



**Safeguarding
Policy Document
June 2024**

Draft Safeguarding Policy

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

Definitions

Westlake Church Events & Ministries all activities organised by staff, members, or representatives of the legal entity under Swiss law known as Westlake Church Nyon Association.

Vulnerable People ... This term covers all children and young people under the age of 18 and those of an adult age who cannot fully exercise their adult abilities due to mental or physical impairment. Within this document all references to children and young people should be assumed to equally apply to vulnerable adults.

This policy commits us as a church to safeguard the vulnerable people we are responsible for in the following ways:

Prevention And Reporting Of Abuse

Westlake Church is committed to preventing the abuse of vulnerable people in all that we do. It is the duty of each staff member about the well being of vulnerable people. Any abuse that is discovered, disclosed or suspected will be reported in line with the policies outlined in this document. The church will fully and transparently cooperate with any investigation by appropriate statutory authorities into any abuse connected to the Church or its staff and volunteers.

Safe Recruitment And Supervision

The Church will exercise due care in the selection and appointment of people working with children and youth, whether paid employees or volunteers. We will provide appropriate guidance and supervision to promote the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people by our staff and volunteers.

Respect

All staff and volunteers will follow the code of conduct described in this document in their interactions with vulnerable people, showing the appropriate respect.

Safe Working Practices

Those responsible for ministries and events will strive to provide as safe an environment as possible for vulnerable people and will encourage ways of working to promote their wellbeing and safety.

Safe Community

The Church will endeavour to ensure that the contact of any person deemed to be a threat to the wellbeing of vulnerable people will when possible be prevented and when inevitable appropriately supervised at all times.

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SAFEGUARDING CONTACT POINTS

The following people will be contacts for the reporting of any abuse or suspected abuse.

1. **Chair of elders**
2. **EB President**
3. **Pastor**

On receiving a report, a contact point person will consult with the other two contact points, providing the allegation does not involve them, as to the appropriate action to be taken and record the report in the church safeguarding log.

POLICY INTO PRACTICE

A copy of this policy will be made available on the church website.

The names of the contact points will appear on the church website with a contact email and posted in the church building.

A hard copy of the policy will be made available to anyone upon request.

A one-page summary of the main points of this document will be given to everyone working with vulnerable people.

Each year appropriate training will be given on safeguarding vulnerable people, this may be delivered by seminar, video or in written form.

PROCEDURE WHEN ABUSE IS DISCLOSED, DISCOVERED OR SUSPECTED

Abuse and neglect are both forms of the maltreatment of vulnerable people.

Abuse can take several forms.

- Active abuse by inflicting harm.
- Neglecting the physical or mental needs of a vulnerable person.
- Failing to prevent harm or neglect.

All forms of abuse must be taken seriously. Most abuse is carried out by persons known to the vulnerable person

We have a direct responsibility to report abuse which occur within the context of our church activities.

We also have an indirect responsibility to report abuse when we hear reports of abuse or see signs of abuse or neglect of vulnerable people who are taking part in church activities.

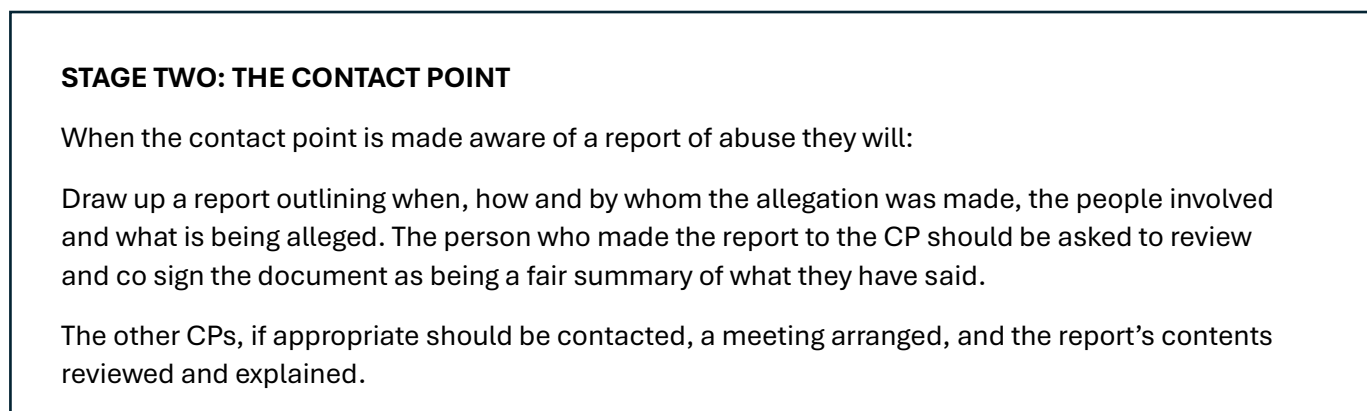
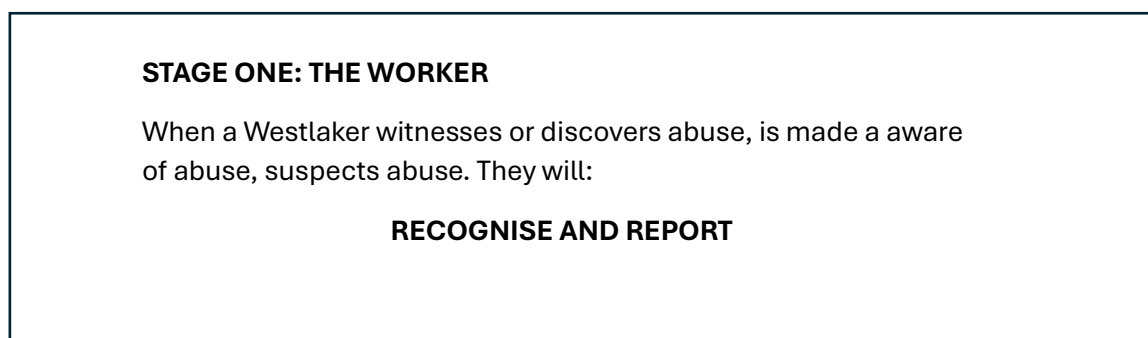
WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen and acknowledge what you are being told.• Keep calm and be reassuring.• Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next.• Write a short summary of the incident or allegation and give to one of the contact points.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't show shock, disbelief or disapproval.• Do not try and minimise what you are being told.• Do not ask probing or investigative questions, allow the vulnerable person to explain what happened in their own words.• Don't offer false reassurances.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be open and honest• Tell the vulnerable person they were right to tell you. You are taking what they have said seriously. That it was not their fault. You will have to report what has happened or alleged to have happened to the appropriate people.• Give them contact details for yourself or the contact points of the church so that they can follow up with any questions or further information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't offer absolute confidentiality, indicate you will need to share this information but only with those who need to know.• Do not share with people beyond those absolutely necessary, even for prayer.• Do not contact the abuser.• Do not delay contacting the contact point person.• Do not investigate.
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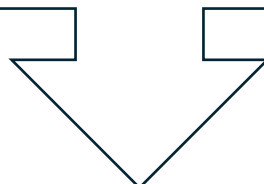
Reporting Of Abuse

When abuse is witnessed, discovered, alleged or suspected the following process must be followed.



NEXT STEPS

The contact point will decide on the next steps to be taken and unless the allegation is demonstrably untrue or frivolous, it should be reported to the appropriate authorities and the victim, and their care givers (if not involved) made aware of this. The report should be made available to the authorities and put in the restricted access safety log.



IMMEDIATE DANGER: If the victim of abuse is believed to be in immediate danger the matter should be referred to police as soon as possible by person who has been made aware of the abuse or the CP.

Allegation Against Westlake Workers Or Members

If behaviour by someone connected with Westlake at a Westlake event is witnessed which is inappropriate or could be misconstrued, the concern should be reported to one of the CPs. The actions and behaviour of everyone connected to Westlake, pastor, staff, elders, ministry leaders, volunteers, members and attenders should all be reported if deemed inappropriate.

Concerns specifically about the pastor or staff members should be made to the chair of elders.

Procedure

1. When an allegation of abuse has been made or a cause for concern raised or reported, the alleged perpetrator should not be contacted.
2. The procedure of **RECOGNISE, RECORD, REVIEW & RESPOND** should be followed. Recognise what has happened or been alleged, record the details, CPs to review, respond appropriately.
3. If an allegation of abuse is referred to the authorities, a paid employee should be suspended and a volunteer removed from their position of service until the investigation is concluded. This may include for staff a ban on access to Westlake email addresses etc.
4. If the CPs conclude that the allegation warrants reporting to the authorities the church is legally obliged to do so.
5. All meetings and discussions between the authorities and the CPs should be recorded, dated and placed in the confidential safeguarding log.
6. Information regarding an allegation regarding a staff member, volunteer or member should only be shared to prevent endangering others or to explain a suspension. This should be done in general terms without giving specific details.

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7. In the case of serious allegations the alleged perpetrator should be required to worship elsewhere until the issue is resolved and refrain from attending Westlake events.

Abuse Of Trust And Inappropriate Relationships

Relationships between children and young people and church workers are relationships of trust. The worker has been placed in a relationship with the child or young people in which the child or young person and church places their trust in the worker to act appropriately and legally. It is never appropriate for a church worker to develop a romantic relationship with a child or youth with whom they have a relationship of trust. Awareness should be exercised around a worker “grooming” a young person for a romantic or sexual relationship once they reach 18 years of age. Language that can be construed as flirting, or inappropriate compliments or explicit language is not acceptable. These guidelines apply to relationships developed digitally as well as physically. Any worker found to have requested or be in possession of explicit pictures of child or young person will be immediately suspended and reported to the authorities.

Concerns Brought Against Vulnerable People.

Allegations of inappropriate behaviour by vulnerable people to other vulnerable people can occur and must be taken seriously. If a child or young person inappropriately touches, indulges in sexual activities deemed not appropriate for that age group, or forces themselves on a child or young person action must be taken. Verbal or emotional bullying in person or online should also be taken seriously even when they don't reach the criteria for reporting to the authorities.

Procedure

1. Do not approach the child about whom the allegation has been made or their care givers.
2. Follow the procedure of REPORT, RECORD & REVIEW
3. An allegation to a CP will be recorded and discussed with the other CPs as to the appropriate response. This may include reporting to the statutory authorities and about when to inform the child or young persons care givers. The CPs should seek advice as to how ensure the needs of the alleged victim and perpetrator are safeguarded.
4. Pastoral care should be made available to the families of both the alleged victim and perpetrator.

Safe Recruiting

This procedure needs to be clarified for Westlake. Should it be retrospective?

See the volunteer and reference forms in appendixes

General Rules For Behaviour

Everyone is to be treated with dignity and respect.

Physical contact with vulnerable people should be appropriate within socially accepted limits. All physical contact should be in public. Team members should constructively challenge one another if they witness physical contact that could be construed or misunderstood as inappropriate.

Sexually explicit remarks or jokes should never be shared with children and young people.

Children and young people should not be humiliated, ridiculed or belittled.

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The privacy of vulnerable person in the bathroom should not be invaded unless they are believed to be unwell.

There should be no physical punishment of children or young people.

All events taking place out with the church facilities require parental permission.

Caution should be exercised meeting children and young people alone outside of church events. This should never take place between an adult and young person of the opposite sex. When a meeting is planned another adult should be aware of the meeting and its purpose.

Children and young people should not be invited alone to workers homes.

No person under the age of 18 should be left in charge of children and young people.

Its best practise to have two adult workers with groups of children, if that is not possible on occasions doors should be left open so that the room is clearly visible to other people

If a child or young person requests a private conversation this should be done in a corner of a room with other people or in a room in which the door is left open.

Cyber Safety

Electronic communication is an unavoidable part of life but must be regulated to some extent as it is often the medium for sexting, bullying, grooming etc. The following guidelines should be followed.

A young person has the right to decide who to share their contact details or befriend on social media. No pressure should be applied by the worker or by other children or young people.

With children under 13 communication should not happen directly through electronic means. All communication and contact should be made via their care giver.

E-mails and instant messages to young people from workers should contain factual information and should not be used to build relationships.

Interaction with young people on social media should be restricted to sites specific to the ministry so everything is in the public domain.

Photographs & Videos

Photographs and videos should only be used with permission for church purposes. For children under thirteen care givers permission should be sought. For young people over 13 but under 18 care givers permission and the young person's permission should be sought. Verbal permission is sufficient. No personal details should be shared.

Bullying

Bullying is abusive behaviour and can be physical, verbal or emotional in nature. Bullying can be defined as a pattern of behaviour intentional or otherwise which causes emotional or physical harm to another person or seeks to exert power over them.

- Examples of bullying in the context of a church could include:
- Being verbally or physically abusive to another person.
- Isolating, ignoring or excluding a person from a group.
- Spreading rumours or malicious untruths.

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- Use of social media or emails to undermine, ridicule or humiliate someone, this would include the sharing of degrading images.
- Make false accusations.
- Name calling or personal insults verbally or online.

Singling out physical, gender, sexuality, race or cultural features of a person for ridicule or negative comments.

In order to proactively help prevent bullying the church will initiate the following actions. It will periodically stated at youth groups and children's events that bullying of any kind will be tolerated. All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously. If the bullying is understood to be of less serious nature the church worker should speak to the children or young person's care giver about how to resolve the situation. If it involves bullying of a more serious nature including physical violence it should be reported to one of the CPs.

It can be difficult to distinguish bullying from a legitimate challenging of or disagreeing with another person, an argument does not necessarily infer bullying. There must also be a place for the legitimate "banter" that is part of growing up, providing it is not targeting and victimizing one person or a group of people. In the church setting we should err towards caution and stop behaviour that has the potential to be hurtful.

Off Site Events

Permission should be sought for church run events outside of the church building.

When overnight stays are organised special care should be taken with sleeping arrangements, no adult should sleep in the same room with less than three children or young people.

Workers should be careful about invading young people's privacy on overnight stays in terms of dressing and undressing and use of the bathroom.

Appendix One: What Is Abuse?

Physical	Actual physical harm, or failure to prevent it
Emotional	The persistent emotional ill treatment of someone that affects their emotional wellbeing, mental health or behaviour and development.
Sexual	The forcing, enticing or grooming to take part in sexual activity, whether the child or young person is aware of what is happening or not. This includes non-touch activities such as sexting, the use of pornographic images, watching sexual activity, indulging in sexually explicit conversations.
Neglect	When a responsible care giver neglects to provide for those in their care, physically or emotionally or fails to protect them from danger or abuse.
Financial	The misappropriation, misuse, embezzlement or theft of another person's money or possessions.
Spiritual	The coerce use of spiritual beliefs or practises to gain or exercise power over someone or influence their behaviour. This would include any abuse by a person in a relationship of trust with a vulnerable person by virtue of their role in the church.
Discrimination	The inappropriate treatment of someone on the basis of their gender, race, culture, religion, sexuality, physical features, or disability.
Institutional	The mistreatment of person by virtue of the ethos, policies and culture of an institution. This could be repeated acts of poor or inadequate care. The failure to act on or take complaints seriously. Exclusion from groups or appropriate decision making processes.
Domestic	Any threatening, violent or abusive behaviour whether verbal or physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect between people in a relationship or within a family. This kind of mistreatment often seeks to exert control over a person and limit their contact with people outside of the domestic setting.
Cyber	A pattern of deliberate use of electronic media, to harass or harm another person.

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Signs And Symptoms Of Abuse

The following may be indicators that abuse is taking place.

- Unexplained and / or repeated injuries, especially on areas of the body not usually prone to injury.
- An injury that has not been treated or for which appropriate medical care has not been sought.
- An injury where the explanation seems implausible or inconsistent.
- A child or young person deliberately or unintentionally reveals information that they are being abused.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour, becoming quiet and withdrawn or unduly disruptive.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness in children.
- Signs of neglect, under nourishment, lack of hygiene, dirty and damaged clothing, untreated illnesses, or injuries.

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Appendix Two: Guidance On Reporting

First Phase – The Staff Member / Volunteer

If a staff member or volunteer witnesses abuse, receives a credible allegation of abuse or neglect, or suspects abuse or neglect based on signs and indicators of abuse that a vulnerable person has been subject to abuse or neglect, they must report it to one of the contact persons. If the preferred contact person is unavailable, one of the other contact persons should be made aware of the situation as soon as practicably possible.

The reporting can be done form free, though it is best practice to make some notes and a rough report if possible. The reporting can be done face to face, by phone, video call or in writing. Email should be avoided if possible as there is always the chance of it being inappropriately forwarded.

The report should include accurate facts. The names of those involved, the nature of the allegation, description of what happened if witnessed, any relevant signs or indicators of abuse, what the people involved so far have said or how they have reacted. This is why a rough report is helpful.

If the worker is unsure if the incident warrants an official report of concern they should discuss it confidentially with one of the CPs. When in doubt, it is better to report than not.

Second Phase – The Contact Person.

The responsibility of the CP is to Document → Report to other CPs → Review with other CPs → Recommend action.

The CP must record, and document all concerns on the safe guarding incident form, which should then be printed and put in the confidential safeguarding log. The reviewing of the report may require the gathering of some further details or clarification of points. The report should then be reviewed collectively by the CPs and the appropriate response decided. The CPs may decide that the case does not warrant further action, can be dealt with by talking to care giver, or must be reported to the authorities. An in-depth investigation of a serious allegation is not within the remit of the CPs. If the report is about an allegation of a child on child, young person / young person and there is not clarity about whether the incident is serious enough to formally report, informal guidance from the authorities should be sought.

The CPs should meet and review the report as soon as possible, within three days. If a CP is implied as being involved in the allegation, they should be excluded from receiving the report and the subsequent discussion. Unanimity should be sought for the recommended action, but it can proceed on the basis of a two thirds majority. The CPs should decide on what follow up support is needed by victim, perpetrator, family members, church staff, volunteers or members, children or youth.

Swiss Authorities To Receive Reports

Police

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Appendix Three: Sample Safeguarding Incident Form

Contact person	
Name of Contact Person (CP)	
Contact details of CP	
Worker, alleged victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s)	
Name of Worker that reported the concern to the CP	
Name of Child or Youth who is the possible victim of abuse or neglect	
Age of possible victim	
Which Sunday School class or Youth group	
Who is the alleged perpetrator?	
If necessary: any particulars about alleged perpetrator.	
Relationship between possible victim and alleged perpetrator	
The concern	
What happened or what are the observations?	
When did it happen?	
Where did it happen?	
Any others involved other than the possible victim and alleged perpetrator?	
Involvement of others	
Have parents or carers been informed? If so, when and by whom?	
Have Statutory Authorities been informed? If so, when and by whom?	
Review by the CP	
Has additional information been asked that is not included in this form? From whom?	
What is the recommendation by the CP to the ST?	
Any other remarks?	
Date Of Reporting	
Signature of Worker that has brought the Concern, to ascertain	

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Appendix Four: Volunteer Application Form Westlake Church Nyon

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Volunteer Position _____

Do you have any health issues or disabilities that could have implications for this role?

REFEREE:

Please give details (including an e-mail address) of a person who can give a character reference for your application to work with children.

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

Please read and sign the declaration below:

DECLARATION

1. I will work within the procedures laid out in the Westlake Lausanne Child Protection Policy.
2. I have not been convicted or the subject of an allegation of child abuse, sexual misconduct, or act of violence in the presence of children.
3. I understand that if an allegation is made against me about child abuse or neglect, the matter will be referred to the police and other relevant authorities for investigation.
4. I will report any concerns or suspicions I have about a child's welfare, or about the conduct of another volunteer or member of staff in relation to child protection. I will report any disclosures or allegations to one of the contact persons.

Applicant's Signature:

Name in capital letters:

Date & Place of signing:

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Appendix 5: Reference Form For Volunteers Westlake Church Nyon

The following person has applied to work with vulnerable people at Westlake Church Nyon

And has provided your name as a reference. It would be greatly appreciated if you could answer the following questions.

How long and in what capacity have you known the person?

Do you have any concerns about this person working with vulnerable people, children, young people or vulnerable adults? If so, please give details.

NAME _____

ADDRESS

DATE

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Appendix 6: Child Protection Policy Summary For Volunteers & Staff

Safeguarding At Westlake Church Nyon

The purpose of our safeguarding policy is to:

- Create a safe and healthy environment to learn about Christianity.
- Provide effective screening and selection of volunteers who work with vulnerable people.
- Prevention of abuse – physical, neglect, sexual, verbal, etc.
- To clarify the duty to and the procedure for reporting any abuse or neglect, witnessed, reported, or suspected.
- To ensure that regular safeguarding training and learning happens
- To provide for the creation of appropriate records.

Good Practice With Children And Young People

Below you will find our stated guidelines of Good Practice in working with children and young people.

- As far as possible a worker should not be alone with a child or young person where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- In one-to-one situations with a young person or child, where privacy and confidentiality are important, try to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom. Another adult should be in the building, and the young person should know they are there, doors should be left open.
- Ensure that access to the building and activity areas are safe and well lit.

As a volunteer you should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watch language, tone of voice, and where you put your body.
- As far as possible, do not be alone with a child or young person. If they require one to one attention and privacy this should be done out of earshot but within sight of other adult workers.
- Don't show favouritism to any one child.
- Do watch your speech, tone of voice and body language.
- Learn to control and discipline without using physical punishment.
- Make sure another worker is present if, for example they need help to toilet, have soiled their underclothes and need to be washed or if you need to give First Aid.
- Do not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking that are overly sexual or physical in nature.
- Don't invite a young person to your home alone. Invite a group, make sure that another adult is around and that the parents are aware where the young people are, If you need to meet outside the church building and not in a home make sure another volunteer is aware beforehand of the reason for the meeting and its place and time

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- Don't permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying, excluding.
- Don't allow unauthorised adults access to children. Visitors should be accompanied by a known person.
- Avoid give rides in cars to children or young people on their own, if there is no alternative travel with the child in the rear seat, make others aware of the exact timing of your journey- when you leave, when you drop and when you return.
- Don't share sleeping accommodation with less than three children or young people.
- With children under 13 communication should not happen directly through electronic means. All communication and contact should be made via their care giver.
- E-mails and instant messages to young people from workers should contain factual information and should not be used to build relationships.
- Interaction with young people on social media should be restricted to sites specific to the ministry so everything is in the public domain.

Do not engage in any of the following with vulnerable people:

- Invade their privacy when they are showering or toileting.
- Indulge in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in "fun"
- Touch in Inappropriate and intrusive ways.
- Humiliate or ridicule a child or young person.
- Allowing or taking part in "scapegoatism," ridiculing, or rejecting a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- Post pictures of young people or children on social media. If for publicity you wish to use photographs or videos. Permission should be sought for the under 13s from their parents and for over 13s permission from the parent and the young person. No identifiable person details should be posted.

Good practice with Colleagues

If you see another volunteer or staff member acting in ways, which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to talk to the ministry leader about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour. These measures will also protect workers from any potential false accusations.

Reporting Of Abuse Or Neglect

- If you have witnessed abuse,
- A vulnerable person directly or inadvertently reveals they are being abused or neglected.
- Receive a credible report about abuse or neglect happening.
- You come to the conclusion due to signs and indicators of abuse that abuse or neglect has occurred to a vulnerable person.

You have a duty to report to one of the contact persons. *(If the preferred contact person contact person is unavailable one of the others should be contacted.)*

- It is best practice to make some notes and a rough report if possible so that details are not missed when you pass on the report. The reporting can be done face to face, by phone, video call or in writing. Email should be avoided if possible as there is always the chance of it being inappropriately forwarded.

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- The report should include accurate facts. The names of those involved, the nature of the allegation, description of what happened if witnessed, any relevant signs of indicators of abuse, what the people involved so far have said or how they have reacted. This is why a rough report is helpful.
- If the worker is unsure if the incident warrants an official report of concern, they should discuss it confidentially with one of the CPs. When in doubt, it is better to report than not.
- In a serious emergency, the police or emergency medical workers should be called first.

The Westlake Contact Persons For Safeguarding are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.