

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Safeguarding Team**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

Rev. Andrew Grey, Minister

**Designated Safeguarding Officers:**

Mark Smithers, Governing Elder and Trustee

Caroline Evans, Church Office Manager

Dr Louise Noble, MBBS, RCGP (2012), church member

### **Church details**

Name of Organisation:	<b>IMMANUEL CHURCH BRENTWOOD</b>
Charity Number:	1156523
Company Number:	08819716
Registered Address:	The Bays, Ashwells Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 9SE
Website:	<a href="http://www.immanuelbrentwood.org">www.immanuelbrentwood.org</a>
General Email address	<a href="mailto:info@immanuelbrentwood.org">info@immanuelbrentwood.org</a>

**Approved: 24 November 2025<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This policy replaces all our previous policies. First approved April 2019. Revised and approved November 2025.

## **Leadership Statement on our Safeguarding Policy**

Immanuel Church Brentwood is committed to creating a healthy church environment. We want everyone who comes into contact with us to feel safe, valued, and cared for. We believe that each person (including the unborn child, the disabled and the elderly) is made in the image of God, and as a result has an inherent dignity and worth.

We also recognise that we live in a sinful world, where human beings rebel against God and his ways for us, and harm one another in innumerable ways. We believe that the human heart is wicked and deceitful and that we all have a sinful nature.

We believe in the good news that God offers us forgiveness and new life if we will receive Jesus Christ as our saviour and Lord. We believe that when we submit to God and allow him to work in us by his Holy Spirit, we will grow in our faith and gradually become more like Jesus. Our greatest purpose and joy is to be in relationship with God, and to know his transforming work within us, giving us the power to change and become more Christlike; living lives that glorify God.

The church is a place where the love of God for each person is displayed and where we live, learn, and grow together in our faith. This involves supporting, encouraging, and even challenging and rebuking one another when we sin; all for the glory of God and for our individual and mutual good. We believe that God sees everything and that he knows even our secret and hidden sins and that one day each of us will stand before him as our judge.

As we journey and grow together in this life of faith, we recognise that we are not perfect and that at various times we will all have to both offer and seek forgiveness. We do, however recognise that within our church there is the opportunity for individuals or groups to harm, abuse, or exploit others. We as a church stand against any misuse of power, abuse, harassment, exploitation or other forms of harm. We all have a responsibility to care for and protect each member of our church community, but particularly those who are weaker or more vulnerable.

To support this, we have implemented policies, procedures, codes of conduct and systems that support the positive culture that we seek to create by ensuring that those responsible for leading safeguarding in the church are competent and that our safeguarding arrangements are effective.

We actively seek to encourage a culture where concerns about the way that individuals or groups have been treated, or about anything that we do as a church, can be raised openly. When concerns are raised, we commit to examining them carefully and impartially, establishing truth and upholding justice for all involved. We strive to reflect, learn, and grow as we consider such concerns; particularly where we fail to meet the standards that we have set for ourselves. Any concerns can be raised with one of the Elders, the Women's Worker or with one of our Safeguarding team. Their details are listed in the safeguarding policy and are available at the back of church. Our safeguarding policy and procedures are also available on our website.

As a church we are committed to safeguarding everyone who participates in church life, regarding care for the vulnerable as a biblical imperative and not just as a legal requirement. We work with local and national partners, doing all we can to keep everyone safe. We will strive to fulfil all our legal duties to protect both children and Adults at Risk of Abuse, but we aim to go above and beyond and to discharge

our safeguarding duties in a way that is biblically faithful and pleasing to our loving heavenly Father, who calls us to act with justice, love kindness and to walk humbly before him.

## **Introduction and Context of Immanuel Church**

Immanuel Church Brentwood is a medium-sized, independent (non-denominational) church<sup>2</sup>. There are approximately 180 regular attendees to its Sunday services, including a significant number of children.

Main Sunday meetings ordinarily take place in a large secondary school (Becket Keys Church of England School), in the middle of the town of Brentwood, Essex. We host other midweek meetings in other premises including Hutton Free Church. Immanuel owns a church building in the centre of Brentwood which is undergoing some renovating work before it can be used for church activities.

Immanuel's work is conducted both by paid ministers and staff members, and by a large team of volunteer workers.

Immanuel is a church which is centred on Jesus Christ. It believes and teaches that all Christians should strive to follow Jesus in their daily lives. Its overarching aim is to glorify God and serve the town of Brentwood, by faithfully teaching the Bible to believers and to enquirers, seeking to make disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Immanuel's supreme authority is the Bible; the church's doctrinal basis is the Westminster Confession of Faith. Immanuel believes wholeheartedly that God created all people in his image. Each person, therefore, is infinitely valued by God. Jesus taught that his people should be marked by love for one another. The church's theological and confessional position is important, since it underpins all the church's work in pastoral care for members of the church, regular attendees and also visitors.

## **Policy Coverage**

This policy is designed to safeguard the following individuals who engage with Immanuel's various ministries and activities:

- those who have committed to Immanuel formally as members
- regular attendees of Immanuel who are not members
- children of members and regular attendees
- visitors and guests who attend Immanuel's services and activities
- members of the public who may very infrequently be present on the premises at which Immanuel is holding a meeting
- external hirers of the building – this policy will be given to all external parties using our building/premises. We expect them to read and adhere to it.

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<sup>2</sup> At the time of this revision of the policy, Immanuel is seeking to join the IPC. Once Immanuel is part of the denomination, the church will have different, accountability and oversight structures, including those with robust safeguarding responsibilities.

## The leadership team within Immanuel

Safeguarding is primarily the responsibility of the leadership team within Immanuel, which consists of:

- employed paid elders, referred to as Teaching Elders and Ministers, currently:  
Revd. Andrew Grey and Gavin Wright
- lay or non-paid elders referred to as Governing Elders, currently including:  
Mark Smithers and Will Trump
- employed Women's Workers, currently one in post:  
Charlotte Smithers
- a Church Office Manager, currently one in post:  
Caroline Evans
- Immanuel's Trustees, currently 9 in total, consisting of the teaching and governing elders, plus 4 non-elder trustees:  
Alison Drummond, Alane Lunn, Denis Parsons and Kirsten Witchalls

However, everyone who regularly partakes in Immanuel's ministries and activities has a responsibility to be aware of safeguarding issues and how to report a concern.

## External Oversight and Governance: Immanuel's Council of Reference

Immanuel is an independent church and thus not formally part of a wider denomination of churches<sup>3</sup>. It is, however, served by an external Council of Reference (COR), consisting of serving or retired church ministers. It ensures that Immanuel's leaders have oversight, accountability and support, but also crucially for this document, provides a group of experienced professionals who are independent of the church with whom any concerns may be raised.

Within Immanuel's legal constitution the Council of Reference has power to intervene, for example, together with the Trustees in removing one of Immanuel's Ministers if appropriate and deemed necessary. The Council of Reference is referred to later as well in the document, under the section of abuse of power, church culture and potential risks. The Council of Reference's Members are currently:

- Revd. Rob Hudson
- Revd. Canon David Banting
- Revd. David Thomas
- Revd. Mike Walton

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of this revision of the policy, Immanuel is seeking to join the IPC. Once Immanuel is part of the denomination, the church will have different, accountability and oversight structures, including those with robust safeguarding responsibilities. The Council of Reference will cease to have oversight of Immanuel.

In addition, Deborah Kelly, Women's Worker from Grace Church Wanstead, is available to female church members at Immanuel if they would like her help in relaying questions or concerns to the Council of Reference.

## **Safeguarding Roles**

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead and Officers**

Immanuel has appointed the senior minister, currently Andrew Grey, to be the church's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)<sup>4</sup> The DSL holds overall responsibility for the safeguarding on both an operational and strategic level for the church.

### **Designated Safeguarding Officers**

To support the DSL a group of Designated Safeguarding Officers have been appointed (DSO<sup>5</sup>). The DSOs will deputise for the DSL if he is unavailable to make a decision on a disclosure and are used to offer support in ensuring any safeguarding matters are actioned and dealt with promptly. The DSOs will also be the individuals who may be approached if there is a concern raised about the DSL. They are:

- Mark Smithers, Governing Elder and the Trustee with responsibility for safeguarding
- Caroline Evans, Church Office Manager
- Dr Louise Noble, MBBS, RCGP (2012), church member

The contact details for the DSL and DSOs are on the front page of this policy.

### **Safeguarding administration**

Additionally, Caroline Evans is appointed to carry out administration associated with safeguarding such as:

- management and co-ordination of the safer recruitment process, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- ensuring training safeguarding records are kept and available for perusal by the DSL, DSOs.
- organising regular safeguarding training for key individuals
- responsibility for updating and maintaining the Single Central Record (SCR) of staff and volunteers
- monitoring the safeguarding referral email address and passing on information to the DSL and DSOs
- conducting regular reviews of the safeguarding policy to ensure it is up to date with best practice

## **Immanuel's commitment**

Immanuel's leadership recognises the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people, vulnerable adults and adults, acknowledging that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

It accepts 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

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<sup>4</sup> DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead

<sup>5</sup> DSO: Designated Safeguarding Officer

distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

It also concurs 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.”

The Leadership has therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. It is committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

Immanuel’s leadership (the Trustees and staff) undertakes to provide effective oversight of safeguarding across the church by:

- endorsing and following all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above
- ensuring that the premises we use meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that they are welcoming and inclusive
- Ensuring that they appoint from amongst their number a nominated Safeguarding Trustee who will act on their behalf to provide leadership and guidance on matters related to safeguarding
- Ensuring that the church leadership promote the importance of safeguarding and lead the development of a culture that is biblically faithful, healthy, transparent, and accountable and that safeguarding is appropriately prioritised, and its profile maintained
- Ensuring that a suitably knowledgeable and appropriately trained and skilled Designated safeguarding Lead (DSL) and DSOs are appointed and that they are adequately supported and resourced
- supporting the DSOs in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs
- providing on-going safeguarding training for all its workers
- Ensuring that a proportionate and legally compliant safeguarding policy is implemented and that it is reviewed by the Trustees with input and support from the DSL and DSOs at least annually, but more frequently as required
- Ensuring that clearly defined safeguarding procedures and systems are in place, that they are understood and implemented by all staff, volunteers, and anyone else who acts on ICB’s behalf. These procedures include maintaining confidential safeguarding files, regularly updated and securely filed, see below section: record keeping for further detail.
- Ensuring that an annual report is provided to the Trustees by the Safeguarding Trustee, the DSL, and DSOs
- Ensuring that the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements is monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed annually in line with the review of the policy and procedures
- Ensuring that safeguarding roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- Ensuring that any “Serious Incidents” (as defined in the Charity Commission Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>) are reported accurately and in a timely manner

# Prevention

## Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult or 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 adult.

In order to safeguard those in Immanuel's care it adheres to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19:

- 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:

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

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in the policy.

\*A vulnerable adult at risk is defined as someone who is aged 18 or over and:

*Who 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<sup>6</sup>.*

## Safer recruitment

To fulfil our legal duties and to ensure we meet the still higher standards dictated by scripture, all workers responsible for leading and delivering Immanuel's ministry and activities will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with appropriate safer recruitment processes.

This includes ensuring that:

- At least one person who is involved in the process of recruitment of staff or appointment of volunteers will be trained in Safe Recruitment
- Staff and volunteers will be provided with written Job / role descriptions and person specifications prior to deciding whether to take up the position / role
- those applying have completed an application form
- those short listed have been interviewed
- safeguarding has been discussed at interview, including checking that the applicant has read the safeguarding policy, person specifications and job descriptions
- written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> Source the Care Act 2014: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/adult-pocket-guide.pdf>

- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has been completed where necessary. Roles that involve regulated activity and which consequently are subject to a DBS check will be clearly identified as exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Where a DBS check is conducted, the individual will be encouraged to join the DBS Update Service. If the individual is already registered with the Update Service, so long as the check is of the same level or higher, this will be used rather than requesting a new DBS check.
- qualifications where relevant have been verified
- safeguarding training is provided for the successful applicant
- the applicant has been given a copy of ICB's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.
- Appropriate records will be kept of all recruitment processes and decisions
- A "Single Central Record" of recruitment checks, DBS checks and a training log will be maintained by the church

### **Safeguarding training**

The Leadership of Immanuel is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all its workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our voluntary workers will receive appropriate safeguarding training for their role on a regular basis<sup>7</sup>.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs 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.

### **Practice Guidelines**

Immanuel, as an organisation and place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, wishes to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for staff and volunteers<sup>8</sup>, Immanuel has specific good practice guidelines for every activity it runs. An 'activity' might be a regular children's or adult group held on a Sunday or in the week.

- For each worker, Immanuel provides a person specification and job description
- For each group and ministry there is an Activity Plan and Risk Assessment (reviewed regularly and available upon request)
- Any activities outside of the regular plan and risk assessment will have a specific Activity Plan and Risk Assessment created.

### **Adult to child ratios**

For children's groups, the Leadership seeks to ensure that appropriate child: adult ratios are maintained in line with guidance from the NSPCC and as indicated within any activity risk assessment. This includes always seeking to have at least two adults present when working with or supervising children and young people. The minimum ratios are:

- 0 - 2 years - one adult to three children

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<sup>7</sup> Christian Safeguarding Services advises that best practice is for volunteers/workers to repeat this training every three years

<sup>8</sup> See appendices for details



- 2 - 3 years - one adult to four children
- 4 - 8 years - one adult to six children
- 9 - 12 years - one adult to eight children
- 13 - 18 years - one adult to ten children

We note that where Immanuel is involved with caring for children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or where children's or youth groups are doing 'riskier' activities e.g. outdoor adventure, more supervision than the minimum ratios above may be required.

In situations where an adult is present with a specific role to support a particular child, the additional "carer" can be counted as one of the minimum of 2 workers, if they will be present throughout the group, however, since their role is to support one child, they will not count towards the ratios listed above. *(For example, if a group consisted of 10-year-olds and there were 11 children present, if one volunteer is allocated to provide specific 1:1 support for a child, they cannot be counted as a second adult because they are focusing on the one child, and the number of children present requires 2 adults. Whereas if there were 9 children present the 1:1 worker would be supervising the 9<sup>th</sup> child and therefore the ratio of 1:8 would be met).*

### **Working in Partnership**

Immanuel has clear guidelines with regard to its expectations of those with whom it works. It will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations.

Any external (non-ICB) groups hiring the church premises are required to agree to our Conditions of Hire Document. In it, we draw specific attention to Safeguarding practices and policy:

***Safeguarding;** ICB is committed to the safeguarding of all children and vulnerable adults. Any hirers must therefore agree to ICB's requirements in respect of safeguarding. Any failure to do so may result in the contract being terminated. It is the responsibility of the hirers to ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies, practices and measures are in place, and adhered to, while hiring out the space. The hirer will be required to provide copies of these policies on request to ICB. The hirer confirms that, should any safeguarding concerns present themselves during the hire of the Premises, they shall contact [safeguarding@immanuelbrentwood.org](mailto:safeguarding@immanuelbrentwood.org) as soon as reasonably practicable.*

## **Responding to allegations of abuse**

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse, they should follow the procedures as below:

### **Helping a child when abuse is disclosed**

If a child makes a disclosure to you:

- Make time to listen to them
- Stay calm and controlled
- Do not make any false promises e.g. that you will keep a secret or that no one else will be involved

- Do not question a child (and particularly avoid leading questions), try to limit your involvement to listening.
- Report any disclosure immediately (or as soon as possible) following the notes below.

### **Reporting a concern**

Anyone who has a safeguarding concern should contact Immanuel's DSL, or DSOs as soon as possible (contact details are on the front page of this policy). Where appropriate a 'Cause for concern' form should be completed. Any record made should include:

- The nature of the concern
- What is the evidence that led to your concern
- What the child has said if a discussion took place
- What you did or said in response

The DSL and DSOs are 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. If the suspicions concern the leadership team or safeguarding leads the concern should be made directly to the Council of Reference (see above for details) or to Christian Safeguarding Services, the external advisory group for safeguarding:

#### **Christian Safeguarding Services**

contact@thecss.co.uk Tel: 01162 184717

#### **Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.**

The Safeguarding team may first ring the Christian Safeguarding Services helpline for advice. They will act on that advice or contact the appropriate statutory agency directly:

**Name of local authority:** **Essex County Council**

**Children's Social Services** **Tel: 0345 603 7627**

Website: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/Health-Social-Care/Families-and-childrens-social-care>

**Adult Social Services** **Tel: 0345 603 7630**

Website: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/Health-Social-Care/Health-and-social-care-for-adults>

**Essex Police non-emergency** **Tel: 101** (in emergencies call 999)

The Safeguarding leads may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, these include:

- the trustees and the treasurer who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident
- the designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18

Suspensions or concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above, or those involved in direct pastoral care in the church i.e. the Elders and the Women's Worker. A written record

of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place, see further detail in the section below on record keeping.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding leads individuals with concerns should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Christian Safeguarding Services.

Immanuel's leadership will support the DSL and DSOs 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.

The role of the DSL and DSO 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.

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 Christian Safeguarding Services, although the Leadership hope that members of Immanuel will use this procedure.

If, however, an individual with a concern feels that the DSL or DSO has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL or DSO as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency or the Council of Reference. It is hoped that by making this statement the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

## **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 DSL or DSO will:

- contact Children's Social Services (or Christian Safeguarding Services) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home
- not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services
- seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions
- 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
- 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
- seek and follow advice given by Christian Safeguarding Services (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 DSL or DSO will:

- 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

- seek and follow the advice given by Christian Safeguarding Services if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Christian Safeguarding Services will confirm its advice in writing for future reference

## **Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult or vulnerable adult is in need of protection:**

Suspicious or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse – if there is concern about any of the above, the DSL or DSO will:

- contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse, alternatively Christian Safeguarding Services can be contacted for advice
- if the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions
- If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the DSL or DSO will:
  - identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
  - contact Christian Safeguarding Services and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern

## **Allegations against or concerns about staff and volunteers**

ICB takes allegations against our staff and volunteers very seriously and will ensure that they are investigated thoroughly, via a transparent process that expedites the matter in a timely manner. We recognise that that we have a responsibility to take the allegation seriously, to manage the situation effectively while the investigation takes place and to support the person accused throughout the process.

- Allegations against staff or volunteers within the church should be reported to the safeguarding trustee or by e-mailing [safeguarding@immanuelbrentwood.org](mailto:safeguarding@immanuelbrentwood.org)
- If the allegation is against the safeguarding trustee, it should be reported to one of the other Elders or the DSL.
- Full details of the allegation will be recorded.
- The trustees will nominate an investigating officer (on a case-by-case basis) from amongst their number, who will assess whether any immediate action is required to ensure the safety of everyone involved.
- Dependent upon circumstances and the immediate action required, notifying the individual that an allegation has been received may be unavoidable.
- If so, care will be taken not to compromise the gathering of evidence.
- If it is necessary to notify the individual at this stage, details of the allegation will not be divulged.
- Support must be offered to the subject of the allegation as well as any potential victims.
- At the earliest opportunity, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) should be consulted.
  - If the LADO cannot be contacted due to working hours, initial advice can be sought from Christian Safeguarding Services (CSS)

- If the allegation meets the threshold for the LADO, the church's investigating officer will work with the LADO to ensure that the allegation is thoroughly investigated, and all issues raised are addressed.
- If the allegation does not meet the threshold for the LADO, the investigating officer will consult with CSS, who will provide independent support and advice to ensure transparency.
- Thorough records of all aspects of the handling of the allegation will be retained throughout the process.
- These records will be held confidentially in a secure folder on a password protected, cloud-based drive.
- The investigating officer will seek and follow specialist advice throughout the process as required.

## **Pastoral Care**

We understand there is an overlap between pastoral care and safeguarding and therefore information will be shared where appropriate between the safeguarding team and those at Immanuel who are providing pastoral support. Where necessary, records will be retained as sub-threshold levels concerns, in line with safeguarding best practice.

We recognise that there are some adults who do not meet the criteria for "adults with care and support needs" but may still be vulnerable in other ways. These vulnerabilities would be classed as sub-threshold, therefore any support offered would be on the same basis. However, we aim to care well for all who come into contact with the church and as we are able, we will support and signpost to other organisations who may be able to support the individual.

### **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 church.

### **Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk**

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties. The risk assessment will only be shared with the leadership team and any individuals the DSL deems appropriate and necessary. Individual safeguarding risk assessments are reviewed and monitored regularly.

## **Record Keeping in relation to safeguarding**

As a matter of course, Immanuel will record and store information accurately, keeping it securely in line with our legal duties, information sharing policies<sup>9</sup> and national and local guidance and agreements. This will include records such as:

- Consent forms
- Attendance data for work with children, young people and adults at risk of abuse
- DBS certificate information
- Accident and incident reporting
- Confidential recording of safeguarding concerns

Concerns, allegations, information and written statements, whether acted upon or not will be kept for reference, and if necessary will be used to create a safeguarding case or file on an individual. Where appropriate a 'Cause for concern' form will be completed.<sup>10</sup> The information will be stored electronically, safely and secure in a cloud-based server with access strictly limited to the safeguarding team and those involved in direct pastoral care in the church i.e. the Elders and the Women's Worker. It will be kept only in accordance with data protection legislation.

## **Church culture and potential risks**

Immanuel and its leadership team adopt a proactive approach to safeguarding, recognising that, sadly, cases of abuse within churches have been uncovered, and that safeguarding procedures have failed, been deliberately ignored or been inadequately implemented. It ascribes to an attitude of 'this could happen here', and continually reminds its members of the importance of keeping individuals safe.

It is also aware that leaders within churches, especially the lead minister, hold positions of power and authority which can sometimes be abused and cause harm to church members. Again, some high-profile cases of leadership abuses have made national news in the last few years; such cases have been discussed by the Elders, Trustees and Council of Reference in order to learn any lessons.

In 2022, Immanuel undertook a review of its leadership culture and sought the views of its members on their perceptions of church leadership, power and accountability. We will seek to conduct such reviews periodically.

Immanuel is committed to transparency, a plurality of leadership with both internal and external accountabilities built into its leadership structures as explained in this document. It is hoped that these accountability measures and considerations in leadership will negate and minimise the risks of such abuses taking place at Immanuel. Furthermore, we are committed to:

- ensuring that we have a culture and policies and procedures for raising concerns or complaints by any member of our community including children, young people, adults at risk of abuse and their parents / carers and for dealing with those concerns in an efficient, open, honest, and fair manner.

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<sup>9</sup> See

[www.immanuelbrentwood.org/Groups/306027/Immanuel\\_Church\\_Brentwood/About\\_Us/Data\\_Protection/Data\\_Protection.aspx](http://www.immanuelbrentwood.org/Groups/306027/Immanuel_Church_Brentwood/About_Us/Data_Protection/Data_Protection.aspx) for ICB's Privacy Statement and Data Protection Policy

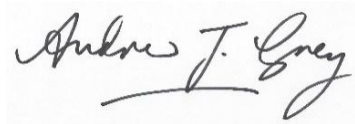
<sup>10</sup> See a template Cause for concern form in the appendices

- developing a culture that encourages every member of our community to identify and raise concerns and we support this with a clear whistleblowing policy<sup>11</sup>
- We ensure that relevant policies, procedures, codes of conduct etc are publicly available – both in physical format at church on Sundays, and via our website.

## Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by Immanuel's Trustees. It will be reviewed annually before the church's Annual General Meeting (to which a Safeguarding Report is submitted).

Signed by:



Position: Senior Minister

Date: 24 November 2025

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<sup>11</sup> See

[www.immanuelbrentwood.org/Groups/409041/Immanuel\\_Church\\_Brentwood/About\\_Us/Whistleblowing/Whistleblowing.aspx](http://www.immanuelbrentwood.org/Groups/409041/Immanuel_Church_Brentwood/About_Us/Whistleblowing/Whistleblowing.aspx)

## Appendices to Immanuel's Safeguarding Policy

These appendices can be requested (via email – [safeguarding@immanuelbrentwood.org](mailto:safeguarding@immanuelbrentwood.org)) or viewed at Immanuel on Sundays.

- Abuse – definitions, signs and symptoms
- Standard document samples
  - Application to volunteer
  - Role descriptions and person specifications for children's work
  - Concerns reporting form
  - Record of safeguarding conversations and actions
  - Template report from Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to trustees
  - Complaint form
- Process Flowcharts
- Safer recruitment flowchart
- Application process checklist
- Child registration and parental consent forms
- Blemished DBS checks
- The management of ex-offenders
- Staff Health and Safety Policy
- General Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy

To be added in 2026:

- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- 1-2-1 Ministry Policy
- Lone worker policy