

# **The Wellspring Community**

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY & GUIDELINES**

*It is the responsibility of each individual within the fellowship of the Church to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults*

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## The Wellspring Community

### Policy Statement

#### *The Wellspring Community:*

- Seeks to serve the needs of all participants and in doing so takes seriously the welfare of all who take part in events run by the community and who are pastorally supported by members of the community.
- Aims to ensure that all are welcomed into a safe, caring, Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.
- Recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its members and volunteers to prevent all forms of abuse, whether they are physical, sexual, emotional, or through neglect, of any participant and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- Recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures which are designed to prevent abuse.
- Acknowledges its responsibility to respond appropriately to any report of abuse.
- Is committed to supporting and training those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults and to providing appropriate supervision.
- Is committed to maintaining good links with the relevant statutory and diocesan authorities.

## Our Duty of Care

As Christians, perhaps the most fundamental principle that governs our lives is that of loving and respecting our fellow human beings. Within that principle we are aware of the need for the safety and well being of those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Much of the Church's work in this area is undertaken by willing, unpaid volunteers, women and men of all ages, who give freely of their time and energies. It is vitally important that each one of us who has contact with vulnerable people is aware of best practice and procedural guidelines concerning this very important field of service.

The welfare of the child or young person is the paramount consideration in all matters concerning their protection. All that follows in word or actions must respect that principle. In the context of the Wellspring Community we should also include in this principle all vulnerable adults.

There is a justifiable expectation by each participant that he/she will be treated with respect in a loving caring atmosphere.

The organisation of Wellspring events involves aspects such as accommodation, transport, food, facilities, content of the programme, team structures and training of helpers. The combination of all of these is designed in the hope that all have a positive experience. The need to have an agreed "Wellspring Community Safeguarding Policy" should be seen as yet another way of providing for this positive experience.

Such a policy aims to provide the following:

- 1) Best practice guidelines to minimise the risk of abuse to a child, young person, vulnerable adult or helper.
- 2) All helpers to be better equipped to care for a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- 3) All to be aware of appropriate action in the event of a suspicion, rumour or allegation.
- 4) The reputation of all volunteers and members of the community to be protected.

The policies and guidelines contained in this document are designed to guide and assist the organisation and running of Wellspring events and to give confidence to all participants and volunteers

## Categories of Abuse

*Although this refers to children and young people it should be seen as relevant to all participants, especially vulnerable adults.*

An abused child is a boy or girl, aged 17 years or under, who has suffered from, or is believed to be at significant risk of, physical injury, emotional abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse.

### **Physical Abuse:**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health in a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as 'factitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy'.

### **Emotional Abuse:**

The persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Neglect:**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. It may involve the parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic educational or emotional needs.

### **Sexual Abuse:**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. 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.

*The Wellspring Community has a responsibility for the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The recognition of suspected or actual abuse rests with all participants, as well as those with organisational responsibilities.*

WHATEVER THE REASON, ABUSE IS ALWAYS WRONG AND IS NEVER THE FAULT OF THE CHILD, YOUNG PERSON OR VULNERABLE ADULT.

## Part 1

Adapted, with permission, from the The Open Cloister, Worth Abbey Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.

## Recruitment, Screening and Preparation of all persons registered as helpers.

*All organisations must be alert to the possibility that any person may pose a risk of harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults. Organisations using staff paid or voluntary who have access to children, young people or vulnerable adults must guard against the potential for abuse, through a rigorous selection process, supervision, preparation and on-going awareness of the behaviour of staff.*

- 1) Each volunteer should give a copy of the **Self Declaration and Code of Conduct Guidelines** form to the Team Leader to be passed on to the community safeguarding representative ahead of any event. The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers attending complete, sign and return the form to them indicating that they have read and understand the guidelines and agree to abide by them. This process will cover a helper's involvement for up to two years: after which it will be repeated. The Team Leader must be satisfied with the information provided and take up a sample of references for the leaders attending. Wellspring will keep a safe record of all volunteer self declarations for up to two years.

To help the selection process each volunteer needs to provide the names of two people who could, if approached, provide a character reference. Neither of these should be a relative.

*The Safeguarding Officer(s) should arrange for spot checks to be made with referees and/or any other persons particularly in cases where there might be some doubt as to the helper's suitability.*

- 2) All Team Leaders must ensure that they have:
  - a) a good understanding of the policy and guidelines
  - b) the skills to pass this understanding onto others
  - c) the skills to offer appropriate support and supervision for group members
- 3) All volunteers must have their roles and responsibilities clearly defined, as set out on the application form and to be reinforced through appropriate training.
- 4) Each volunteer must be issued with a Code of Conduct card outlining best practice guidelines and any action to be taken in the event of a disclosure.
- 5) The Wellspring Community has a nominated Safeguarding Officer(s) to be the main contact person in the event of any known or suspected incident. The role of the Safeguarding Officer is solely to ensure that the laid down procedures are meticulously followed. Only the statutory authority can investigate any disclosure of abuse.

## Part 2

Adapted, with permission, from the The Open Cloister, Worth Abbey Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.

## Guidelines for Best Practice

### Care of Participants

- 1) All team leaders should ensure they provide good support and supervision of participants and volunteers.
- 2) Helpers should ensure that they are not alone providing intimate care, e.g. washing, toileting, dressing and babysitting. This would include any time spent in a child's / young person's or vulnerable adult's bedroom for whatever reason.
- 3) All helpers must comply with the Code of Conduct.

***Helpers should be encouraged to report any incidents or concerns to the Event Organisers.***

### How to respond to a Disclosure

- 4) If a person makes an allegation to you -
  - ◆ The conversation is potentially a source of evidence. **The listener should listen** and not ask questions which lead or suggest an answer.
  - ◆ The listener must **record the conversation** as soon as possible. The record should reflect the conversation as accurately as possible, using the Participant's own words. The record should be signed and dated, noting the time and location at which it took place. The names of anyone else present should be included.
  - ◆ The **allegation** must be **taken seriously**. The person should be reassured that they have done the right thing in reporting an incident.
  - ◆ **Confidentiality** cannot be guaranteed and should not be promised in respect of an allegation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour. This means that any details should not be openly discussed, but may have to be acted upon by other authorities.
  - ◆ You should explain what you will do next, i.e. **inform your Event Organiser / Safeguarding Officer(s)**.
  - ◆ **It is not your responsibility to decide whether the allegation is true or not.**
- 5) At this time the subject of the allegation must not be approached, questioned or informed. Any person subject of an allegation will have their rights protected.
- 6) The Safeguarding Officer(s) must be notified immediately following the allegation(s) being made.
- 7) When deciding the course of action the Safeguarding Officer will consider;
  - (1) The safety and well being of the injured person and,

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- (2) Isolation of the person who is subject of the allegation.
- 8) On being notified of the allegation the Safeguarding Officer(s) will take appropriate action and inform the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.
- 9) Leaders should keep a written record of any accident or incident involving a group member. This should apply irrespective of the age of person(s) concerned and whether or not abuse has occurred or is suspected at the time. Written observations may assist later enquiries.

***This record should be given to the Safeguarding Officer at the time of the incident.***

## **Volunteer Code of Conduct Card**

*The following text shall be issued to all community members and volunteers.*

### **You must:**

- Treat everybody with respect
- Always be an example of good conduct that you would wish others to follow.
- Ensure wherever possible that there is more than one person present during your activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults, that you are within sight or hearing of others. All sensible precautions should be taken to ensure everyone's safety.
- Respect the right to personal privacy.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- Be aware that even caring physical contact may be misinterpreted.
- Operate within the Code of Good Conduct and procedures specified.

### **You must not:**

- Render yourself unfit for "duty as a helper" through the consumption of alcohol or the lack of sleep.
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others.
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour.
- Make suggestive / derogatory remarks or gestures.
- Jump to conclusions about others.
- Exaggerate or trivialise abuse issues.
- Show favouritism to any individual.
- Rely on your good name or that of the Church to protect you.
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'.
- Take a chance when common sense, policy and practice suggest another more prudent approach.
- Ignore the Safeguarding Guidelines and Procedures operating within the organisation.

If anyone discloses to you abuse by someone else:

- Allow him or her to speak without interruption, accepting what is said, but do not investigate or ask questions.
- Advise the person that you must pass on the information.
- Report the matter to the Event Organiser and/or the Safeguarding Officer(s).

If you suspect a participant is being abused, emotionally, physically or sexually:

- Report the matter to the Event Organiser and/or the Safeguarding Officer(s).

If you receive an allegation about any participant or about yourself:

- Immediately tell the Event Organiser and/or the Safeguarding Officer(s).
- Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position that could cause further compromise.

In all cases:

- The listener must record the conversation as soon as possible. The record should reflect the conversation as accurately as possible, using the person's own words.

- The record should be signed and dated, noting the time and location at which it took place. The names of anyone else present should be included.
- Report facts to the Safeguarding Officer(s).
- You must refer, you must not investigate. Do not contact the subject of the allegation.
- Do not promise confidentiality, as any information received may have to be acted upon by other authorities.

I have read and understood the codes of conduct and agree to abide by them.

**Signed:**

**Print Name:**

### References

Please give the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two people (not relatives) who know you well and would be able to give a personal reference (see overleaf for reference form).

Referee permission must be sought before their names are submitted.

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Referee</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Referee</b>
<b>NAME</b>		
<b>ADDRESS</b>		
<b>TEL. No.</b>		
<b>OCCUPATION</b>		
How long have you known this person?		
In what connection?		

### Safeguarding Self Declaration

*This document will be treated as highly confidential\*. Its completion is a necessary requirement of our Safeguarding Policy. The disclosure of an offence does not necessarily mean you cannot be accepted as a helper.*

Have you ever been charged or convicted of a criminal offence? YES / NO

Are you at present the subject of a criminal investigation? YES / NO

If yes to either please give details including the nature of the offence(s) and dates.

Have you ever had an offer of work, paid or voluntary, with children, young people or vulnerable adults declined or has there ever been any cause for concern regarding your conduct with children, young persons or vulnerable adults? YES / NO

If Yes, please give details, including dates and name of organisation.

To your knowledge have you ever had any allegation made against you which has been reported to, and investigated by, Social Services and/or the Police, or been involved in Court Proceedings concerning a child? YES / NO

If Yes, we will need to discuss this with you.

If considered appropriate, do you agree to co-operate in obtaining a formal Criminal Records Check and a formal Local Authority Check? YES / NO

Have you any physical or mental conditions that could affect your work with children, young people or vulnerable adults? YES / NO

If so, please give details.

#### Declaration:

I confirm that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete and I understand that misleading statements may be sufficient grounds for cancelling any agreement made.

Signed:

Date

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Print Name

\* Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying this position is exempt from the provision of section 4(ii) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions Order 1975), and you are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are "spent" under the provisions of the Act and in the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults within the Church

### **Appendix A: Definition of Vulnerable Adult**

3.1 No Secrets defines a vulnerable adult as:

***'A person (over 18) who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability\*, age or illness***

**AND**

***'Who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.'***

\* Disability includes sensory impairment, physical impairment, learning difficulties etc.

3.2 No Secrets defines abuse as:

***'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.'***

### **Appendix B: Best practices for social events (e.g. parties where alcohol is present) run in community properties**

Adapted, with permission, from the The Open Cloister, Worth Abbey Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.

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