



Guidelines for those working with Children

River Church is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all the children in our care and seeks to provide a safe environment for them to thrive.

Safeguarding is a high priority here. Many children are involved in the life of all our churches under the guidance of a dedicated group of leaders and helpers all of which will be DBS checked. These adults give their time freely and generously. Both children and adults need a safe and secure environment in which to work.

If we discover or suspect a child is suffering harm, we will notify children's social care (formerly social services) or the police so that they can take appropriate action to protect the child.

We will investigate all allegations that a worker or volunteer may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, involving children's social care, adult social care and the police as necessary in line with this document.

This short guide is intended to assist leaders and helpers in their role; to keep themselves safe, to protect children from unnecessary harm and to provide guidelines to follow when there are concerns regarding the welfare of a child or when an allegation is made.

For more detailed information about River Church's policies and procedures please refer to the safeguarding pages on the River Church's web site.

Good Practice

You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Watch your own language, tone of voice and body language.
- Aim to work within sight of another adult.
- Inform another adult when you take a child to the toilet, if possible, arrange toilet breaks and go in groups.
- If possible, ensure there are both male and female workers.
- Respond warmly if a child needs comforting, make sure there are other adults around.
- Administer any necessary first aid with other adults around.
- When it is necessary to restrain a child, who is harming themselves or others, use the least possible force. Inform the parents as soon as possible.
- Record any concerns/accidents/incidents with your team leader, sign and date any records.
- Avoid being on your own with a child.
- Report any unsafe practices to the safeguarding-coordinator.

You should not:

- Use physical punishment. This is illegal.
- Invade a child's privacy whilst toileting.
- Touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively.
- Ridicule or reject a child.
- Show favouritism to one child or group of children.
- Invite a child or young person to your home alone.
- Allow unknown adults unsupervised access to the children.
- Permit abusive peer activity e.g., bullying.

All children must be signed in and out by their parents. Young people (over 11) must sign themselves in. Registers will be stored in the church office.

Staffing Levels guidelines:

0-2 years	1 adult for every 3 children	1:3
2-3 years	1 adult for every 4 children	1:4
3-8 years	1 adult for every 8 children	1:8
8+ years	1 adult for the first 8 children, with an extra person needed for each extra 12 children.	

However, each group should aim to have at least 2 adults, ideally 1 male and 1 female. Young people aged 16-17 may count as an adult helper but should not be left unsupervised. Young people under 16 may help but do not count and may not be given responsibility for children.

What to do if....

A child discloses information about possible abuse:

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Do not interrogate the child but question normally without pressure in order to be sure you understand what is being said.
- Do not put words into the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing.
- Never promise to keep a secret but tell the child you must pass the information on, but that you will only tell those who need to know. Tell them who you will speak to.
- Make notes of the date, time, place and what was said and done immediately after the event, not during. Sign the report.
- Do **not** speak to parents unless advised to do so.

Do **not** investigate concerns or allegations yourself, but report immediately to the congregational safeguarding coordinator or deputy. Do not speak to anyone outside the investigation, including the parents/carers.

You are concerned that a child may be suffering from abuse:

If a child has an unexplained physical injury, symptoms of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional or other abuse:

- Document your concerns, with dates.
- If the child is in immediate danger call the appropriate emergency services.
- Inform your team leader or church safeguarding co-ordinator.
- If your safeguarding co-ordinator or deputy are not available, contact River Church's safeguarding officer or trustee with responsibility for safeguarding. If none of these are available contact Thirtiye:eight (Formally CCPAS) for advice.
- Do not talk to the parents/carers unless advised to do so.

Remember to follow the 4 Rs:

Recognise that abuse may have taken place.

Respond sensitively and appropriately.

Report to your team leader or safeguarding coordinator.

Record as soon and as accurately as possible, using the child's own words.

Useful Contacts

Safeguarding Officer:

Rachael Odeniyi safeguarding@riverchurch.org.uk

Trustee with responsibility for Safeguarding:

Graham Burgess graham@riverchurch.org.uk

Church Safeguarding Coordinators:

Maidenhead:

Beth Chisnall safeguardingmaidenhead@riverchurch.org.uk

Marlow:

Susan Scott safeguardingmarlow@riverchurch.org.uk

Slough:

Julie Ioakeim safeguardingslough@riverchurch.org.uk

The Journey:

Diana Saunders safeguardingjourney@riverchurch.org.uk

The Hub:

Gulnar George safeguardinghub@riverchurch.org.uk
Manager

Local Authorities children's services:

Maidenhead:	01628 683150	out of hours 01344 786543
Marlow (Bucks):	01296 383962	out of hours 08009 997677
Slough:	01753 477321	(general enquiries)
	01753 875362	(emergencies only)
The Journey (Surrey):	03004 709100	out of hours 01483 517898

Thames Valley Police, Non-emergency: 0845 850 505

Thirtyone:eight (Formally CCPAS): 0303 003 1111