

The Cotteridge Church

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Safeguarding Children and Young People (under 18's)

SECTION 1

Details of the place of worship

The Cotteridge Church
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Charity Number: 1143091

Insurance Company: Ecclesiastical Insurance Policy reference number: 04/XPG/0127040. Policy includes Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance

Brief description of church and activities with children and young people

The Cotteridge Church is an ecumenical church, uniting Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed Church congregations. It is a large church (approximately 200 members) open 7 days a week, with varied activities for both young and old. There is a coffee bar open 6 days a week and a Day Centre on weekdays for older adults. Sunday groups are age specific.

Our commitment

The Cotteridge Church has agreed to adopt the policies and procedures of the Church of England with regards to safeguarding. As a church we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people. We acknowledge that children and young peoples can be the victims of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect. 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 (1989) 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 church we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

Child Protection Policy Statement of the Church of England

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the protection of children and young people, both in society as a whole and its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle enshrined in the Children Act 2004 that the welfare of the child is paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people. It is committed to acting promptly whenever concern is raised about a child or young person or about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

This policy is informed by Diocese of Birmingham Policy **God's Children: Our Diocese, Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) and established good practice.

The Cotteridge Church undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached
- 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
- support the Minister and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children

SECTION 2

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children 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.

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. All 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.

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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying 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 maltreatment of a 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, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, 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.

Signs of Possible Abuse

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in the context of the child's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate 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

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- 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

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow
- Constant hunger, stealing or gorging food
- Untreated illnesses
- Inadequate care

*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. In excess of 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

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Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Concerns about the welfare of a child can be as a result of concern expressed by:

- another adult
- because of behaviour or appearance of a child or young person
- disclosure by a child or young person.

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 Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators will:

- Contact Children's Social 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.

Allegations of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Officer direct.
- Contact the Bishops Safeguarding Children's Advisor
- Contact parent or person with parental responsibility except when there is:
 - Risk of abuser being deliberately or inadvertently alerted and possibly removing incriminating evidence
 - Risk of parent or carer taking matters into their own hands
 - Risk of the alleged abuser attempting to silence the child or young person with bribery or threats Increased risk of harm to the child if the parent or carer does not believe them or if they feel angry with the child or young person for disclosing
 - Risk of pressure being exerted for allegations to be retracted or to change their version of events

When a decision is taken to disclose information to Police or Social Services without parental consent then details of the justification will be recorded in writing

How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse

The key skill is to listen effectively. Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child to talk in private, but making sure other appropriate people are aware the conversation is taking place

Effective Listening

- It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- Above everything else listen without interrupting
- Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
- Remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen
- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure that there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.

Helpful Responses

- You have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

Don't Say

- Why didn't you tell anyone before
- I can't believe all this
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

After The Meeting

- Give positive reassurance and information of what you are going to do next
- Make detailed notes that are factual, noting body language and emotional behaviour
- Make a note of your actions and who you are going to inform
- Do not speak to anyone implicated in the allegation
- Do not attempt to obtain further information from the child or young person other than the information volunteered
- Only talk to those people who have responsibility for these matters

Safeguarding Awareness

The Cotteridge Church is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All workers will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis. We will also ensure that children 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.

Given the sensitive nature of the notes and records of discussions and decisions relating to safeguarding issues, such records will be kept securely, in a locked cabinet or safe and access will be restricted to the Minister and Parish Safeguarding Coordinators.

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:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

The Cotteridge Church Minister

or

The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator

Contact details are available from the church administrator or may be found on the notice board near the chapel.

All of these people are authorised by the church 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. Where the concern is about a child either of the above should contact either

- Children's Social Services. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) office telephone number (office hours) is 0121 303 1888. The out of hours emergency number 0121 675 4806

OR

- The Police Child Protection Officer telephone number is 0845 113 5000 and ask for Child Protection Unit

If the situation is an emergency and it is not possible to contact the Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators the worker should contact directly Social Services or the Police. It is essential that the worker inform the Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators as soon as possible after this action has been taken and the Bishops Safeguarding Advisor, (Bishop's Chaplain, 0121 427 1163).

- 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
- The church will support the Vicar and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator 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
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies, although The Cotteridge Church hopes that its members will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that The Cotteridge Church demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all children

The role of the Minister and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators 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.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children or young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). They will also inform the Bishops Safeguarding Advisor and liaise with them at all times.

Concerns about the Minister or Parish Safeguarding Coordinators

If a concern has been raised or an allegation has been made against a member of the clergy or anyone holding a Bishops Licence (lay reader) the matter must be referred to the Bishops Safeguarding Advisor who can be reached through the Diocesan Bishop's Office 0121 427 1163, the Methodist Circuit Assembly or the West Midlands URC Synod. A complaint against a Reader, Local Preacher or Lay Minister must initially be addressed to the Minister.

- If there is a concern or an allegation has been made against a member of the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators, then the matter must be referred directly to the Minister

Prevention

Safe recruitment

The Cotteridge Church will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written role profile for the post giving details of the post, skills required and type of person sought for the role
- Those applying have completed an application form
- Those applying have completed a Confidential self-declaration Form
- All potential workers are interviewed
- Safeguarding issues have been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A criminal records bureau disclosure (DBS) has been completed where required
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided and agreed with the new worker
- The worker has completed a probationary period
- The worker has been given a copy of the Safeguarding Policies, undertakes to work within the policies and knows how to report concerns
- That a 'Volunteer Agreement' is signed after the satisfactory completion of the probation period
- Copies of interview notes and all associated forms are passed to the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators

Positions of Trust and Authority

Many people, apart from those working directly with children and young people, hold positions of trust and/or authority within the church. Such a position means that a person may have influence over a child or young person or may have influence over policies and procedures safeguarding children and young people because of their position.

In order to control this risk The Cotteridge Church will ensure that all those who hold positions of trust and authority have completed a Confidential self-declaration Form and a Disclosure and Barring Service record has been completed. The roles and positions of such people are:

- All paid staff members
- Church Wardens, Stewards and Elders
- JCC office holders – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer
- Lay readers and local preachers
- All others who are regularly on the platform who fall within above mentioned criteria. The Minister and Parish Safeguarding Coordinators will make final decision as to who falls into this category

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a church we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers will be issued with appropriate information and copies of the policy will be issued to all ministry leads and available in the Church Office.

The Cotteridge Church undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow or encourage an inappropriate or sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

Pastoral Care and Support

Supporting those affected by abuse or where an allegation of abuse has been made

The Cotteridge Church is committed to offering pastoral care and support to all those within the church who have been affected by abuse any way.

Where there is an allegation of abuse within the church all pastoral support of the child, young person, family member, alleged perpetrator will be arranged in consultation with the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor.

Supporting anyone where there is a potential for the intervention of statutory agencies or authorities will be done in accordance with the diocesan guidelines – God's Children: Our Diocese – Section 7

Working with offenders

When someone attending The Cotteridge Church is known to have abused children the Minister or his appointed nominee will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. The Bishops Safeguarding Advisor will also be informed of the situation. A risk management policy will be drawn up in consultation with the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor which will determine the level of integration the individual will be allowed to have in the church community. The Cotteridge Church safeguarding commitment to the protection of children will be paramount and clear boundaries will be set for that person which they will be expected to keep.

Further details and guidelines will be found in Section 5 'Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse' in God's Children: Our Diocese available from the Church Office

SECTION 5

Good Practice Guidelines

As a place of worship working with children and young people 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.

It is important that all those who work with children and young people have shared values. The aim of these values is ensure quality childcare, protect children from possible abuse and workers from false accusations. To facilitate this The Cotteridge Church has set guidelines for those working with children and young people. They are as follows:

- Workers should treat all children /young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions
- Due consideration will be given to how many workers should be involved with a group and whether they should be male and/or female worker or both. The adult/child ratio will also reflect current guidelines
- Sometimes young children need support with their personal care (i.e. toileting). During the Saplings Stay and Play Group that responsibility will remain with the parent or carer, and workers will not be involved with assisting. On Sundays there will be occasions when younger children will need the toilet. For those who are able to use the toilet independently they will just be chaperoned to the toilet and the worker will stay by the door. It is expected that the only age group who would need more direct help would be the Footsteps group aged up to 2½ years. Workers who care for babies in this group are not expected to change soiled nappies. Should the situation arise that the baby needs to be changed then the parent or carer should be called to do so. Toddlers requesting the toilet generally need to go 'now'. The toddler is to be taken to the toilet by the worker and helped as necessary, bearing in mind the need to encourage independence in this area from the toddler. It is good practice to tell another worker that you are doing so and the door should remain unlocked
- It is paramount that children are free from any threat, or anything that could be perceived as a threat, whilst they engage in activities at The Cotteridge Church. Their privacy should be respected at all times. It is therefore important to avoid questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments
- It is not expected that any worker should work alone with a child or young person. Where there is a need for one to one work it will be done under the direct supervision of the ministry leaders. When such work is carried out regular feedback and accountability will be in place. When one to one work takes place the following good practice guidelines must be adhered to i. meeting should take place in an appropriate place e.g. church room, coffee shop, other public place ii. inform someone that the meeting is happening iii. keep notes of what was discussed
- No person under 16 years of age will be left in sole charge of any children of any age. Nor will children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time
- Appropriate feedback and support will be given to those involved in any disclosure regardless of outcome
- Potential volunteers will be permitted to take part in two taster sessions. They will be fully supervised and not left alone with a child or young person. They will not be able to continue after the two sessions until DBS clearance has been received and they and the Ministry Lead has been informed by the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators.

Adult to child ratios

Below are the child care ratios set by the Diocese of Birmingham. There must be a minimum of 2 adults.

| | Adult | : | Children |
|-----------------|-------|---|----------|
| 2 years & under | 1 | : | 3 |
| 3 years + | 1 | : | 6 |
| 5 years + | 1 | : | 8 |

Anyone under the age of 18 years must not be included in the child care ratios

For children over 8, there is no official guidance. A suggested ratio is two adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children, with an additional leader for every 10 children. Following a risk assessment, this ratio would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered high risk or dangerous, or when catering for children with disabilities/special needs.

For specific activities such as Saplings Stay and Play Group, where the child remains the responsibility of the parent/carer these ratios do not apply. The ratio of workers for that activity is reflected by the numbers needed to facilitate the group.

Home Visits

Workers and leaders may need to make home visits from time to time. In these circumstances the church will confirm identification (this may take the form of a letter or phone call to parents/carers) of the person doing the visit. As with working one to one this will be done under the supervision of the Minister.

Guidelines for visiting:

- Inform a supervisor or another worker of the proposed visit.
- In the case of children and young people never go into a home if a parent or carer is absent unless the child would be at risk of significant harm if you do not do so.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
 - Purpose
 - Time you arrived and left
 - Who was present
 - What was discussed

This also refers to meetings with young people outside of the ordinary context, and outside of the home. Such meetings are referred to in more information under the 'communication with children' section.

If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them.

Food and drink safety and hygiene

Any food that is made and/or consumed on the premises should meet food safety regulations. It follows therefore that there should be someone within the activity who has responsibility for this. They should possess a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate or equivalent. The Cotteridge Church will provide someone with the relevant certificate for each activity. If food and drink are provided during an activity, the following should be expected.

- Workers should follow good personal hygiene.
- Basic health and hygiene regulations should be adhered to.
- All food and drink is stored appropriately.
- Hot drinks should not be carried through an activity area and not placed within the reach of young children.
- Snacks and mealtimes are appropriately supervised.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Systems are in place to ensure that children and young people do not have access to food/drinks to which they are allergic. Typically, this can be peanuts, nuts, milk, eggs, fish, shell fish and gluten - found in wheat, barley, oats etc.

Guidelines for discipline

Workers will:

- Work on each individual child's positives, not comparing one child with another, but encourage and affirming them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.
- Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example. Workers will work on the premise that children cannot be expected to observe the ground rules if they see their leaders/those in authority breaking them themselves.
- Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and resist allowing demanding children to take all their time and energy.
- Be consistent in what they say and ensure that other officers know what they have said. This avoids manipulation.
- Review their programme regularly as children often misbehave when they are bored.
- NEVER smack or hit a child and don't shout. Workers will change voice tone if necessary.

- Discipline out of love, NEVER in anger (and call on support from other leaders if they feel so angry they may deal with the situation unwisely).
- Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if not kept.
- Deal with each child on an individual basis as every child is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline.

Some children have a tendency to be disruptive in a group. Workers will, where children are disruptive, give them a chance, warn them and only, as a last resort, separate them. Workers will:

- Place/sit a disruptive child sit right in front of them or get a helper to sit next to them.
- Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take a disruptive child to one side and engage with them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging their strengths.
- Take remedial action against a constantly disruptive child. They can be warned that the worker may speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour, they may be sent outside the room (under supervision), back into the church service or, after consultation with a church leader and advising the parent/carer, be banned from attending the group for a period of time.

Social Media and Communication

This part of the policy is to give clear guidance and boundaries to JCC, staff and volunteers with regards to communicating with young people online and mobile phone. It is recognised that young people communicate using various forms and this is an important part of their 'world'; therefore it is essential for our ministry that we engage with it. By setting good practice guidelines and boundaries we aim to protect all stakeholders and help our young people stay safe online. Responsible engagement with young people through social media can be an effective part of our ministry. It can also be an opportunity to help educate young people engage with social media and other forms of communication safely.

Scope: Young people are defined as under the age of 18 years. This policy section applies to all young people from ages 11 to 18. Where they remain involved with youth work it is good practice to adhere to this policy. Children under the age of 11 will not be communicated with directly via any form of social media, email or texting. All communication will be direct with parents or carers.

Parental awareness and consent: Consent forms will request permission for taking and using photographs and will state that social media, texting and email will be used to communicate with young people. This policy will be available to parents, which will outline the various media forms, and the protocols that will apply.

General Principles: The following are general principles to be applied in the use of social media, email, mobile phone use. Specific social media platforms will be looked at in closer detail.

- Do not use any form of private messaging to communicate to individuals.
- Where private messaging is preferable another leader (not spouse) must always be copied in.
- All messages and posts should be within a closed group.
- No young person should be identified in the public domain e.g. Facebook wall, Twitter.
- Do not upload or distribute photographs of any young people (see section on Photographs and Images).
- Generally do not communicate between the hours of 10pm and 8am.
- Online communication or text messages are rarely an appropriate response to a young person in crisis. This method of communication should only be used if other forms of communication have failed.
- Tone of communication should be friendly but not over-familiar or personal. They should not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Staff and volunteer leaders should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to work with young people, not for general socialising.
- JCC employed staff should have separate accounts for all social media. Email should be sent from 'thecotteridgechurch.org.uk' domain only.
- If using a social media platform for group communication, (e.g. Facebook group other than official Cotteridge Church groups) ensure that the Minister is included as a group member so as to be able to act as a moderator.

- History, email archives, texts should not be deleted

Email communication: Email is generally not a preferred way to communicate with young people, and is more effective with parents as a good way to keep them informed of what is happening. If and when email is used to communicate to young people it should be used within the following parameters:

- Used only to communicate specific information (e.g. times and dates of events).
- Not to be used for 'ping pong' conversations or private communication.
- Recruiting or encouraging young people to be involved in youth activity.
- Should be open (not Bcc) and always include leaders and/or parents.

If a potential safeguarding issue is disclosed via email then the following action should be taken:

- Inform Minister and/or the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator immediately for further advice.
- If a concern is raised about any of the children or youth leaders, then the Minister and Parish Safeguarding Coordinator must be informed.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality or ask questions relating to the disclosure.

Facebook: This is a popular social media network platform. It has the potential to be an excellent asset for working and communicating with young people so long as basic guidelines and protocols are observed.

The Cotteridge Church will have its' own official Facebook account for **youth** (14 – 18 yrs old) ministry which will be operated by The Cotteridge Church Youth leaders. The group must be closed, and membership of the group reviewed on an annual basis.

Named administrators of each group or page should be recorded with the Church Administrator and reviewed periodically.

Whilst it is relatively easy to supervise the The Cotteridge Church account, it is almost impossible to monitor individual accounts of volunteer leaders. The following are guidelines and good practice principles:

- Volunteer leaders must not accept 'friend' requests from young people on their personal social networking site.
- Leaders should not intentionally view or go through profiles or photos of young people who have requested them as a 'friend'.
- Leaders should not download, share or communicate any information from a young person's profile.

Text messages or any other messaging services

Traditional text messaging or other messaging services are private by nature and generally not a good way to communicate with young people.

Save messages as text files to ensure an open record exists.

Meeting Children and Young People

Where it is deemed appropriate for one-to-one meetings between young people and a leader then it must be done publicly (i.e. local coffee shop or church premises) and with the knowledge and consent of the Minister. Please refer to previous section on home visits for guidelines on recording conversations appropriately.

It is inevitable that workers will meet the children and young people that they minister to outside of The Cotteridge Church context. It is important to affirm the relationship that you have with the child by being encouraging etc, but it is also important that the relationship does not develop to encourage contact with each other that does not fall under the supervision of The Cotteridge Church or without the parents' knowledge and consent.

Developing relationships outside both these scenarios places both the worker and the children in a potentially vulnerable position, however caring the motivation is.

Photographs and Images

(Photographs and images will cover any visual formats including video footage.)

General: We recognise that it is beneficial to the work of the church with children and young people to photograph various activities in order to provide material to publicise and report on the work.

Whilst it is not illegal to take photographs of children participating in church activities, photographs and video images of children and young people are classed as personal data under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. Therefore, using such images for publicity purposes will require the consent of children and young people and their legal guardians. This means that the church will not display images on websites, in publications or elsewhere in public space without such consent.

A statement regarding the use of photography is included in the Consent Form. The wishes of any child, young person or parent/guardian not to be photographed must be upheld.

The following guidelines should be observed:

- Images will be securely stored at church and used only by those authorised to do so.
- Staff and appointed volunteer leaders should take care when taking any photographic image in any medium, that all young people are appropriately dressed e.g. swimming or sports events are not appropriate to take photographs at.
- It is not appropriate for any adult to take photographs of children for their personal use.
- Written consent must be obtained from parent / guardian whose child may appear in a photograph, video or web cam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- If a child or young person does not want their photograph taken, then this will over-ride parental consent of permission.
- Adults need to remain sensitive to any children or young people who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings.
- Volunteers must not share, publish or distribute images of children without the consent of the Minister and children contained in the images.
- Young people should not be identified/tagged by any youth workers in photos/videos online.
- It must be made clear why a person's image (adult or child) is being taken, what it will be used for, and who might have access to the pictures.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by a large crowd, such as a worship event, this is regarded as a public arena and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- If photographs or recordings of children's/youth groups are made and individual children cannot be easily identified, children's/youth leaders must still respect the wishes of any parents/guardians who do not want their children to be in the photograph.
- In publicity or on the web children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or by other personal details. These details include e-mail, postal addresses or telephone.

Gifts and Rewards

The giving of gifts or rewards to children and young people can be part of an agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. In some situations, the giving of gifts and rewards may be accepted practice for a group of children or young people.

Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism and criteria should be applied fairly to all. Workers need to be aware that the giving of gifts could be viewed as a gesture to bribe or groom a child or young person.

Workers should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.

Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children, young people or parents/carers wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to workers, for example, on special occasions or as a thank you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Safety of buildings, equipment, accident recording and external users

Buildings being used for groups or activities will be properly maintained. The external fabric of the building, plus all internal fixtures, fittings, lighting, fire exits and equipment will meet the required safety standards. An annual review should also be carried out and, where necessary, action taken. All electrical equipment will have undergone an electrical safety test. In the UK these are known as PAT (Portable Appliance Inspection) tests.

Youth and Children's ministry workers have a responsibility to inform their ministry heads should they discover something that has the potential to cause harm and then the relevant response can be implemented.

All accidents should be reported using an Accident Report Form – these are available from the Minister, church office and the First Aid Box. Completed forms should be returned to the church office.

All external users of the premises are reminded that if they are providing activities for children or young people that they must have their own safeguarding policies in place. Room bookings for activities regularly involving children and young people will only be accepted from bona fide organisations

Transport of children

Transport of young people may sometimes be necessary, however The Cotteridge Church will, wherever possible, try to encourage parents to make their own arrangements. Where The Cotteridge Church is involved in making arrangements best practice guidelines will be followed as with any activity with young people and workers will ensure that they have another leader with them in the car. Where this is not possible, and the child or young person would face some immediate threat, then the young person will be asked to travel in the back of the car, and not in the passenger seat.

Where larger vehicles are used for the transportation of large groups of young people, workers will ensure that the highway code is followed in all aspects of the journey, especially taking care to ensure safety inside of the vehicle. Seat belts will always be worn whilst the vehicle is moving, and passenger numbers will not exceed the number of seat belts available. It will be the responsibility of the car owners to check that their vehicle is taxed, has a current MOT certificate and is appropriately insured. Those organising outings requiring the use of private cars will be responsible for ensuring car drivers are aware of the above. Workers will ensure that there is the appropriate number of leaders per child ratio (see above).

Registration

When a child becomes a member or becomes involved in an activity run by The Cotteridge Church, it is important at the outset that a general information and consent form is completed and returned giving contact details of parents/carers, plus medical and other details such as allergies or special dietary requirements. This form should be renewed annually.

SECTION 5

Records and Confidentiality

Records

- All recruitment, interview and review records will be kept secure in line with The Cotteridge Church Data Protection Policy
- Records pertaining to DBS process and Self-declaration form will be kept secure and will only be accessed by the Minister and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators

Confidentiality

- It is essential matters concerning safeguarding issues, disclosure, allegations or suspicions are kept totally confidential.
- Communication about such matters should only happen with authorised persons (Minister, Parish Safeguarding Coordinators, Social Services or Police)
- Matters should not be discussed 'for prayer' even if names and details are removed
- When cases are closed, move into public domain or are dismissed confidentiality must be maintained

SECTION 6

Glossary of roles and responsibilities

Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor (BSA)

In the Diocese of Birmingham the BSA is responsible for promoting good practice in all aspects of safeguarding. He or she should be contacted via the Bishop's Office. Further details of their role can be found in the Diocesan Policy God's Children: Our Diocese

Parish Safeguarding Coordinators

The PSOs have an essential role in the parish in relation to protection and safeguarding. The persons will have some understanding of protection issues. They will adopt the role of parish representative on all matters relating to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and will help the parish develop a culture of 'informed vigilance'. The PSOs will maintain direct and regular links with those responsible for work with children and vulnerable adults. They will provide support in all aspects of the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The PIV will be responsible for processing and recording all details pertaining to DBS forms, Confidential Declaration Forms, and all other associated forms and papers.

Parish Children's Advocate

The Parish Children's Advocate is a person who can represent the needs of Children and Young People on JCC and in the church. They will represent their views and needs with regard to ministry, mission, worship and teaching. They will be someone who children and young people would feel able to go to with pastoral concerns or even someone to go to in order to disclose abuse.

By virtue of their position this role is assigned to the Minister and the Chair of the Young People's Forum.

This policy has been adopted by The Cotteridge Church JCC:

Signed by: _____ Chair of The Cotteridge Church JCC

Date: _____

The Cotteridge Church Safeguarding Children Statement

The Joint Church Council of The Cotteridge Church recognises the importance of its ministry /work with children and young people in need of protection and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the JCC on 19 January 2017

The Cotteridge Church is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people and ensuring their well-being.

Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect
- We believe every child and young person should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children and young people we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of The Cotteridge Church unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and young people

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and young people and good practice recommendations
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Implementing the requirements of legislation in regard to people with disabilities
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding
- Following the Diocese of Birmingham policy in relation to safeguarding children
- Supporting the Minister and the Parish Safeguarding Coordinators in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work
- Supporting all in the place of worship affected by abuse

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or young person then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of worship/organisation.

The Cotteridge Church Minister

Or The Parish Safeguarding Coordinator

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from the church office

Signed by the Minister or their nominee

Signed

Name

Date