

Veritas Church Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Charity Number: 1209204

Charity Postal Address: 7 Brookwood Way, Buckshaw Village, Chorley, PR77GW

Church Contact Name: David Scholes

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Telephone Number: 01772 288070

This policy approved: 8th August 2025

This policy should be reviewed every year. The next review is due before: 8th August 2026.

Context

Veritas Church is an independent charity registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales. The church has a formal membership and is led by a session of elders, a deacon's board, and is supported by a board of trustees.

The church was established in 2024. Our beliefs are defined by the Subordinate Standards as outlined in the International Presbyterian Church Book of Church Order, and the church is run in accordance with our constitution which is available on request.

Veritas Church is currently an independent church in the process of applying for membership in the International Presbyterian Church.

The church is a group of Christians who meet for Sunday services at 10:00am at Grimsargh Club, 148 Preston Road, Preston, PR2 5JQ. The church also runs events such as a bible study and prayer meeting, membership meetings, and social gatherings, usually at either 7 Brookwood Way, Buckshaw Village, Chorley, PR7 7GW or 14 Crofts Drive, Grimsargh, PR25LW.

The church does not provide any activities specifically for children, young people, or for adults at risk of abuse. However, we recognise that during the course of our ministry we may come into contact with vulnerable people.

Our Responsibilities

We recognise that both as a charity and as Christians, we have a responsibility to:

- Protect and promote the wellbeing of those who attend the church; paying particular attention to those who may be more vulnerable than others.
- Ensure that we have suitable systems and processes in place to manage safeguarding risks, including the appointment of a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Ensure that those who act on our behalf are competent and safe to do so.
- Identify non-safeguarding risks and manage them effectively.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that meet the threshold to the appropriate statutory services as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. Where immediate action is required to ensure safety, an urgent report to the Police (999) or the appropriate Social Services department will be made without delay.
 - If we are unsure whether a statutory threshold has been met, we will seek advice from either the relevant statutory services or from CSS.

- Ensure that our conduct and practice is accountable and transparent and that we care well for those to whom we minister.
- Ensure that if problems occur or dissatisfaction is expressed, we examine these in an impartial and careful way and manage any conflict of interest effectively.

Our Commitments

- We will treat all who engage with the church through its ministries with courtesy and respect and will seek to uphold their inherent dignity and worth.
- We will seek to support and care well for anyone who discloses to us that they have been a victim of abuse or neglect and report this to statutory services in line with local procedures where required.
- We will seek to listen well to any concerns, complaints, or other expressions of dissatisfaction and to respond in a proportionate, impartial, transparent, and accountable manner.
- We will carefully examine any allegations made or concerns raised about any member or leader and respond appropriately.
- We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are competent to fulfil their roles and the legal duties associated with safeguarding. This includes:
 - Ensuring all Trustees and Elders have Safeguarding training with CSS at least every three years
 - That the DSL has top-up training with CSS in between that

Governance, Oversight and Management of Safeguarding

The trustees will include a statement on safeguarding in their annual return as required by the Charity Commission. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be trained in the role and will update their safeguarding training every two years in line with best practice standards and Local Authority requirements. The trustees will ensure that those who act on behalf of the church are competent and appropriately trained.

Any allegations that may require a Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission will be passed to the trustees as a matter of urgency and certainly within 48 hours. The Trustees will file the Serious Incident Report with the Charity Commission in accordance with their legal responsibilities. If the Trustees require advice or support in this duty, they will seek such from suitably qualified and experienced sources.

Handling Safeguarding Concerns

Any concerns that are identified or disclosures that are made must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is David Scholes.

They can be contacted by phone: 01772 288070 or email at:

dave@veritaschurch.co.uk

If the concern involves the DSL, or if the DSL is unavailable, the report should be made to:

Andrew Carter by phone: 07771 537761 or email at: andy@veritaschurch.co.uk

Or

Graham Burrows by phone: 07740 622962 or email at:

vicarburtonholme@gmail.com

The details of the concern will be clearly and accurately recorded and stored securely with the [Safeguarding Register](#).

The DSL will ascertain whether any action needs to be taken. If required, support and advice will be sought from either the relevant statutory services or from CSS.

The DSL will make any necessary referrals according to local procedures.

The DSL will cooperate with statutory services and provide the link between the church and those professionals involved in responding to the situation.

Records of all discussions, advice sought, decisions made, and actions taken will be retained in the confidential file.

Safer Recruitment

The church will ensure that the main leader(s) are DBS checked in accordance with national guidance.

Although the church does not engage in regulated activity with either children or adults, reasonable and proportionate assessment of the suitability and competence of staff and volunteers will be made and decisions recorded. The church will provide training for formal roles where required.

Handling Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers

Allegations against staff or volunteers will be passed to the DSL:

The person to whom allegations should be reported is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

They can be contacted as stated above.

If the allegation is against the DSL it must be reported instead to one of the Elders or Trustees of the church.

Upon receipt of an allegation, advice will be sought to ascertain whether a statutory threshold for reporting has been reached:

If a statutory threshold has been reached, the matter will be handed to the responsible statutory authority and the church will fully cooperate with the process of investigating the allegation.

If the person handling the allegation on behalf of the church is unsure whether the statutory threshold has been met, they will consult with either the statutory services or with CSS to establish this.

A report to the statutory authority, Lancashire County Council can be made by contacting: Children's social care: 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722.
Adult social care: 0300 123 6721

If the statutory threshold has not been met, a proportionate response will be developed, and implemented. Where necessary (including for the avoidance of conflict of interest) advice and support will be sought from CSS, who will support in developing a plan to address the concerns raised.

We hold to the principle of innocence until proven guilty, so while there may be times when an individual must come out of a role while an investigation proceeds, we will always seek to abide by this principle. We also hold to the biblical thresholds of evidence being brought against elders (or anyone else) as laid out in 1 Timothy 5:19, where 'witnesses' could also mean the witness of evidence, not just eye-witnesses.

Handling of Complaints, Grievances or Any Other Expression of Dissatisfaction

Any concern, complaint or other expression of dissatisfaction will be passed to the Complaints Officer:

The person to whom these should be reported is David Scholes.

They can be contacted by phone at 01772 288070 or via email at dave@veritaschurch.co.uk

The matter will be examined impartially and proportionately, and once conclusions have been reached, the church will respond to the complainant. Please see the separate Complaints Policy for more information.

If advice or support is required, this can be sought from CSS.

Managing Ex-Offenders, Those Who Are on a Barred List, or Others Who Pose a Risk to Vulnerable People

A formal risk assessment will be made which will include input from statutory services.

Advice and support will be sought from CSS where required.

A formal contract will be drawn up that outlines the church's commitments to the individual and any control measures required.

The contract will be formally reviewed and monitored on a regular basis.

Managing Under-18s and Vulnerable Adults Who Attend Services/Events

Given the fact that Veritas Church's Sunday services (and some other events/activities) are open to the public and held in public spaces, it is possible that children or young people, or vulnerable adults may from time to time attend. These people should at all times be treated in accordance with this policy, and the elders will make every attempt to get information for parents/guardians/carers to inform them of the child/vulnerable adult's attendance, and (if appropriate) to discuss arrangements for their repeat attendance if they should wish to do so. Consent forms will be drafted and provided.

The safeguarding lead will respond to attendees by ensuring that they are supervised properly and not allowed to be on their own or with others in places that are not supervised by an elder or trustee or other safeguarding leader.

Appendix 1: Key Contact Details

The Church's Designated Safeguarding Lead is David Scholes

They can be contacted on 01772 288070 or email at info@veritaschurch.co.uk.

The Church's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is Andy Carter.

They can be contacted on 07771 537761 or email at mtecandy@gmail.com

The Local Authority is LANCASHIRE COUNTY. They can be contacted on:

Children's Social Care 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722.

Adult Social Care 0300 123 6721

LADO 01772 546694

Appendix 2: Definitions

Abuse

Abuse is a general term that is used to cover a wide range of harm caused to people. It always involves a violation of the person's rights. It can take various forms as described under "Categories of Abuse" later in this appendix.

Adult at risk of abuse (sometimes referred to as adult in need of protection)

These are adults who have care and support needs, however, in addition, they are at risk of abuse, and because of their support need, are unable to protect themselves. Since these adults are unable to protect themselves, we have a legal duty to protect them.

Adult with care and support needs

An adult who requires help or support with basic and essential day-to-day tasks such as:

- Getting up, washing, or dressing
- Cooking meals
- Cleaning the house
- Shopping
- Managing their finances
- etc.

Adults with care and support needs have the right to choose whether they want support or not.

Allegation (against a member of staff or volunteer)

An allegation is a claim that a person who has a role that provides access to a vulnerable person has used their position to exploit, abuse, or otherwise harm the person they should have been caring for.

Categories of abuse

This term is used to refer to the legally recognised forms of abuse.

When considering the safeguarding of children, abuse is categorised under four headings:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

When considering the safeguarding of adults, abuse is categorised under ten headings:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological (or emotional)
- Neglect
- Domestic
- Institutional
- Financial or material
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect
- Discriminatory

Child

A person (including an unborn child) who has not yet reached the age of 18 years.

Child protection

Child protection is defined as the protection of children who have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, "significant harm". It is our legal duty to report all Child Protection concerns to either Children's Social Care or the Police as per local procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Frequently abbreviated to DSL, this is the person appointed by the church to take responsibility for many aspects of safeguarding, including, receiving safeguarding

concerns from staff or volunteers, and passing them on to the local authority where their threshold is met.

Early Help / Child in Need

Early Help and Child in Need are the areas of safeguarding where a child who has additional needs is receiving targeted support to meet their needs. Support is consent based and so the parents (or the young person if deemed competent to make decisions for themselves) can choose whether to access the support.

Neglect

Neglect is one of the categories of abuse that is characterised by the failure to provide the basic necessities for life where we have a responsibility to do so.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a broad range of activities that range from the general duty of care that we have for everyone who comes into contact with the charity, through early intervention and targeted support to protection from significant harm. It relates to both children and adults.

Universal safeguarding

This refers to the general duty of care that we must provide for everyone who comes into contact with the church.

Vulnerable adults

This term is only used as a generic term. It is no longer used as a technical descriptor for a specific group of people. A vulnerable adult is less able to protect themselves and meet their own needs than an adult who has no vulnerabilities.