

Safeguarding Policy

Homewood



St Albans
**United
Reformed
Church**

St Albans United Reformed Church is based on two sites, Homewood and Greenwood. This Policy relates to the Homewood Site.

Aim and purpose of this policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that protecting people from abuse, harm or neglect is central to our culture. It provides procedures for promoting safeguarding, preventing abuse and protecting children, adults at risk and staff. This includes clear procedures for taking appropriate action when safeguarding concerns are raised involving children and adults within our church, or those who attend our activities and events.

Good Practice 6 referred to in this document can be found at -
<https://urc.org.uk/safeguarding>

Further information about St Albans United Reformed church can be found on our web site – stalbansurc.org.uk

Who this policy applies to

- This policy is approved and endorsed by the Trustee Elders and applies to:
- All members of our church
- All those who attend and serve our church/place of worship and its services
- Our trustees and Elders
- Paid staff (both internal and external, such as consultants)
- Volunteers
- Organisations and groups who hire our building with written agreement to operate under the church safeguarding policy.

Principles underpinning the policy

- Our theology and values
- Our commitment to put the welfare of children and adults at risk first
- A willingness to be open and listen
- A commitment to comply with relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

Definitions

The term 'children' refers to those under the age of 18 years.

The term 'adult at risk' refers to any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation, are permanently, or for time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

Duty of care and confidentiality

We have a duty of care to all beneficiaries of the church, whether adults, children or young people. We will always maintain confidentiality, except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm or abuse.

Creating a safer culture

In line with Chapter two of Good practice 6, we will:

- Appoint a Church Safe Guarding Coordinator and ensure contact details are available for anyone to report a concern
- Have a safeguarding policy which is reviewed annually and updated when necessary
- Practice safer recruitment procedures for paid and volunteer roles
- Ensure all those working with children and / or adults at risk are given copies of the relevant Codes of Conduct
- Follow the requirements of the training framework
- Comply with legal requirements in relation to data protection
- Complete the Annual Church Safeguarding Return
- Ensure safeguarding is a regular agenda item for church and Trustee Elders' meetings.

Ensuring safer activities

Activities will be organised in accordance with URC's safeguarding policy and guidance to promote a safe environment and healthy relationships, whilst minimising opportunities for harm, misunderstanding or false accusation. For each event, risk assessments will be carried out,

In line with Chapter three of Good practice 6, we will:

- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place for buildings and activities
- Consider the implications of data protection and health and safety requirements for specific activities
- Carry out risk assessments for relevant activities or events
- Ensure adequate staffing for activities and that leaders have suitable training, are aware of relevant guidance and agree to follow relevant Codes of Conduct
- Ensure the hirer's agreement is in place for other organisations using church premises. If the hirer does not have a policy, they must abide by the church's own safeguarding policy, a copy of which should be made available.

- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer for complex or sensitive risks.

Recognising and responding to concerns

In line with Chapter four of Good practice 6, we will:

- Promote awareness of different kinds of abuse, other vulnerabilities and types of safeguarding concern
- Seek to create a 'listening culture' and help people develop listening skills to respond appropriately in situations where sensitive information is disclosed
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer as a minimum of any situation where statutory services is/may be required
- Share information with statutory services as appropriate and co-operate with them during any investigations
- Report any serious safeguarding incidents to the Charity Commission and notify the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

Managing allegations and people who may pose a risk to others

Where allegations are made against individuals within the Church, we are committed to following all required investigative and regulatory procedures. We will work in collaboration with the Synod, wider Church staff, statutory agencies and other relevant organisations.

In line with Chapter five of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Co-operate fully with any investigative or disciplinary procedures
- Inform the Synod Safeguarding Officer immediately on becoming aware of anyone in the church who may present a risk to others
- Work with the Synod Safeguarding Officer and contribute relevant information for risk assessments
- Alert the Synod Safeguarding Officer or statutory agencies to known breaches of a safeguarding agreement.

Supporting victims and survivors

The key principle underpinning our policy and practice in this area is that all those who have experienced abuse, whether recently or in the past 'will be listened to and offered the pastoral care and support they deem appropriate and relevant, irrespective of the type of abuse, context, or when this occurred' (General Assembly policy statement 2021).

In line with Chapter five of Good Practice 6, we will:

- Recognise that the Trustee Elders' meeting has responsibility for the provision of pastoral care
- Be aware of local support services that people can be referred or directed to
- Ensure those in relevant roles attend appropriate training
- Seek advice from the Synod Safeguarding Officer about provision of appropriate support when necessary.

Key Contacts

Church Safeguarding Coordinator

Name: Sheila Knopp

Telephone No: 07305 549008

Email: safeguardingstalbansurc@gmail.com

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator

Name: Ray Fraser

Telephone No: 07960 259668

Email: safeguardingstalbansurc@gmail.com

Synod Safeguarding Officer

Name: Belinda Herbert

Telephone No: 0747 1531977

Email: safeguarding@urcthamesnorth.org.uk

URC Safeguarding Office (This should only be used if you are unable to contact your Synod Safeguarding Officer)

Email safeguarding@urc.org.uk

Local statutory services: Children – 0300 123 4043 (24 hours a day)

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Team

Local statutory services: Adults – 0300 123 4042 (24 hours a day)

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Details of other organisations and support services

Childline - A free 24-hour support and counselling service for children and young people up to 19 years of age. www.childline.org.uk / Freephone helpline for children: 0800 1111

Age UK - Support and advice services for the elderly. www.ageuk.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 678 1602

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, updated as required and adopted by the church meeting

Date of the most recent review: February 2026

Date of the next review: February 2027

Signed: Lesley King

(On behalf of the church Trustee Elders)