

# ENCOUNTER CHRISTIANITY SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

March 2024

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### **1.The Purpose of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

Encounter Christianity recognises that it has an explicit duty to safeguard and protect children and young people from abuse as defined in the Children Act 2006 and the Education Act 2011. A child is anyone under the age of 18. Child abuse happens when a person harms a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can also involve neglect.

The overall intention and purpose behind Encounter's Christianity's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is underpinned by the fundamental principle of the Children Act 2006 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. Our policy applies to all staff, trustees and volunteers working for the charity and in visiting school contexts: the welfare of the child is paramount.

Everyone at Encounter Christianity has the objective to help keep children and young people safe by:

- Ensuring the charity practices safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- When in schools, maintaining safe environments in which children can learn and develop; abiding by the child protection policies of each school.

## **2. Charity Commitment**

We are committed to

- Thinking about what is in the best interests of the child in our policies and procedures, in line with the child centred model of safeguarding set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- providing a clear and publicly accessible model of management of suspected or disclosed abuse to trustees and stakeholders.
- recognising that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Considering the pupil's welfare throughout any investigation
- Dealing with allegations fairly and quickly and avoiding delay
- Sharing information in a timely way but only for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Responding fairly, with transparency and balance and ensuring the safety of children whilst supporting those adults who are the subject of allegations.

## **3. Responsibilities and Roles**

- It is the responsibility of everyone involved and linked to Encounter Christianity, whether as a trustee, staff member or volunteer to be involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children they come into contact with.
- Encounter Christianity has two Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs): one is a selected trustee and the other the staff member in the role of Charity Director (Please see name of DSLs at the bottom of this policy). They will receive appropriate training and support for this role. Training will be updated every two years or when significant changes to child protection law are introduced.
- All volunteers, staff and trustees will be informed of their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and in being alert to the signs of abuse and the procedures for referring concerns to the DSLs.
- All new staff will receive induction training and all staff will have refresher training annually, with updates when necessary.
- All new trustees will need to complete safeguarding training and refresher training every 3 years.
- New volunteers will sign to say they have read our Safeguarding policy and receive safeguarding training that will then be refreshed every 3 years.
- Encounter Christianity will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL.
- Ensure that safe recruitment practices are always followed and that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out on all staff, volunteers and trustees if they are working in a non-supervised capacity.
- The Trustees are responsible for ensuring the annual review of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

#### **4.Safer recruitment**

As a charity, we recognise the importance of recruiting all staff and volunteers as safely as possible in order to do all we can to ensure that all provision is as safe and effective as possible.

Encounter Christianity will ensure all staff and volunteers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safer recruitment.

##### For staff this will involve:

- a written job description / person specification for the post
- completing an application form and a self-declaration form
- being interviewed by a panel, including the safeguarding lead and one or more trustees
- discussing safeguarding as part of the interview
- written references have been obtained and followed up for the successful candidate
- a disclosure and barring check has been completed
- qualifications, where relevant, have been verified
- important documents have been verified, such as ID
- a suitable induction is provided for the successful applicant
- completing a 3 month probationary period
- reading a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knowing how to report concerns.
- Having the opportunity to meet regularly with their line manager and discuss any safeguarding concerns

##### For regular EC volunteers this will involve:

- a written volunteer role description
- completing an application and self-declaration form
- an informal interview with the lead teacher
- written references have been obtained and followed up and a record kept, in compliance with our GDPR policy
- important documents, such as ID, have been verified and a copy kept in their file in compliance with our GDPR policy
- a disclosure and barring check has been completed
- reading and signing the volunteer policy and safeguarding policy
- completing the training which will be provided when they start and refresher training every 3 years.
- Never being left unsupervised in a school setting

##### For volunteers from local churches, this will involve:

- a request for a DBS and ID to be brought in for sessions.
- reading our safeguarding policy before the session.
- Make sure all volunteers are reminded of *classroom etiquette* document before each session
- Never being left unsupervised in a school setting.

## **5.Procedures and Policies**

Stakeholders may access Encounter Christianity's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy via the website.

The Charity recognises that it does not have the responsibility to investigate cases of suspected child abuse, but rather to pass all information on to a school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the concern arose in a school session, or First response if the concern arises outside of a school session. In case of an emergency, the person raising the concern must call 999. In the case of a child making a disclosure about the possibility or the occurrence of female genital mutilation (FGM), contact the police directly by calling 999.

All staff, trustees and volunteers will make it clear to any child disclosing information that they cannot guarantee confidentiality, but they will only pass the information on to the people that can help them. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a judgement in each individual case about who needs, and has a right to access, particular information.

### **A. Reporting concerns**

Any concerns raised with one of the DSLs must always be shared with the other DSL, unless that concern relates to that DSL

#### Concerns about children in schools

If a child in a school makes a disclosure to anyone on the EC team (staff, trustees or volunteers), then it is important that the child feels listened to and valued.

The NSPCC gives the following guidance on how to listen to and respond to a disclosure made by a child:

*You should talk to them calmly and remember that they need support.*

- *Reassure the child that they've done the right thing by telling you about it.*
- *Listen carefully to the child and let them tell their whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure you understand what they're saying.*
- *Use non-judgmental language.*
- *Tell them that you now have to do what you can to keep them and the other children involved safe.*
- *Never promise to keep what a child tells you a secret. Explain that you will need to speak to other people who can help.*
- *You may want to suggest the child contacts [Childline](#) for support.*

The EC trustee, staff or volunteer who has been entrusted with a disclosure must make a written note of exactly what was said as quickly as possible after hearing the disclosure. They must report it to the Charity Director DSL, in the first instance, or the trustee DSL, in the second instance, who will pass the concern on to the school's designated safeguarding lead.

### Concerns about staff or volunteers

If there is a safeguarding concern about any of the EC staff or volunteers, then please contact the Charity Director DSL. If the concern is about the Charity Director, then contact the trustee DSL.

### Concerns about trustees

If there is a concern about one of the trustees then please contact the Trustee DSL and if the concern is about the trustee DSL, then please contact another member of the trustee board.

If your concern is about the trustees and you want to report your concern to an external body, then please check the guidance for reporting to the charity commission:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer>

and contact the charity commission through: [whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk)

The Charity will cooperate with relevant external agencies in any enquiries regarding child protection matters.

## **B. Best practice**

### Schools

The EC teacher taking bookings with schools must ensure that the school is aware that we require a member of staff to be present with us in the classroom during sessions. All EC staff and volunteers to bring their DBS check and photo ID into schools to present at the main office. All EC staff team and volunteers to comply with the signing in system at the school and to wear the sticker or badge given them, whilst complying with the level of access granted by the school. Follow and abide by the school's safeguarding policy and make a note of the designated safeguarding leads if any concerns arise.

### Outside of school

If Encounter Christianity organises a session in a venue which is not a school, it is important to make sure the school will bring the correct ratio of adults to children, as required by law for a school trip. The EC team must not be left alone at any time with the children from the school and the team member who took the booking must ensure the teacher knows that a member of staff from the school must be present at all time. The EC staff will make sure to create and provide a safe and nurturing environment.

### Work Experience and volunteers under 18

Any volunteers or work experience students with EC must have the written consent of their parents to undertake volunteering/work experience. In the case of work experience, EC will comply with the policies and procedures of the organising school.

The Charity Director must ensure we have an emergency contact for the young person. If working in the office, the door should be left open at all times if there are not at least 2 staff members in the room. Any lifts in the car to and from schools must be agreed with the parent/carer beforehand and there must be at least 2 adults with DBS in the car (staff or volunteer),

including at least one member of staff in the car. Otherwise, the student must undertake to make the journey through a different means of transportation.

## **6. Training**

Staff members will undergo safeguarding training annually and the DSL will undergo training every two years and keep up to date with any changes in policy in the meantime through the NCVO website: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/help-and-guidance/safeguarding/>

Each new academic year, the EC staff team will read Keeping Children Safe in Education - Part one. A record will be kept and signed once each staff member has read this document. A record will also be kept of safeguarding training undertaken by the team and certificates obtained.

## **7.GDPR**

Please note that our GDPR policy does not apply to sharing information with the relevant authorities and persons in the case of reporting abuse or allegations of abuse.

All safeguarding allegations or concerns will be stored securely in the relevant safeguarding folder and will not be stored on any private devices. Please refer to our GDPR policy for more information on how we store any personal information.

## **8. Relevant Documents**

- Southwest Child Protection Procedures on <https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Government guidance on what to do in the case of suspected abuse or neglect: [Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/2020-07-16-keeping-children-safe-in-education-part-1)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2023) : [Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales \(2023\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance)
- [Welcome to the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership \(trixonline.co.uk\)](https://www.trixonline.co.uk/keeping-children-safe-in-education)
- [Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/2020-07-16-keeping-children-safe-in-education-part-1)

## **9.Important contacts**

Encounter Christianity safeguarding leads:

Charity Director DSL: Sharon Price [sharon@encounterchristianity.co.uk](mailto:sharon@encounterchristianity.co.uk)

Trustee DSL: Lucille Charles [lucille@encounterchristianity.co.uk](mailto:lucille@encounterchristianity.co.uk)

Other important contact numbers outside of Encounter Christianity:

First Response: 0117 903 6444.

Childline: 0800 1111