct.....	15
APPENDIX 6: Guidelines for Discipline.....	16
APPENDIX 7: Useful addresses and phone numbers.....	17

Organisation details

Bishop's Stortford Vineyard
Charity number: 1151817
Company number: 8428264

Senior Pastors: Christopher Goddard and Gail Goddard
Safeguarding Coordinator: Manie Opperman

Office address:
8 Franklin Drive
Elsenham
Essex
CM22 6UG

Tel: 07922 082647

Safeguarding Coordinator
Manie Opperman

Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding
Gail Goddard

Introduction

Church Details

BSV Church is registered with Thirtyone:eight (Membership No. 7383), is a member of the Evangelical Alliance and compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Children Act 1989 and 2004, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

At BSV the safety and welfare of our children is of paramount importance. All staff / volunteers must protect children from harm and abuse. We currently hold our Sunday services in a local school, Summercroft Primary School, Plaw Hatch Close, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5BJ, where we have age appropriate groups for our children.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children and young people under the age of 18 years are cared for, taught and pastored in the safest possible way, through enabling church staff and leaders, trustees, children and youth workers, and parents to recognise their collective and individual responsibility to protect children from abuse and other dangers.

We are committed to the following basic principles:

- We treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and religion. We are aware of their individual needs, experiences and strengths.
- We recognise that the primary responsibility of care rests with parents/carers, but that during any time when children or young people are under the care of Bishop's Stortford Vineyard we are responsible for their safety.
- We implement a procedure of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on those wishing to work with children and young people and these references and checks are repeated every three years as necessary.
- Our attitude to protecting children and young people is: "take action, don't leave it to someone else, do not be afraid to challenge"
- We hold ourselves accountable and do not put ourselves in positions that could be considered compromising.
- We follow guidelines when responding to the possibility of abuse, and all parents and workers are regularly made aware of these
- Regular in-house safeguarding training and development opportunities.

Working with Parents

It is always our intention that we should operate as transparent and caring a system as we possibly can. We recognise that society places many sources of stress on families and we would aim to care within biblical, pastoral and legal guidelines. We believe that if parents have the full range of information available to them as to why Bishop's Stortford Vineyard has adopted this Safeguarding policy then they will feel that their children are safe and cared for. When families join Bishop's Stortford Vineyard they will be given an information leaflet and will have the opportunity to discuss any issues or queries with the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Procedures to Follow in the Event of Child Abuse

What is child abuse?

This takes the form of:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse (including organised abuse)

Any one or a combination of the above forms of abuse may be present and abuse can take place as part of an online activity. Please see Appendix 1 for definitions.

Who abuses children?

- Very rarely a stranger
- Often someone close to a child e.g. parent, carer, babysitter, sibling, relative or friend of the family
- Sometimes someone in authority such as a teacher, youth leader, children's worker, or, very sadly, a church worker/leader
- Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations (including churches) to obtain access to children

Suspicious of abuse: What is suspicion of abuse?

This is when you have growing concerns based on a number of signs and symptoms that something is not right and that a child/young person may be being abused. Please see Appendix 2 for possible signs and symptoms for physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Disclosure of abuse: What do we mean by disclosure?

- This is when a child or young person tells another person about a situation, which suggests that abuse of some form may have taken place.
- Disclosure may involve information that relates to events entirely outside Bishop's Stortford Vineyard, and this should not be disregarded simply because it has nothing to do with the church.

Children's Workers must respond to any disclosure of whatever nature.

Recommended step-by-step guidelines to follow in the event of Suspicion or Disclosure of Child Abuse

1. **BE SENSITIVE:** If appropriate *reassure* the child/young person that you take what they say seriously and will act on it. Children rarely lie about abuse. If they have made such a disclosure, then it is likely that some form of abuse has actually taken place. You need to explain, sensitively, that you cannot keep this information to yourself and will need to pass it on to someone who is equipped to help the child/young person.
2. **FOCUS ON FACTS:** Try and allow space and time for the person to talk; *listen attentively* without interrupting. Show acceptance of what they say, reflecting back words or short phrases they have used. Try to *remain calm*.
3. **RECORD DETAILS ACCURATELY:** Make a written record of all that has happened, using a Cause for Concern form (see Appendix 3), including your response and guidance given. *Sign and date the record* and give to the Safeguarding Coordinator. Include your observations and anything that the individual child/young person has told you. Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour or so) of the suspicion or allegation, *recording dates and times of events as accurately as possible*.
4. **REPORT:** Report the concern *immediately* to the Safeguarding Coordinator. Please see Appendix 7 for name and contact details.
5. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** You must not discuss your suspicions or the allegations with anyone other than the Safeguarding Coordinator.
6. **Do not** seek to confront the named or suspected person in any way.
7. In cases where a third party/anonymous individual makes the allegations directly to a Children's/Young People's Worker or Church Leader, this information must be passed

onto the Safeguarding Coordinator immediately. This will then be handled in the same way as any other form of allegation and details will be passed on to the necessary organisations (including Thirtyone:eight, the Police and Children's Social Care).

Extreme circumstances

This is when:

- An individual child or young person is now physically hurt, or emotionally traumatised, that immediate medical attention is required.
OR
The next time the child meets the alleged abuser there is a real possibility of severe physical damage, or even death.
OR
- The individual child is so desperate that they may possibly:
 - Inflict self-harm
 - Attempt or succeed in taking their own life
 - Make a call for help from a highly unsafe environment (e.g. late at night from a public place - or where there is danger of being interrupted)

If a child is in such immediate danger due to these 'extreme circumstances', you should call the police and seek their advice. You must also contact the Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible, for your own support needs.

Allegations against volunteers, members of leadership staff or trustees

Allegations against volunteers, leadership, staff or trustees should be made directly to the Safeguarding Coordinator; assuming it is not against them, this information may then need to be shared with other relevant parties on a "need to know" basis.

The Safeguarding Coordinator is then responsible for liaising with Social Care, the Designated Officer at the local authority and the Police, and all serious incidents need to be reported to the Charity Commission. The Safeguarding Coordinator will undertake to implement a plan for the necessary communication with the church. They may then inform other staff or leadership team members at their discretion but will not discuss the details of the allegation with anyone until either further action is taken or no further action is concluded by statutory services. In the meantime, the person against whom the allegation has been made will not be permitted to continue working with children or young people in the church.

If the allegation of abuse is made against the Safeguarding Coordinator the Senior Pastors will deal with the situation. In the event that the allegation of abuse is made against the Senior Pastors, the Safeguarding Coordinator will refer to the Vineyard area leaders and/or overseers.

Any staff member, leader or volunteer who is dismissed because of allegations of abuse will be reported to the DBS and the incident will be reported to the Charity Commission to maintain accountability.

What will happen next?

Where we suspect a child has been abused or neglected:

1. The Safeguarding Coordinator will talk with the parents unless in doing so the child or young person would be placed at risk of further harm. With older young people their views about talking to their parents will be taken into account. If they do not want parents to be informed and this is thought appropriate, then the following steps will still be followed.
2. Where there are concerns about poor parenting the Safeguarding Coordinator will encourage the parent/carer to seek advice and support, whether from within the Church or from outside agencies. The Senior Pastors will be informed in this case. Reference may be made to “Every Child Matters” and/or the “Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People” if appropriate.
3. Where a child or young person has been injured the Safeguarding Coordinator will seek medical help if immediate action is required.
4. If in the Safeguarding Coordinator’s opinion, the risk to the child is perceived to be high, or where a child is afraid to return home, this falls within the area of Safeguarding issues rather than pastoral support for the family, and a referral will be made to Social Care (in their local area) or the out of hours team will be contacted, if necessary.
5. If a referral to Social Care or the Police is made, then the Safeguarding Coordinator will also speak immediately to the Senior Pastors to inform them of the situation.

Adults who have been abused as children

Sometimes in a church setting adults will talk about abuse they experienced as children. These adults are not legally obliged to report someone to the police because they abused them as a child. Any action they take is up to them.

However, if church leadership become aware of the identity of the alleged abuser and children may still be at risk, then it may be necessary to report this to protect children. This is a situation where the usual confidentiality is outweighed by our duty to protect children. The adult (who was abused as a child) will always be informed before any action is taken, if this is the case.

Adults who confess to Abusing Children

As a church we encourage confession of sin and repentance, which in the majority of cases remains confidential. However, if an adult admits to abusing children this cannot be kept confidential as children may still be at risk. A written record must be made using a Cause for Concern form (see Appendix 3) and passed on to the Coordinator. Once passed on, this information remains confidential and should not be discussed elsewhere. The Senior Pastors will assess the risk and take action they deem appropriate to protect children, which will involve informing Social Care or the Police.

Managing Convicted or Known Abusers

If a known abuser attends church we will assess the situation and put in place provision that ensures the person is never alone with a child/young person, taking advice from the Designated Officer or Multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) as appropriate. The Leadership will supervise the individual concerned in order to protect everyone who

may be at risk of harm and will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. When someone joins the church as an ex-offender who is known to have committed crimes against children, young people or vulnerable adults, a member of the leadership team will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of everyone at risk of harm, will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

Steps we are taking to implement our Policy

Disclosure & Barring Service Disclosures

At Bishop's Stortford Vineyard we have chosen to operate under best practice and have become a Registered Body with Thirtyone:eight. This gives access to police records, education authority records and social service records. We have a number of counter-signatories who have themselves been checked and approved by the DBS. They are the only individuals allowed to check the documentation of others. They are bound to this by section 124 of the Police Protection Act 1997, and they are liable for prosecution should they be in breach of this section. They are also the only people with access to completed disclosure forms.

It is our intention to renew DBS checks at 3 yearly intervals as determined by the Senior Pastors and Safeguarding Coordinator.

The Trustees have responsibility to review the Safeguarding policy at least annually.

Handling Confidential Information

Applications for disclosures are primarily done online using Thirtyone:eight as our umbrella organisation. The certificate goes directly to the applicant and not to Bishop's Stortford Vineyard. We are dependent on the applicant showing us the certificate themselves before we can make a decision on whether or not to appoint them. However, as we largely process our DBS checks online via e-Bulk, you will still be able to see the disclosure number, issue date and result of an employee's certificate but will not be able to view or download an electronic copy of the certificate. We are clear that having a criminal record will not necessarily bar individuals from working with Bishop's Stortford Vineyard. This will depend on the nature of the position, and the circumstances and background of the offences.

Any person who is on the ISA Barred list will not be permitted to work with children and young people.

Alleged Incident Forms will be kept in a locked file.

Sign in/sign out sheets and lists of teams working on any given morning will be kept indefinitely in line with guidance from Thirtyone:eight.

Appointment of Children's Workers

1. All those involved with children and young people will undergo an enhanced DBS check.
2. All those involved with children must be attending church and in an accountable relationship, preferably with a small group leader or other member of the leadership team. These leaders may then be consulted as part of an appointment process.
3. Any adult wishing to be involved with children or young people will be asked to complete the "Application to work with kids and young people at Bishop's Stortford Vineyard Church" form.
4. They will be asked to read guidance about working safely with children and young people and agree to abide by the practices described in it, signing to say they agree with it.
5. Each individual will be sent a role description (and if applicable a Code of Conduct) appropriate to the age group they will be working with so that they are aware of the expectations of their role.
6. Parents who are not approved children's workers may stay in their child's age group when appropriate with the knowledge of the lead children's worker, but at no time may have sole charge of or responsibility for other children. Their presence will be recorded on the weekly signing-in sheet.
7. Whilst having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent someone working at Bishop's Stortford Vineyard Church, anyone with an offence against children or young people will be excluded. Other offences that may put children at risk e.g. recent drugs or violence offences may deem someone unsuitable for this work.
8. All individuals excluded from working with children will be informed in confidence of the decision and the reason behind it.
9. The Safeguarding Policy will be implemented and monitored by the Senior Pastors and Trustees.
10. There will be a named trustee who is the trustees' designated point of contact for issues pertaining to Safeguarding.
11. Our Safeguarding Policy and procedures are reviewed annually and updated where necessary.
12. While the initial process of appointment of a children's worker is important, we recognise the need to provide ongoing support and training to workers. Adults working with children and young people will have regular Safeguarding updates and the opportunity to attend Safeguarding Training on an annual basis.
13. As a place of worship, we will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Therefore, we expect that all employees (paid or voluntary) will report improper actions and omissions. Whilst all malpractice and acts of discrimination will be investigated, it is especially important that suspicions of abuse are immediately reported to the safeguarding co-ordinator.

APPENDIX 1: Definitions of Abuse

Physical abuse - includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning, biting, administering poisonous substances, suffocating/drowning, excessive force, deliberately inflicting injury (including FGM). It may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Neglect - a failure to meet basic essential needs of a child, or if a child is left unsupervised at a young age, or with an inappropriate carer.

Emotional abuse - children harmed by constant lack of love and affection, or threats, verbal attacks, taunting or shouting; or children seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; or serious bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger. This could also include spiritual abuse, which can take place when leaders, or adults in positions of influence, to whom people look for guidance and spiritual nurture use their positions of authority to manipulate, control, and dominate.

Sexual abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Radicalisation is defined by the UK government as *“the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.”* We support young people who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist or extremist activity and work alongside the police/other agencies to express any concerns we have regarding potential extremist behaviour.

The definitions below are from the Modern Slavery Act 2015

Modern Slavery is when a person holds another person in slavery or servitude making them perform forced or compulsory labour.

Human trafficking is when a person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person with a view to that person being exploited.

In the event of any staff member or volunteer becoming aware or suspecting either of these issues they need to speak immediately to either one of the Senior Pastors or the Safeguarding Coordinator who will then contact the appropriate organisation (Police, Social Care or Modern Slavery helpline).

APPENDIX 2: Signs and symptoms of Abuse

These possible indicators are only intended as a guide. Please note that a person could exhibit signs and symptoms from more than one category of abuse.

Physical Signs

- 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
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illness, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Evidence of substance abuse

Emotional Signs

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Nervousness/watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Change in relationships
- Inappropriate relationships
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activities 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

APPENDIX 3: Cause for concern form

Date (Include year)	
Time	
Cause for concern	
Observed by	Print: Signed:
Info passed to	
Action taken	
Action taken by	Print: Signed:
Spoken to parents	Yes/ No (if no, state reasons why)

APPENDIX 4: Alleged Incident Form - Children and Young People

Name of Child

Date & Time of Alleged Incident

Name of Person Bringing Allegation (If not child)

Details of Alleged Incident

Details of any Witnesses

Name of Age Group Coordinator

Date & Time Safeguarding Coordinator informed

Action – leave blank for Safeguarding Coordinator

Name of person recording information

Signature of person recording information

Date

Signature of Safeguarding Coordinator

Date

APPENDIX 5: Code of Conduct

Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People

“Be Safe and Be Seen to Be Safe”

These guidelines are issued to all who work with children and young people to ensure that not only are our children kept safe, but that workers protect themselves from false allegations and do not put themselves in situations which could be viewed as compromising. We want our workers to enjoy their time with the children but to also ensure as safe an environment as possible - Be Safe and Be Seen to Be Safe

- Never be afraid to ask for help or advice about anything - Try the Coordinator, the Lead Children’s Worker or Senior Pastors.
- Be safe and be seen to be safe - your conduct needs to be above question at all times - keep everything public
- Do not give lifts home where you and a child/ young person are alone in the car together - take your child with you or a friend
- Do not enter the toilet cubicle with a child whatever their need. If necessary, send someone to fetch their parent/carer. Encourage children to deal with clothing themselves
- Do not change nappies - send for the parent/carer
- Do not keep secrets children tell you or promise them that you will - tell someone. Follow guidelines when responding to the possibility of abuse.
- If an adult confesses inappropriate behaviour towards a child, however long ago, you should inform the Senior Pastors or Safeguarding Coordinator, explaining to them that you cannot keep confidentiality in this instance.
- Do not put yourself in a position that could be considered compromising i.e. being alone in a room with children, allowing children to undress, rolling around with them play-fighting, or having any unnecessary physical contact. (Any physical contact should be age-appropriate and generally child initiated - e.g. reassuring a distressed child with a hug). Avoid any physical contact that may be sexually stimulating.
- When giving First Aid (or applying sun cream etc...) encourage the child to do what they can themselves, but, in their best interests giving appropriate help where necessary.
- Do not arrange to meet young people without parental knowledge, and only arrange to meet up 1:1 with a young person in an appropriate setting e.g. public place, café.

Youth team communication with young people by means of text, email, phone, social networking sites (e.g. dedicated WhatsApp group or Facebook page) should be used to communicate information and arrangements, rather than personal conversation.

- Children and youth team members should not take photos of children or young people on their personal phones within the context of church groups
- Under no circumstance may physical punishment be used. If you are finding a child's behaviour difficult to manage you are probably not the only one - ask your Coordinator or the Kids Manager for help or see 'Guidelines for Discipline' document at the end of this policy.
- Do not allow adults into the children's areas if they are unknown, regardless of who they say they are or what they look like. Do not be afraid to challenge adults- it is better that they are offended than a child put at risk. If necessary, call the Kids Manager the Safeguarding Coordinator or the Senior Pastors.
- Be aware - take action and don't assume someone else

“Be Safe and Be Seen to Be Safe”

APPENDIX 6: 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 attention to the quieter/ well behaved children and young people and resist allowing the more demanding individuals take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure other team members are aware of what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
- If children and young people are bored this will often lead to misbehaviour, so review your programme regularly.
- NEVER smack or hit anyone and resist the temptation to shout. Change voice tone if necessary.
- If you feel angry call on support from other leaders, you may deal with the situation unwisely if emotions are running high.
- Lay down ground rules; for example - no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property. Make sure everyone understands what action will be taken if these ground rules are disregarded.
- Every person is unique and will respond in different ways to differing forms of discipline. Each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.

For those who are continually disruptive:

- Have them sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
- Encourage helpers to be proactive rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- Challenge them to change their behaviour whilst encouraging their strengths.
- Warn them that you may have to speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour. They may be sent to out of the group to join their parents/carers (under supervision) or be excluded from attending the group for a period of time.

The above material is copyright of Thirtyone:eight 2018.

APPENDIX 7: Useful addresses and phone numbers

Bishop's Stortford Vineyard
8 Franklin Drive
Elsenham

Essex
CM22 6UG
Tel: 07922 082647
info@bsvchurch.org

Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding
Gail Goddard

Safeguarding Coordinator
Manie Opperman

Thirtyone:eight (formerly Churches' Safeguarding Advisory Service)
PO Box 133
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7UQ
Tel: 0303 0031111
helpline@thirtyoneeight.org

Provides support and training across all denomination and can help in individual cases of abuse.