

## **Eastgate Safeguarding Policy**

### **SECTION 1**

Name of Place of Worship/Organisation: Eastgate (formerly North Kent Community Church)

Address: 141 Springhead Parkway, Northfleet, Gravesend, DA11 8AD

Tel No: 01474 873040 Email address: safeguarding@eastgate.org.uk

Membership of Denomination/Organisation: The Evangelical Alliance

Charity Number: 1102206 Company Number: 5014909

Insurance Company: Church Connect Policy including Public Liability Insurance with Ansvar Insurance.

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The following is a brief description of our place of worship/organisation and the type of work/activities we undertake with children/vulnerable adults:

Eastgate is a multi-purpose building which is the base for Eastgate Church (formerly North Kent Community Church). It is also a community facility available for private and corporate hire. This means that the building may be used for both church and external functions at the same time, in separate areas of the building, with shared use of communal facilities such as a coffee shop, conveniences, and car parking. This policy and our practice refer to activities undertaken by the Eastgate Church organisation (hereafter referred to in this policy as "The Church").

Our activities are numerous and diverse and may include: Sunday children's and youth groups, after-school/holiday clubs; church family celebration events; evening youth groups; a Healing Centre; and workshops and groups in areas of specific interest e.g. music, dance or art, to which young people and vulnerable adults are welcome to attend. In addition to this, children, youth and/or vulnerable adults may also participate in external activities supervised by the church outside of the building, such as community initiatives (e.g carnivals and Fun Days) and Summer Camps (e.g Limitless).

Some activities and groups run by the church may also be held in other locations, such as local schools, homes, or community venues. Activities and events may also be conducted via online platforms, such as Zoom or Skype. Since January 2021 the church has been live streaming all or part of its main Sunday service via YouTube.

The church is independent of denominational groups but has good relational links with many churches locally, nationally and internationally through initiatives such as Churches Together in

Gravesham and in Ebbsfleet. We have UK and global connections through Living Fire and Heaven in Healthcare.

The church is also a member of the Evangelical Alliance, the Independent Charities Commission and the safeguarding organization 31:8, formerly known as Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS).

### **Our commitment**

As a team of Directors and Trustees (hereafter referred to as "the Leadership") we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We also acknowledge that spiritual abuse may be included in some people's experience. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child." As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by 31:8 and prepared by Eastgate's safeguarding team in consultation with the Leadership.

The Leadership undertakes to:

1. Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above. With this in mind if and when "Martyr's Law" is enacted, Eastgate will comply with its requirements.
2. Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached.

3. Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming and inclusive.
4. Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.
5. File a copy of the policy and practice guidelines with 31:8 and any amendments subsequently published. The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

## SECTION 2

### Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

#### Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against a vulnerable adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or vulnerable adult.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. *States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*
2. *Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

Also, for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5 which states:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy (See Appendices 1- 3)

1. Definitions of abuse – See Appendix 1
2. Signs and symptoms of abuse – See Appendix 2
3. How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse – See Appendix 3

#### Safeguarding awareness

**A photograph of the Safeguarding Officer and their team is displayed at reception and the work of the safeguarding team is included in “Vision and Values” sessions for new members.**

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers and member of Eastgate, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All those working directly alongside children, youth and vulnerable adults will receive training on a regular basis. This will be delivered in-house by the safeguarding team in consultation with 31:8. In addition to this, all adult members of Eastgate will be invited to attend a safeguarding awareness session, delivered by the safeguarding team and running at various times throughout the year. As part of the membership process of Eastgate, adults are asked to attend a Vision and Values meeting at which they are told about our safeguarding policy, shown who are our Safeguarding Officers are and how to contact them should they ever have any concerns.

In addition, the safeguarding team is encouraged and supported to attend specialist training sessions run by those with appropriate expertise, such as 31:8 and local authorities.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

### **Responding to allegations of abuse**

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Following procedures as below:

1. The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to HELEN MATTHEWS hereafter the "Safeguarding Officer") via the church office or email [safeguarding@eastgate.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@eastgate.org.uk) who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
2. In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to one of the following deputy officers (hereafter referred to as "the Deputy"): Steph Cox, David Koya, Tracy Jarvis, Kate Seager, Liz Smallwood and David Stevens.

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Officer and all the Deputies, then the report should be made in the first instance to 31:8 PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone 0845 120 4550. Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

3. Where the concern is about a child the Safeguarding Officer should contact Children's Social Services. Where the concern is regarding an adult in need of protection contact Adult Social

Services or take advice from 31:8 as above.

Kent County Council's Children's Social Services office telephone number is:

03000 41 11 11 (during office hours)

Kent County Council's Adult Social Services office telephone number is:

03000 41 61 61 (during office hours)

Out of hours and in an emergency

If you need to contact Social Services out of normal office hours call 03000 41 91 91

The Police Child Protection Team telephone number is: 01622 690 690

Where required the Safeguarding Officer should then immediately inform the insurance company and other strategic personnel within the Eastgate organisation.

4. Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
5. Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Officer, the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from 31:8.
6. The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.
7. It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from 31:8, although the Leadership hope that members of the place of worship / organisation will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Officer(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrate its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Officer/ deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

## **DETAILED PROCEDURES WHERE THERE IS A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD:**

### **Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

1. Contact Children's Social Services (or 31:8) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
2. Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
3. Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
4. For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
5. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
6. Seek and follow advice given by 31:8 (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

### **ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

1. Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
2. Seek and follow the advice given by 31:8 if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. 31:8 will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

**The following procedure will be followed where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:**

**SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, ORGANISATIONAL, FINANCIAL, OR DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE, OR NEGLECT, SELF NEGLECT, DOMESTIC ABUSE, FORCED MARRIAGE, TRAFFICKING OR MODERN SLAVERY.**

If there is concern about any of the above, Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

1. Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively, 31:8 can be contacted for advice.

2. If the vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

#### **ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regard to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).



## **SECTION 3**

### **Prevention and safe recruitment**

The leadership structure is based on a team model. Members can freely choose from a wide range of opportunities to connect with other members, several of which are time-bound. The number of such groups that any individual can access is neither prescribed nor limited.

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. Recruitment procedures are in line with Safer Recruitment Practice and are the responsibility of Heads of Departments

### **Management of Workers – Good Working Practice Guidelines**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers are issued with a set of good practice working guidelines towards children, young people and vulnerable adults. These are issued via the Heads of Department and are relevant to their specific area of ministry. The safeguarding team work with heads of department in developing appropriate guidelines, a copy of which is held by the safeguarding officer. The safeguarding team are available to support both workers and heads of department in implementing guidelines in context.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Pastoral Care**

#### **Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship/organisation.

The church has a number of initiatives, groups and ministries which offer pastoral support. The Transformation Centre offers: Bethel Sozo UK, Restoring the Foundations and Lie Busters. Eastgate also runs Love After Marriage courses. Counselling is available through Lighthouse Counselling. The church also offers support through: The Healing Centre, Prayer ministry and one-to-one support.

The Director with oversight for Pastoral Care is STEPH COX.

#### **Working with offenders**

When someone attending the place of worship/organisation is known to have abused children or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults the safeguarding team, in consultation with the Leadership, will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. In its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, the safeguarding team will set written boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

## SECTION 5

### Practice Guidelines

As an organisation/place of worship working with children, young people and vulnerable adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

As well as a set of general good practice working guidelines for workers, we have specific additional guidance for each individual activity we are involved in and which may include risk assessments, information sheets for parents and young people, and consent forms/medical forms etc as appropriate. Samples of these are available from the relevant Heads of Department (via the safeguarding team) on request.

### Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse. We therefore have clear guidelines in regard to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets 31:8's safeguarding standards. If an organization doesn't have its own policy we have drafted one based on Eastgate's one with a recommendation that they either provide their own or adopt our suggested version.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and vulnerable adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Signed by:



Date:

4th July 2023



## APPENDIX 1

### Definitions of Abuse

#### Physical 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 is commonly described using terms such as 'fabricated illness'

#### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of the child such as to cause severe and continuous adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only 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 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 the child, though it may occur alone.

#### Sexual Abuse

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 (e.g. rape or buggery) 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.

#### Neglect

Neglect is 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. It may involve a 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 emotional needs.

#### Spiritual Abuse

**“Spiritual Abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. Spiritual Abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it.**

**This abuse may include: manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, coercion to conform, control through the use of sacred texts or teaching, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation as a means of punishment, and superiority and elitism” (Oakley, 2018).**

***From: Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse Dr Lisa Oakley and Juston Humphreys SPCK 2019***

## Appendix 2

### Recognising Abuse

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

#### Physical signs of abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

#### Indicators of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a person concerning sexual abuse
- Person with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity 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
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia

#### Emotional signs of abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child/person withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

#### Race, Culture and Religion

Crucial to any assessment is a knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious aspects. Remember also that differences exist not only between ethnic groups but also within the same ethnic group and between different neighbourhoods and social classes. While different practices must be taken into account, it is also important to remember that all children have basic human rights. Differences in child-rearing do not justify child abuse.

\*These signs may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming, mostly by cutting, burning, self-poisoning. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

## **Appendix 3**

### **How to respond to a person wanting to talk about abuse**

#### **GENERAL POINTS**

- Above everything else listen, listen, listen
- Show acceptance of what the person says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- Keep calm
- Look at the child directly
- Be honest
- Tell the person you will need to let someone else know - don't promise confidentiality
- Even when a person has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- Be aware that the person may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- Never push for information. If the person decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.
- As soon as possible write down what has been shared

#### **HELPFUL RESPONSES**

- You have done the right thing in telling
- That must have been really hard
- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

#### **DON'T SAY**

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- Never make false promises
- Never make statements such as "I am shocked, don't tell anyone else"

#### **Responding to Abuse:**

Where neglect, physical abuse or sexual abuse is suspected, the following guidelines apply:

- All cases should immediately be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. She will decide, in consultation with the Safeguarding team and appropriate director (s), what appropriate course of action should be taken.
- Where physical abuse is suspected, this must be followed up with the parent/guardians to advise medical attention be obtained, and any continuing concerns followed up by appropriate agencies.
- Allegations of sexual abuse must be referred to the appropriate body (e.g. Social Services) without delay by the Safeguarding Officer.
- Where any of the above children/youth workers are themselves implicated, they will immediately relinquish responsibility for any part of this process and for any aspect of working with children in the Church.
- A confidential written record must be kept by the safeguarding team of all cases reported.