

St James's United Reformed Church Newcastle upon Tyne

Safeguarding Policy Statement

The following statement has been agreed by the Elders' Meeting

Safeguarding is taken seriously by St James's Church. We define safeguarding as the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and adults who are at risk of, or experiencing harm, abuse or neglect in all forms. We acknowledge children's and adults' right to protection from any form of abuse or neglect regardless of age, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. Therefore, as members and workers of the church, we are committed to:

- the care and nurture of all children and adults
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults at risk
- the establishment of a loving church environment which is safe and caring for all people and where the dignity of each person is respected
- an informed vigilance about the dangers of all forms of abuse, harm and neglect within all aspects of work in the Church, and how to respond appropriately
- ensuring everyone who engages with the life of the Church is responsible for keeping people safe
- working together with voluntary/statutory agencies and other denominations and faith-based organisations.

We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent any form of abuse and neglect of children and adults, and ensure the well-being and pastoral care of those who are or may be at risk.

We will prevent abuse for extremist or other purposes and put all suitable health and safety arrangements in place as well as safeguarding, first aid, fire safety and online safety policies that everyone understands.

We will create and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all, especially children and adults at risk, in which the dignity and rights of each person are respected.

We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living and it can affect both adults and children.

We will always acknowledge that the welfare of the child and adult at risk is paramount, and that the priority is always to act in their best interests, following legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice guidance to enable them access to support and protection.

We will support everyone to ensure that as a place of worship all will work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy. The Safeguarding Coordinator or the Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (when available) are the persons to whom all concerns or

allegations should be addressed for appropriate actions to be taken. In the absence of a Safeguarding Coordinator, the Synod Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. Their contact details will be always available in our posters, websites, or other communications with the public.

We will exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of trustees and those who will work with children or adults at risk within the Church, whether paid, volunteers, lay or ordained. We will ensure that trustees, staff and volunteers are suitable and legally able to act in their positions. We will use DBS/PVG checks as part of a wide range of checks on trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure that we have a broad and informed view to assist us in minimising the risk of abuse, harm or neglect.

We will support, supervise, resource and train all those who undertake work with children and adults in need of protection.

We will respond without delay to every concern, incident or complaint which suggests that a child or adult has been harmed, or is at risk of harm and cooperate with ecumenical partners, the Police, DO (the Designated Officer, formerly known as LADO), Local Safeguarding Boards (in Wales), Children's Partnership Boards (formally Local Safeguarding Children's Boards) and Children's and Adult Social Care Services in any investigation, while maintaining confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

We are committed to offering appropriate pastoral support where possible to those who have suffered or suffer any form of abuse, as well as to challenging any abuse of power, especially where it involves someone in a position of trust.

We will manage risks and those who might pose a risk to the welfare of people and the life of the Church and offer support to those known to pose a risk to children and/or adults, including supervision, referral to the appropriate agencies, and implementation of safeguarding contracts, when appropriate.

We are committed to ensuring that any allegations, concerns and complaints about abuse or neglect that we discover or suspect are recorded accurately, reported promptly and shared safely within and outside the denomination.

We will review our safeguarding policy, practices and procedures annually, considering lessons learned from safeguarding cases and changes in legislation, statutory guidance and good working practice.

We will ensure processes and practices in all aspects of safeguarding, including discipline, risk management, whistleblowing and bullying/harassment in alignment with Good Practice 5 – United Reformed Church's Policy and Guidance in Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

Any local policy changes will be formally approved by the Elders.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please report them without delay to:

Safeguarding Coordinator – Andrew Graydon, stjnclsafeguarding@gmail.com, or

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator – Ann Jackson, sjsec99@gmail.com