



# The Church of Scotland

## Faith Nurture Forum – Initial Ministerial Education (IME) Student Policy

### Safeguarding – Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

#### 1. Introduction

The Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service has a policy of *“Ensuring a Safe Church for All”* (2010). *“The Church of Scotland has a deep concern for the wholeness and wellbeing of each individual. Through its Congregations, working together with the Safeguarding Service and statutory agencies, the Church seeks to safeguard the welfare of all people who come into contact with the Church and its services.”*

*The Gospel proclaims that it’s the responsibility of everyone within the fellowship of the Church to prevent harm, be it physical, sexual or emotional, and we will always seek to reduce risk.*

*The Church’s commitment to safeguarding reminds us that God cares passionately about the welfare and wellbeing of all people.”*

The Faith Nurture Forum of The Church of Scotland (Faith Nurture Forum) is committed to upholding this policy in full and keeping people as safe as they can be in our congregations, services and projects. Safeguarding is about protecting children and vulnerable adults from the risk of harm. It includes preventing those who are deemed unsuitable to work, either paid or unpaid, with them from doing so and being alert to and acting upon situations where they may be caused harm. The Faith Nurture Forum has a zero-tolerance approach to any forms of potentially harmful behaviour. All incidents of alleged misconduct concerning safeguarding will be taken seriously by Faith Nurture Forum and may lead to disciplinary action against those involved.

Please become familiar with the Safeguarding handbooks of the Church of Scotland found on their publications page - [churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding-service/safeguarding-publications](http://churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/safeguarding-service/safeguarding-publications)

#### 2. Relevant Legislation

There are numerous pieces of legislation which guide safeguarding practices including Human Rights legislation, Children Scotland Act, Children and Young People Act, Adult Support and Protection Act and many more. The Church has its own Safeguarding Act and Guidance to support practice.

Anyone who applies to work (whether paid or unpaid) with children or protected adults must become a member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG). The PVG scheme aims to prevent unsuitable people being recruited into, or remaining in, regulated work with children or vulnerable adults.

Individuals who are considered a risk and therefore unsuitable to work with children and/or protected adults are included on the relevant barred list and excluded from the scheme.

Under the scheme, organisations can check to verify that an individual is a PVG scheme member and not barred from working with children and/or protected adults. Members' records are continuously updated with information relating to criminal convictions and relevant non-conviction information held by the police.

### **3. Purpose & Scope**

The purpose of this policy is to minimise the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults and to ensure that where the students have concerns about the welfare of children or vulnerable adults, they know what to do about those concerns.

Whilst students participating in the IME programme are not routinely directly involved with children and young people (i.e. those under the age of eighteen), there are a number of situations for example during placements when students may have direct contact with children and young people. Some examples could include:

All age services and worship, holiday clubs, creches, Sunday Schools, Bible Classes, uniformed organisations and other opportunities in the life of the church which may be required during placement.

All students participating in the IME Programme are required to be a PVG Scheme member. Whilst on placement, or where working with children or vulnerable adults as part of the IME Programme, students will adhere to relevant Safeguarding (and related) policies and procedures in place.

### **4. Training**

As part of the IME Programme, students will be expected to take part in initial safeguarding training which takes place at candidates' conference, any ongoing safeguarding training and be:

- conversant with policy in this area.
- clear about measures to be implemented by Kirk Sessions.
- clear about action to be taken in the event of an allegation of harm or abuse.
- aware of good child and adult protection practice in their pastoral work.

### **5. The Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service**

The Safeguarding Service services the whole of the Church of Scotland, and aims to:

- Ensure best practice in preventing harm or abuse.
- Ensure that the Church makes a timely and appropriate response when harm or abuse is witnessed, suspected or reported.

The Safeguarding Service provides practical guidance and support and can be contacted on [safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk).

### **6. Reporting a concern**

If you think someone is at risk of immediate harm then do not delay in contacting the police.

Any incidents which cause concern, or if harm or abuse is suspected, reported to you or witnessed, in respect of a child or vulnerable adult, must be reported to either a staff member of Faith Nurture Forum, a Safeguarding Co-ordinator, or the Safeguarding Service. During that conversation it must be made clear to all parties what happens next for example who will be reporting this directly to the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service (which must happen within 24 hours)

The information may be shared with Police Scotland, other relevant statutory body, or local authority social work departments to ensure effective multiagency working.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

The impact of this policy will be monitored and the policy is subject to amendments as necessary. The policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum.

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