SAFEGUARDING POLICY
(CHILD PROTECTION)

- Previous version: June 2022
- Current version: June 2023
- Review period: 1 year

This policy:
- Approved by the SWT Board of Trustees on: 12 June 2023
- Approved by the SW Regional Leadership Team: July 2023

The Servants of the Word

SAFEGUARDING (CHILD PROTECTION) POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1. The Servants of the Word are committed to safeguarding all children and young people without exception, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We will take care that our relationships with minors are characterised by respect, modesty and concern for their welfare, including physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing.

1.2. By definition, in this document:
- 1.2.1. Any person under the age of 18 will be referred to as a "minor" (though other terms "child", "children", or "young people" may be used interchangeably).
- 1.2.2. A "brother" or "member" of the Servants of the Word means any committed brother, or an affiliate whose service assignment comes under SW responsibility.
- 1.2.3. "The brotherhood" means the Servants of the Word (SW).

1.3. Members of the Servants of the Word have some degree of interaction with minors in various contexts, including (but not limited to):
- 1.3.1. Personal relationships with individuals or families, both within or outside the Sword of the Spirit community life, including personal friends and acquaintances.
- 1.3.2. Involvement in youth work (ie activities related to our service or mission).
- 1.3.3. Relating to their own family members.

1.4. Brothers should seek to spend time with minors primarily in family or in service settings, and primarily in a group context and/or with other adults present, although one-on-one activities are not excluded.

1.5. Brothers are expected to adhere to the following ethical and behavioural standards in all aspects of their personal lives and mission work.

2. Code of conduct and behaviour

2.1. <u>General Principles</u>
- 2.1.1. Brothers will take care that their relationships with minors are characterized by respect, modesty, and concern for minors' welfare. To this end, every member will respect and follow this Code of Conduct.
- 2.1.2. We will relate to minors in a way that is always appropriate to the nature and purpose of our relationship with them (as a godfather, or youth worker, or uncle, etc.).
- 2.1.3. Any form of abuse towards a minor is strictly prohibited. It is every member's responsibility to protect minors from any kind of harm at all times. What follows is meant to be a non-exhaustive list of appropriate and inappropriate conduct for our interactions with minors.
- 2.1.4. Brothers should immediately report any disclosures of abuse or maltreatment of minors, significant behaviour problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.
- 2.1.5. Brothers will strive to have a balanced approach of being accessible to minors while maintaining the proper dignity, respect, and distance that should characterize minor/adult relationships. The initiatives that minors take and responses that minors make to brothers (e.g., a minor's level of familiarity or affection), should not determine how brothers relate to minors in return.
- 2.1.6. If a minor relates in a way that is overly familiar or more affectionate than is

appropriate, the brother will take care to redirect the minor's actions and not relate in a similar manner in return.

2.1.7. Brothers will be careful not to relate to minors in a way that is or may be interpreted as sexual, sexually suggestive, or abusive.

2.1.8. Brothers will dress modestly as is fitting for men who seek to be examples to young people.

2.1.9. In situations in which brothers are invited by a family to have a special relationship with a minor (e.g. becoming a godfather, a sponsor for confirmation, a mentor, etc.), they will conduct themselves according to the purpose of this relationship and follow our decisions for relating to minors. In addition, patterns for relating to minors in these relationships must be worked through with, and approved by, the parents.

2.1.10. Expressions of affection between a member and his family members must also reflect all standards below, socially appropriate norms, and family traditions.

2.2. Prohibited Behaviours (see page 8 – definitions of abuse)

Members are prohibited from engaging in the following behaviours:

2.2.1. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or being intoxicated on alcohol while supervising minors.

2.2.2. Providing or allowing minors to consume alcohol outside the laws and age restrictions of the country in which this policy is being applied outside Christian religious ceremonies. Illegal drugs are prohibited under any circumstances.

2.2.3. Showing or exposing minors to sexually oriented or morally unacceptable materials such as magazines, cards, videos, video games, films, clothing, images, music, etc.

2.2.4. Possessing, distributing, downloading and/or intentionally viewing real or virtual child pornography.

2.2.5. Dating or becoming romantically involved with minors.

2.2.6. Forming exclusive, secret, or 'special' relationships or establishing 'favourites' with individual minors.

2.3. Physical Interactions

2.3.1. In our physical interaction with minors, we will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting everyone involved. Appropriate physical contact is encouraged, while inappropriate displays of physical contact are prohibited.

2.3.2. Physical interactions with minors should occur only when appropriate and in public, not in private situations. Members should exercise prudence when engaging in physical contact with minors and ask themselves whether the interaction would be perceived by an outside person exercising reasonable judgment as nonsexual.

2.3.3. A brother will not sleep in the same immediate space (room or tent or similar) with minors unless required for health or safety reasons, and then only with another adult present.

2.3.4. Appropriate Physical Interactions include the following:

2.3.4.1. Brief hugs, including kneeling or bending down for brief hugs with small minors

2.3.4.2. Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs or arm around shoulder

2.3.4.3. Pats on the shoulder or back

2.3.4.4. Hand-shakes, high fives and fist bumps

2.3.4.5. Touching hands, shoulders, and arms

2.3.4.6. Briefly holding hands during prayer in a group setting or when escorting small minors

2.3.4.7. Pats on the head when culturally appropriate

2.3.4.8. Kisses on the cheek when culturally appropriate, to greet or say farewell, and if initiated by the other person

2.3.4.9. Lap sitting under the age of five

2.3.5. Inappropriate Physical Interactions include the following:
- 2.3.5.1. Lengthy embraces or embraces with excessive physical contact
- 2.3.5.2. Kissing on the mouth
- 2.3.5.3. One-on-one wrestling
- 2.3.5.4. Tickling
- 2.3.5.5. Piggyback rides
- 2.3.5.6. Any type of massage given by a brother to a minor or by a minor to a brother
- 2.3.5.7. Being in the same bed or sleeping bag with a minor
- 2.3.5.8. Any form of unwanted affection or touching
- 2.3.5.9. Engaging in any type of sexual contact with minors. For the purposes of this policy, sexual contact includes but is not limited to touching the thighs, genitals, buttocks, pubic region or chest of another, and vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, or oral intercourse.
- 2.3.5.10. Using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of minors. Prohibited forms of physical discipline include spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by minors. If a minor's immediate safety is at risk, brothers may take necessary action, such as briefly holding the minor, to ensure the minor's safety (e.g., to prevent the minor from running in front of a car, breaking up a fight between two minors, preventing a minor from assaulting another, etc.). The SW Safeguarding Officer and the parents of the minor will be informed of such actions.

2.3.6. A brother will tell the minor's parents and his service supervisor or elder about any physical contact that has occurred that might be questionable or could be construed as questionable.

2.4. Verbal Interactions

2.4.1. Members are prohibited from speaking to minors in a way that is, or would be construed by an observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

2.4.2. Appropriate Verbal Interactions include the following:
- 2.4.2.1. Positive reinforcement and encouragement
- 2.4.2.2. Appropriate jokes/friendly teasing
- 2.4.2.3. Praise

2.4.3. Inappropriate Verbal Interactions include the following:
- 2.4.3.1. Name-calling, cursing, and belittling
- 2.4.3.2. Derogatory remarks about a minor's family members
- 2.4.3.3. Using sexual jokes, sexually suggestive language or innuendo
- 2.4.3.4. Oversharing personal history
- 2.4.3.5. Asking minors to keep secrets
- 2.4.3.6. Giving compliments relating to physique or body development which could be construed to be of a sexual nature
- 2.4.3.7. Discussing sexual experiences, history, or habits, or in any way involving minors in the personal problems or issues of brothers.
- 2.4.3.8. Engaging in sexually oriented conversations with minors, except when the conversation is part of a legitimate discussion appropriate for teenagers regarding human sexuality issues. Such conversations should convey Christian teaching on these topics.

2.4.4. A brother will tell the minor's parents and his service supervisor or elder about any verbal interaction that has occurred that might be questionable or could be construed as questionable.

2.5. One-on-One Interactions

2.5.1. One-on-one interactions between a brother and a minor may provide a valuable opportunity for a minor to develop healthy relationships and grow in maturity.

These should be conducted with the appropriate safeguards, which include the following:

2.5.1.1. Brothers will avoid situations where they are alone in private with a minor (e.g. being alone in a home, in a room with the door closed, out of sight of other adults, etc.).

2.5.1.2. When staying overnight with a family other than their own, brothers will not be in private with a minor while in that family's home.

2.5.1.3. Brothers will seek to spend time with minors primarily in family contexts or service settings, and primarily in a group and/or with other adults present.

2.5.1.4. One-to-one interactions for purposes of mentoring/spiritual growth of a minor must be approved beforehand by a service supervisor or elder and with the consent of the minor's parents.

2.5.1.5. One-to-one interactions must occur in a public place, fully visible to others. Public places may include outdoor spaces often frequented by others, a room or office with windows that allow visibility into the room and where others are likely to pass by.

2.5.1.6. Avoid physical contact during one-to-one interactions. If unavoidable, ensure physical and verbal interactions align with this Code of Conduct.

2.5.2. When a brother has found himself in a private situation with a minor, he will report it promptly to the parents of the minor and to his service supervisor or elder where it has not been agreed in advance by them.

2.6. Electronic Communication and Social Media

2.6.1. Electronic communication and social media platforms provide many benefits, but they also present a private setting and the potential for increased access to minors and inappropriate behaviour. Therefore, any use of electronic communications and social media by brothers with minors must take place in accordance with the following:

2.6.1.1. Brothers will use phones, social media, letters, and any other form of personal communication with minors in a way which is consistent with the SW Code of Conduct as it pertains to verbal interactions and all other sections.

2.6.1.2. Electronic communications for minors under the age of 14 should occur with the parents instead of with the minors. Brothers shall only communicate with older minors (aged 14-18) for defined purposes (e.g. participation in a small group in a youth program, approved mentoring relationships, etc.) and via preapproved means of electronic communication. Parents must approve both the purpose of the communication and the electronic means for the communication to occur.

2.6.1.3. All program-related messaging between brothers and minors should be appropriate to the purposes of the program (e.g. to pass on general information or for making practical arrangements). All communications shall be kept professional and exhibit respect, patience, courtesy, tact, and maturity.

2.6.1.4. Personal social networking profiles and/or blogs of brothers shall not be shared with minors. Brothers with profiles on social networking sites shall not request to be "friends" with or follow minors or approve friend or follow requests from minors.

2.6.1.5. Electronic communication with minors should not occur late at night without good reason.

2.6.1.6. Brothers will not post inappropriate pictures, videos, or comments.

2.6.1.7. Brothers will not post photos or videos of minors who are not members of their own family on their personal social media pages, and will only post them on public, service/mission sponsored sites with prior approval from parents.

2.6.1.8. Should ongoing contact with an individual minor be necessary because of the type of program or relationship (like a mentoring relationship), the pattern for this relating must be worked through and approved by the parents and must follow the standards for relating to minors in a one-to-one situation.

2.6.1.9. The frequency and content of communication with minors, no matter what means are used, should always be appropriate to the role and nature of the relationship.

2.7. Gifts

2.7.1. If a brother receives a gift from a minor, he will be sure to inform his service supervisor and his elder, and also the minor's parents, on each occasion.

2.8. Transportation

2.8.1. Brothers will not transport minors without the permission of their parents and approval from their supervisor/elder.

2.8.2. When transporting minors, brothers will avoid traveling with only one minor in the vehicle and will respect the "rule of three" (at least two adults must transport a single minor, or at least two minors must be present if transported by a single adult).

2.8.3. Should safety or other considerations make traveling alone with a minor unavoidable, the brother will report this immediately to the minor's parents and his supervisor/elder.

2.8.4. When possible, have the minors sit in the backseat and avoid any unnecessary physical contact.

2.8.5. Brothers are prohibited from making any unnecessary stops (e.g. personal errands) and must go directly to their final destination, which has been previously shared with the minors' parents and the brother's supervisor/elder.

2.8.6. Brothers will document any unusual occurrences that happen during transport (e.g. a health incident with one of the minors) and report them immediately to the minor's parents and his supervisor/elder.

2.9. Toilets/Showers/Changing Rooms

2.9.1. Toilets, showers, and changing rooms are facilities where minors are particularly vulnerable. Consequently, activities in these facilities must be closely monitored according to the following:

2.9.1.1. Brothers will safeguard the physical modesty and dignity of minors, taking care not to be alone in toilets or shower/changing facilities with minors.

2.9.1.2. If for reasons of safety there is a need to supervise minors in such situations, such supervision will take place with another adult present.

2.9.1.3. Whenever possible, changing and showering facilities or other privacy-related arrangements for adults should be separate from facilities and /or arrangements for minors.

3. Involvement in youth work

3.1. Brothers involved in youth activities within a service or mission context are usually assigned by the brotherhood to do so in the context and under the leadership of one of our partner organisations, namely one of our Sword of the Spirit communities or outreaches, or closely linked organisations (such as Youth Initiatives). Occasionally, a brother may by his own decision and in his individual capacity be involved in youth activities in an organisation such as his local church, or in his local community as a member thereof. The following provisions apply where the brotherhood has made the assignment, and not where the brother has volunteered in his own time.

3.1.1. The brotherhood will not assign a brother to do youth work with an organisation that does not have a Child Protection Policy. This must be confirmed by providing a copy to the SW Safeguarding Officer (see below) for his review.

3.1.2. Occasionally a brother may be assigned to serve at a particular youth event sponsored or organised by a body without a Child Protection Policy (for example one of our sister communities in another country). The brother will nevertheless be expected by SW to adhere to the SW Child Protection Policy, and should ensure that he will be able to do so, by seeing that safeguarding issues are included in the

planning stages of the event. The brother will have to withdraw from the entire event if any aspect of the final arrangements are in direct conflict with the SW Child Protection Policy.

3.1.3. All brothers are expected to be cognisant of the Child Protection Policy of the Servants of the Word, and, if applicable, of any organisation in which they are involved in Youth work, and follow it.

3.1.4. The Safeguarding Officer will tell such organisations that he must be informed when a safeguarding issue arises about a particular brother. Brothers will not be allowed to do youth work in that organisation without such prior agreement.

3.2. On occasions, some youth activity may be organised and undertaken directly by the brotherhood itself, for example a residential retreat in one of our households (including activities outside the house run by brothers).

3.2.1. As part of the planning process

3.2.1.1. the brothers responsible for supervising or running the activities must have had an Enhanced Disclosure check (see below)

3.2.1.2. a Risk Assessment will be undertaken to ensure that any activity will be conducted safely. The Risk Assessment will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Officer.

3.2.1.3. the parents will be sent:

3.2.1.3.1. a letter of information outlining the main logistics and activities, and the name of the person to contact (ie the SW Safeguarding Officer) if they have any concern

3.2.1.3.2. a consent form to be signed and returned prior to the event.

3.2.1.4. the participants will be informed about the person to contact (ie the SW Safeguarding Officer) if they have any concern.

4. Safeguarding Officer

4.1. The Servants of the Word will have a designated " Safeguarding Officer" (SO), ie a brother who is responsible for dealing with child protection issues (see Appendix 1) as well as a deputy who will act when the SO is unable to do so. They will be appointed by the SW Regional Elder and endorsed by the SW Board of Trustees.

4.2. The role of the Safeguarding Officer will have four main functions:

4.2.1. To ensure that this Policy is implemented and regularly reviewed (eg yearly).

4.2.2. To ensure that any external organisation having service connection with SW has a Child Protection Policy which is adequate within the terms of this policy.

4.2.3. To act as an advocate, ie someone with whom any minor or adult may talk independently, whether their concerns involve them or someone else.

4.2.4. To ensure that any concern or allegation of abuse is responded to appropriately.

4.3. The Safeguarding Officer is responsible for storing securely any written information (see below under "Dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse"). Such records will be retained indefinitely.

4.4. If and when required, the Safeguarding Officer may delegate some of these tasks to (or enlist the help of) another brother.

5. Background checks

5.1. The Servants of the Word use Thirtyone:eight (formerly know as the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service - CCPAS) as their "Umbrella Body" to process Enhanced Disclosure applications, from DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) in England and Wales or AccessNI in Northern Ireland.

5.2. Brothers involved in youth work must have a DBS or AccessNI check. It is the responsibility of the legal entity in charge of the youth programme and activities to ensure that such checks are carried out.

5.3. Trustees of the SW Trust must also have a DBS or AccessNI check, whether done by the SW or another organisation. In the latter case, the SW Safeguarding Officer will be provided a copy of the disclosure certificate.

6. Training

6.1. All brothers will receive training once per year to ensure awareness about:
  6.1.1. issues pertaining to the welfare of minors in general.
  6.1.2. the approaches and procedures contained in the present policy.
6.2. All brothers will attend an annual face-to-face training session (or a catch-up session later), and will also on occasions complete *bona fide* online safeguarding courses.
6.3. The Safeguarding Officer (and Deputy, if there is one) will also attend additional training aimed at safeguarding leads every 2 years.

7. Definitions of abuse

7.1. Maltreatment of a minor may be caused by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Minors may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger (including via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another minor. Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

7.2. There are four categories of abuse recognised from a statutory point of view. The following definitions are based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) in England, and the DHSSPS document 'Cooperating to Safeguard Children (2003) in Northern Ireland.

7.2.1. Physical abuse

Physical Abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a minor, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing, illness in a minor, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

7.2.2. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a minor to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the minor is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non contact activities, such as involving minors in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging minors to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a minor in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other minors.

7.2.3. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a minor such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the minor's emotional development. It may involve conveying to minors that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include consistently refraining from giving the minor opportunities to express their views, deliberately

silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing minors frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of minors. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a minor, though it may occur alone.

7.2.4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a minor's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the minor'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, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
• protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
• ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
• ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

8. Dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse

8.1. Any concern or allegation in relation to the welfare of a minor, whether reported by an adult or a minor, will be taken seriously by the Servants of the Word and responded to appropriately.

8.1.1. A "concern" relates to:

8.1.1.1. any breach of the above code of conduct and behaviour (not amounting *per se* to an allegation);

8.1.1.2. any way in which suspicions are raised by:

- a person's interactions with minors;
- a minor's comments (eg about a particular person or circumstances);
- any unexpected change in a minor's mood or behaviour (eg self-harm).

8.1.2. An "allegation" relates to a person who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a minor, or may have harmed a minor;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a minor;
- behaved towards a minor in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to minors.

8.2. Any brother who has, or is made aware of, a concern or allegation about a minor, should inform as soon as possible the relevant Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy), according to the organizational context relating to the concern or allegation in question.

8.2.1. In case of an actual allegation, the relevant Safeguarding Officer should be informed within 24 hours.

8.2.2. If a minor is in immediate danger or refusing to go home, the relevant Safeguarding Officer should be informed verbally immediately and Police should be called (dial 999).

8.2.3. A written record will be made as soon as possible and passed on to the relevant Safeguarding Officer.

8.3. If what has been reported to the SW Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy) relates to another organization (because of the affiliation of the minor, their family, or the implicated person with that organization), the SW Safeguarding Officer will also inform the Safeguarding Officer (or equivalent) of that organization.

8.4. A brother raising a concern or allegation:

8.4.1. must never carry out his own investigation, or discuss it with any person other than the Safeguarding Officer (or the Regional Elder or a Trustee of SW Trust as outlined below);

8.4.2. should take the matter to the Regional Elder or a Trustee of the SW Trust:
8.4.2.1. if he is not satisfied with the SW Safeguarding Officer's response;
8.4.2.2. or if the person implicated is the SW Safeguarding Officer.

8.5. The Safeguarding Officer will keep a record of the concern/allegation reported to him and the actions taken. He will inform the Regional Elder and Regional Steward. He may also consider seeking further advice from either Thirtyone:eight or Social Services.

8.6. The SW Safeguarding Officer will respond as follows:
8.6.1. In an emergency situation, the police will be contacted (dial 999).
8.6.2. The Safeguarding Officer will ensure that, if not already done, a written statement of the concerns or allegations is made as soon as possible. He will also keep a written record of his conversations in dealing with the matter at hand, and of any subsequent decisions and actions.
8.6.3. If necessary, he will liaise within 24h with the statutory authorities (local Children's Social Services) in order to refer any genuine concern/allegation. (see Appendix 2).
8.6.4. Dealing with the person against whom allegations have been made:
8.6.4.1. The alleged perpetrator will not be contacted before seeking advice from statutory services as to what communication or action may or may not take place.
8.6.4.2. The alleged perpetrator will then be withdrawn as soon as possible from any involvement in youth work, and advised against any contact with minors on a private basis.
8.6.4.3. These decisions will be reviewed in due course in line with the findings and recommendations of the Social Services.

8.6.5. The Safeguarding Officer will inform other relevant parties as required. Any information in his possession will only be shared with due consideration to principles of confidentiality.
8.6.5.1. Other strategic personnel:
8.6.5.1.1. The Regional Elder and Regional Steward will be informed at the earliest opportunity and kept informed of any further development.
8.6.5.1.2. The Senior Leader of the local Sword of the Spirit Community will also be informed unless considered unnecessary or inappropriate.
8.6.5.2. Parents/carers: although it is good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers, in most circumstances (eg due to the nature of the concerns or the worry that contacting them may place a minor or someone else at risk), parents/carers should not be contacted before advice has first been sought from statutory services.
8.6.5.3. The Insurance Company of the SW will be informed as soon as possible. (see Appendix 4)
8.6.5.4. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS): a referral to the DBS will be made if applicable, ie when a brother is removed from "regulated activity" because he has engaged in harmful behaviour or presents an ongoing risk of harm to a minor. (see Appendix 4)
8.6.5.5. SW Trustees and Charity Commission: SW Trustees will be informed if a "serious incident" has occurred, which must then be reported to the Charity Commission, ie (as defined by the Commission) any allegation or actual incident of abuse by someone connected with the Servants of the Word, or in a situation connected with the activities of the Servants of the Word. (see Appendix 5)