

Vineyard Church Isle of Man

Safeguarding Policy

Date created: - 01/10/2025

Next review date: - 01/10/2026

Mission Statement:

We aim to foster an environment where everyone feels safe and seen; a space where everyone is able to thrive emotionally and spiritually. We're therefore committed to implementing and periodically reviewing procedures that follow statutory and specialist safeguarding guidelines.

Our staff and volunteers are trained to work together to build an environment and culture that is safe; all team members working with children or vulnerable adults are DBS checked.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who attend or are served by Vineyard Church Isle of Man (“the Church”).
- Provide clear guidance to those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults (on behalf of the church) on how to behave and respond.
- Enable the Church to carry out its legal responsibilities in safeguarding under Isle of Man law.
- Provide a safe, caring environment where risks are minimised and where any suspicion of abuse or poor practice is responded to promptly and appropriately.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Vineyard Church Isle of Man will comply with all relevant statutory provisions, including but not limited to:

- The **Safeguarding Board Act 2018**: the Isle of Man Safeguarding Board, mandates relevant safeguarding bodies to cooperate, sets out responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
 - Children and Young Persons Act 2001 – for child protection and welfare duties.
 - General Data Protection Act 2018 (Isle of Man), especially as to data handling, confidentiality, record-keeping.
 - The Employment Act 2006, especially Part IV relating to protected disclosures (“whistleblowing”) and protection for workers who make disclosures.
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Isle of Man Order 2025), as extended into Isle of Man, which provides for vetting or barring of persons who are unsuitable to work with vulnerable people.
-

3. Definitions

- **Child / young person**: A person under 18 years.
 - **Adults at risk / vulnerable adult**: Those aged 18+ who may be unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves from abuse or neglect, due to age, illness, disability, mental health, etc.
 - **Abuse**: Including physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, financial, discriminatory abuse, including grooming, radicalisation etc.
 - **Safeguarding**: All measures to prevent abuse, to promote welfare, to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm.
-

4. Policy Statement & Principles

Vineyard Church Isle of Man is committed to:

- The safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, ensuring their physical, emotional and spiritual welfare.
 - Creating a culture of openness, where all abuse or suspicion of abuse, poor practice or concerns about safety are taken seriously, reported and responded to swiftly.
 - Ensuring that all those who work with children, young people or adults at risk—paid staff, volunteers or otherwise—understand their responsibility to safeguard, are trained appropriately, and are subject to safe recruitment practices (including DBS / background checks / vetting).
 - Ensuring confidentiality is maintained, but not at the cost of protecting someone from harm.
 - Ensuring that those harmed by abuse receive appropriate support.
-

5. Safe Recruitment, Training and Support

- All workers (staff or volunteers) who have contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults undergo safe recruitment checks. This may include criminal record checks / vetting, references, interviews and a probation period.
- We require a Disclosure & Barring for the vetting of work with children / vulnerable adults, per the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Isle of Man) Order 2025.
- As a minimum DBS checks are required for:
 - Senior Pastors
 - Designated children and youth workers
- Induction training for all new workers on safeguarding policy, behaviour expectations, recognising abuse, reporting procedures.
- Regular refresher training (e.g. every 2-3 years) and awareness for all staff and volunteers.
- Supervision and pastoral support for staff / volunteers, especially those exposed to safeguarding work or disclosures.

6. Reporting, Responding and Recording Concerns

6.1 Recognising Abuse

- Be alert to signs of abuse: physical injury, neglect, emotional or behavioural changes, disclosures, etc.
- Where there is suspicion, do not investigate in detail, but record what has been seen or heard.

6.2 Responding to Disclosures

- If someone (child or adult) discloses abuse, listen, reassure, do not promise confidentiality, do not interrogate.
- Record the disclosure accurately (date, time, what was said, who was present) using Church incident report forms if possible or similar. Confidentiality and security of paperwork/reporting method is essential.

6.3 Reporting Structure within the Church

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The person within the church responsible for handling reports of abuse or concern. (May NOT be a senior Pastor)
- **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer(s):** One or more, to act if the DSL is unavailable. (May be a senior Pastor).
- All workers must report any safeguarding concern to the DSL immediately (or a deputy if DSL unavailable).
- The DSL must assess whether the concern meets the threshold for reporting to statutory agencies, the Trustee board, police or social services.

6.4 External Reporting

- If a child or adult is at immediate risk, contact Police Isle of Man (Emergency).
- If not immediate, the DSL reports to **Manx Care** or relevant social services / adult services department.
- Where required by law, report to Safeguarding Board Isle of Man. The Isle of Man Safeguarding Board has powers to coordinate safeguarding policies, review cases, commission Serious Case Management Reviews (SCMRs).

6.5 Record Keeping

- Maintain secure records of all concerns, disclosures, investigations, decisions and actions taken.
 - Records should be kept according to data protection law (GDPR equivalent in Isle of Man) and Church policy (for example, for a minimum of 7-10 years depending on the
 - age of the child or nature of the case).
-

7. Whistleblowing Policy (Protected Disclosures)

The Church is committed to integrity, accountability and transparency. Anyone working with or for the Church (staff, volunteers, contractors) may raise concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice or risk without fear of reprisal.

7.1 Legal Basis in Isle of Man

- Under Part IV of the Employment Act 2006, workers are protected from detriment or dismissal for making a “protected disclosure”.
- The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order (recently updated / expanding in April 2025 subject to Tynwald) defines prescribed persons/bodies to which disclosures may be made externally.

7.2 What Qualifies

A protected disclosure is one where an individual reasonably believes that information tends to show:

- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.
- A breach of legal obligation.
- A miscarriage of justice.
- A danger to the health or safety of any individual.
- Damage to the environment.

- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

7.3 Procedure for Raising Concerns

- Preferably raise internally first: to line manager, or to the DSL / Church Leadership.
- If concern involves the DSL or leadership, raise with a deputy, or, if necessary, with an external body.
- Disclosures must include as much detail as possible: what, when, who, evidence, etc.

7.4 Protection and Support

- The Church will not tolerate any retaliation, victimisation or detriment against individuals who make protected disclosures in good faith.
- If victimisation occurs, that in itself will be a disciplinary matter.
- Support will be offered (pastoral, counselling, etc) to those making concerns.

7.5 False or Malicious Allegations

- If allegations are made maliciously or knowingly false, disciplinary action may be taken against the person making them. Genuine concerns which are found to be unfounded are not subject to discipline.

8. Governance, Oversight & Review

- The Church Leadership Team has ultimate responsibility for safeguarding.
- The DSL reports to the Church Leadership on safeguarding matters (e.g. quarterly)
- The Church Leadership ensures this policy is implemented, safe practices maintained, and that adequate resources (training, vetting, etc) are in place.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or earlier if there are changes in law, or in response to an incident or learning from a Serious Case Management Review.

9. Behaviour Standards / Code of Conduct

- All workers agree to adhere to a code of safe behaviour: respecting privacy; appropriate physical contact; boundaries; not working alone with children or vulnerable adults where possible; etc.
 - Clear guidance on photography, digital communication, social media is given at least verbally to staff, volunteers and church members.
-

10. Communication

- This policy will be made freely available to all staff, volunteers, church members and parents.
 - There will be visible notices in church premises giving simple information about how to report concerns and Code of Conduct.
 - Training, induction and refresher workshops or sessions will include this policy.
-

11. Risk Assessment

- Regular risk assessments of church activities involving children, young people, vulnerable adults.
 - Additional safeguards for high risk activities, off-site events, transport, overnight stays etc.
-

12. Flow Diagram of Reporting Structure

A suggested reporting structure:

Who raises concern	To whom reported first	If first contact is implicated / unavailable	External reporting if needed
Staff / Volunteer / Church User / Church member	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Deputy DSL or Church Leadership / External body	Manx Care / Social Services / Police
Concern about misconduct of DSL / Leadership	Deputy DSL or Church Leadership	External bodies if need be	Safeguarding Board Isle of Man / Police / Other statutory agencies
Whistleblowing disclosure of wrongdoing non-safeguarding (e.g. financial, governance)	Church Leadership or nominated person (DSL)	Prescribed Person (see statutory list)	Employment Act / relevant regulator / Police / Other statutory agencies

13. Example of Key Roles & Nominated persons.

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** receives reports, assesses risk, refers to statutory bodies; ensures training; keeps records.
 - **Margaret Verscheuren**
 - **Deputy Safeguarding Officer(s):** supports DSL; acts in DSL's absence.
 - **Katryna Baptist**
 - **Church Leadership Team / Trustees:** ensure policy is in place and resourced; oversee serious incidents; ensure compliance.
 - **All Staff/Volunteers:** follow policy; attend training; report concerns; behave appropriately.
-

14. Implementation

- Review date set.
- Vetting procedures documented and applied.
- Reporting form created.
- Communication of policy to congregation, staff, volunteers.

Safeguarding Procedure (Short Form)

Any safeguarding concern MUST be raised with one or both of the Senior Pastors (Katryna or Matthew Baptist) in the first instance, and Margaret Verscheuren as **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and Safeguarding Trustee.

A safeguarding form MUST be completed for record keeping and capture of details.

Unless: the allegation concerns either Senior Pastor actively or complicity, in which case the concern must be raised with Margaret Verscheuren directly.

Investigation:

Any investigation of abuse must involve Manx Care, Social Care (Children and Families) or Manx Care, Social Care, Safeguarding (Adult Care) as appropriate. It should involve Isle of Man police if the alleged abuse involves any alleged or potential criminal offence.

In the first instance the Senior Pastor(s) and/or DSL should raise concerns with the appropriate authorities (as above), and allow them to conduct an investigation. If the appropriate authorities advise that the incident does not warrant their involvement or constitute a criminal offence then Senior Pastor(s) or DSL should deal with this case as a pastoral matter.

If the complainant is not content with the outcome of any investigation at local church level. They can escalate to Thirtyone:eight (An independent safeguarding organisation).