



Safeguarding - Version 2.1 (01/07/2025)

Stour Church | Church, but Different

1. Purpose and Commitment

Stour Church believes that every person is created in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity, respect, and care. The Church is committed to providing a safe environment for all who participate in its life, especially children, young people, and adults at risk. Safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole Church. All members share in this duty under the leadership of the Pastor, Diaconate, and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

2. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all Church Members, officers, staff, and volunteers, all Church activities, both on Church premises and elsewhere, and all ministries involving children, young people, or adults who may be vulnerable.

3. Key Principles

1. Create and maintain a culture of safety and accountability
2. Respond promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding concern
3. Recruit safely, using checks and references where roles involve regulated activity
4. Train and support all leaders and volunteers in safeguarding awareness
5. Work in partnership with statutory agencies, following national and local guidance

4. Leadership and Responsibility

1. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Appointed by the Church Meeting to coordinate safeguarding, advise leaders, and act as the primary contact for concerns
2. Pastor and Diaconate: Hold collective oversight of safeguarding practice, ensuring policy implementation and regular review
3. Church Meeting: Approves this policy and receives an annual safeguarding report

5. Safe Recruitment

All those working with children, young people, or adults at risk shall:

1. Complete a volunteer or staff application form
2. Provide references
3. Undergo an enhanced DBS check (and barred-list check where required)
4. Undertake safeguarding induction and refresher training at least every 3 years

6. Training and Awareness

1. All staff, officers, and volunteers must read this policy and sign to confirm understanding
2. Regular safeguarding training will be provided by or through recognised providers (e.g., Thirtyone: Eight or local authority)
3. The DSL shall ensure that training records are maintained

7. Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Any person who observes or suspects abuse, or receives a disclosure, must:

- a) Listen carefully and avoid judgment;
 - b) Record what was said or observed, including date, time, and context;
 - c) Report immediately to the DSL
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1. The DSL will decide, in consultation with the Pastor or external agencies if necessary, what action to take—this may include referral to the local authority or police
 2. In an emergency where someone is at immediate risk, anyone may contact the police (999) or Children's/Adult Social Care directly
 3. All concerns and actions taken must be documented and stored securely

8. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

Safeguarding information shall be handled sensitively and shared only on a “need-to-know” basis. Records shall be kept securely by the DSL for at least 50 years or as required by law.

9. Safe Environment

All Church activities shall be risk-assessed to identify and minimise potential harm. Appropriate ratios of adults to children shall be maintained for all groups and trips. The Church premises shall be maintained to a safe standard, with clear procedures for fire safety and first aid.

10. Pastoral Care for Survivors and Those Affected

Stour Church will offer pastoral support to anyone affected by abuse, in consultation with external agencies as appropriate. The Church will not act alone in managing allegations against leaders or volunteers, but will work transparently with statutory authorities.

11. Review and Accountability

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Diaconate and DSL and presented to the Church Meeting for re-adoption. The date of the most recent review shall appear on the front page of this document.

12. Contact Details

DSL: David Scotford - 07507 703803

Police (non-emergency): 101

Emergency: 999