



## **Children and Young People - Safeguarding Policy**

### **Approved by Trustees: (SEPT 22)**

This document covers the policies and procedures for work with Children and Young People and is part of the overall Safeguarding Policies for both Adults and Children. Safeguarding at the Vine is overseen and operationally managed by those listed below. They are responsible for both Adult and Children safeguarding. Therefore, there is a degree of synergy between this policy and the Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy. This policy acknowledges the range and scope of Children and Young People's vulnerability but is not exhaustive. The Trustees have approved this document and it is accepted and endorsed by the Elders. It draws on good practice guidance provided by Thirtyone:eight (31:8 – formerly CCPAS) and requirements of relevant legislation.

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>Church</b>	The Vine Maidstone
<b>CL</b>	Church Leadership (Elders & Trustees/Directors)
<b>DSL</b>	Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>Deputy DSL</b>	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
<b>DBS</b>	Disclosure & Barring Service
<b>KCC</b>	Kent County Council

## CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Contact Details	1
Abbreviations	2
Contents Page	3
The Vine's Commitment	4
Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Self Harm	4
Impact of Life events	5
Policy Framework	5
Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Abuse	7
Talking to Children Where Abuse is Suspected or Alleged	10
Supervisory Arrangements Within Church Groups	10
Groups Attended by Parents/Carers	11
Support and Training of Children's and Youth Workers	11
Support to Those Affected by Abuse	11
Working with Offenders	11
Pastoral Care	12
Support and Training	12
Confidentiality	12
Commitment of the Elders and Trustees	13
Appendix A: Types of Abuse and Neglect	14
Appendix B: Appointment Process	16
Appendix C: One-off Events	20
Appendix D: Guidance for Children's and Youth Groups	21
Appendix E: Health & Safety	25
Appendix F: Photography	26
Appendix G: Transporting Children	27
Appendix H: Visiting Children at Home	29
Appendix I: Electronic Media and Communication	30
Appendix J: Data Protection	31
Appendix K: Pastoral and Ministry Pathways	32

## **THE VINE'S COMMITMENT**

The Church Leadership, defined for this purpose as the Elders and Directors/Trustees of The Vine (hereafter referred to as CL), recognises the importance of its ministry to children and young people and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the church's care.

As part of its mission, the Church is committed to:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting children and young people as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all the children's/youth workers within the church.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those who have been affected by abuse.
- Maintaining good links with the statutory childcare authorities and other organisations.
- Keeping policies and procedures up to date, with an annual review as a minimum.
- Keeping the CL informed of issues, albeit while retaining any required confidentiality.

The safeguarding of children is everyone's business at the Vine; all have a role to play.

This policy and associated child care guidelines are based on models and guidance published by the Thirtyone:eight (formerly CCPAS).

The CL is committed to on-going child protection training for all children/youth workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines surrounding children's and youth work.

For the sake of clarity and for the purposes of this policy, a child is any person under the age of 18 years of age.

This policy includes a range of appendices which contain important aspects relating to child protection.

## **ABUSE, NEGLECT, EXPLOITATION AND SELF HARM**

Regrettably abuse happens in our society and we need to be aware of the dangers, signs and concerns and be able to respond appropriately and adequately. It is acknowledged that Children and Young People can be abused, exploited or neglected in a family or in a church community setting, usually by someone known to them or, less commonly, by a stranger. Often people involved in abusing or harming Children and Young People are in a position of trust or have a position of power or perceived authority over them – this could include spiritual leaders and those with authority or positions in a church setting. Another area of vulnerability is self-harming, threats of suicide or attempts at suicide. These are often the result of wider vulnerability and mental health issues. Acts of omission are also a form of abuse often resulting in neglect or negligence in terms of duty of care.

The procedures outlined later in this document specify the action to be taken if it is suspected that a Child or Young Person may be being abused, exploited, neglected or self-harming.

Categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional / Psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial exploitation
- Institutional / Organised abuse / spiritual abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Neglect
- Self-Harm

Other forms of abuse can include peer-to-peer (bullying), sexual exploitation, honour-based violence, radicalisation and domestic violence.

### **IMPACT OF LIFE EVENTS**

We will also be alert to the potential need for statutory help (see below) for a Child or Young Person who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs and or has special educational needs
- is a young carer for others but is vulnerable themselves
- is showing signs of mental health issues or concerns, inc. self-harm
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the Child or Young Person such as substance misuse, finance or debt issues, relationship or marriage difficulties within the home – this is not an exhaustive list.
- is showing early signs of abuse of others or neglect of others or self

### **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- This policy and our Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy work in concert with each other, being overseen and managed by the same team. The policy is part of a suite of policies that work in unison with each other, in particular the Lone Working, Recruitment, Health and Safety and Data Protection policies. Please refer to them for extended guidance where applicable.

### **Key People**

- A trustee has been given delegated authority to oversee the Children and Young People's safeguarding framework and operation. Regular reports are provided to the CL via a standing item at Trustee Board meetings while maintaining necessary confidentiality. Reports are also provided to Elders meetings. Overall responsibility for safeguarding policy and the framework for delivery remains with all Trustees.
- In addition, the church has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads who act as the focus for any day-to-day issues and concerns that may arise. They serve as a first port of call for anyone to talk to.
- It is acknowledged that Elders have an important part to play in the oversight of pastoral care and as such we have designated an Elder to be part of the Core team overseeing Safeguarding at the Vine

- The core team comprises the Trustee with delegated authority, the Vine Safeguarding Lead and the delegated Elder.
- Contact details for all key staff are on page 1.

### External Links

Links with relevant agencies – in particular KCC and Thirtyone:eight - are fostered and maintained. The intention is to ensure that the Vine is provided with continuing general and specific advice when needed and to facilitate any reporting of concerns to the appropriate authorities.

### Records

A range of records are maintained in a secure manner and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and encapsulated in the Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended in 2021). These are:

- **Workers (paid and unpaid):** application forms, self-declaration forms, reference forms, DBS check details, summary of DBS workers (provided semi-annually to the trustees).
- **Groups:** group membership lists are maintained by the church office on ChurchSuite, where applicable. We also maintain and keep joining/registration, consent forms and group registers. The joining / registration forms also provides the authority to retain children's data at The Vine.
- **Concerns:** records relating to concerns raised and actions taken.
- **Accidents:** accident books.
- **Minutes:** of meetings of the Trustee Board and Members meetings, although the detail of individual safeguarding issues is rarely discussed
- **Reports:** to the Charity Commission (upload of annual Report & Accounts annual return which include not of any reportable incidents).
- **Health data:** for group trips offsite. (See Appendix C)

### Recruitment – for all staff (employed or volunteers)

Safe recruitment is a vital component of safeguarding (flow chart in appendix B).

Appointment first has to be approved in principle by the elders (based on the "know the person" principle). Then, the formal part of the appointment process (application forms, self-declaration forms, reference requests, DBS checks) is undertaken.

Once all forms references and the DBS check are completed, a decision is taken to finalise the appointment process. The process is outlined in the flow charts found in Appendix B. Only when that decision is taken and all aspects of the recruitment process completed, will the individual be permitted to be placed on the list of workers for a group, added to any rotas or employed in a paid or voluntary capacity. (See Appendix B.)

It should be noted that DBS checks at an enhanced level are only provided in relation to adults in specific circumstances – this includes all children and youth workers. The vine complies with legislation that clearly states who can be checked at an enhanced level – there is a safety check to ensure we comply with this area by our DBS provider Thirtyone:eight. However, it is good practice and our policy to ensure a basic level of check of DBS status is undertaken in all positions where a degree of trust is being placed by the CL in the individual. This protects those individuals who may be vulnerable to potential abuse or exploitation, the wider church family and the Vine from inappropriate appointments through proactive due diligence.

## **Whistle-blowing**

The CL encourages whistle-blowing so that any concerns about an employee or volunteer can be brought to the attention of the CL. Concerns or issues may be raised with anyone who has a position in the CL (either an Elder or a Trustee). They must deal with the issue or concerns raised by contacting a member of the safeguarding team unless there is a conflict of interest. In some circumstances it may be necessary to speak to the Chair of Trustees. Whilst others can be approached, we would strongly encourage concerns to be raised with the DSLs or Safeguarding Trustee directly.

It is important to keep the circle of disclosure small and to seek external advice from 31:8, the police or social services as necessary. Once this has been enacted – any further disclosure should follow the advice given – it should be noted that this may restrict the wider CL (Elders or Trustees) having information until it is appropriate to do so. All actions whilst safeguarding investigations are underway in conjunction with other statutory agencies will be recorded.

Any requirement to suspend staff or volunteers will be enacted by the Trustee with Safeguarding responsibility, Chair of Trustees and Head of Human Resources (2 out of 3 if one is unavailable). The Elders and Trustees will be informed and consulted, if this is appropriate and sanctioned by the investigating statutory authority.

If, after an assessment, an individual is suspended, removed or dismissed from responsibilities or a role within the Vine, the Disclosure & Barring Service will be informed if required. Throughout this process, there is a need to maintain confidentiality and to ensure fairness while also maintaining the safety of any person at risk.

## **Children Move Away**

If a child about whom concerns have been raised or an individual where safeguarding related questions have come to the fore moves to another church, that church will be informed where possible and further advice sought from outside agencies or Thirtyone:eight as appropriate.

## **RESPONDING TO CONCERNS OR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Under no circumstances should anyone carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse:

Concerns, suspicions and allegations must be reported as soon as possible to one of the church's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL/Deputy DSL) (see page 1) who are appointed by the CL to act on its behalf in dealing with any allegation or suspicion of abuse, etc.

Disclosure to the wider CL (Trustees and or Elders) is a difficult and sometimes emotive issue. The policy reflects the need for the CL to be informed of any concerns or issues in order to generally perform its duties of good governance and oversight. In an ideal world this needs to be done as soon as possible. This is to ensure good compliance with policies and so that clear accountability and support can be provided to all those involved – potential victims, family, friends, perpetrators, those reporting concerns or those involved with safeguarding responsibilities. The scope in sharing of information to the wider Elders and Trustees may be limited to maintain some areas of confidentiality but reasons for this will be clearly noted following consultation and advice from statutory agencies.

It is also acknowledged that each set of circumstances is unique and it is vital that advice from 31:8 or other statutory agencies is sought and followed. That advice and actions required may restrict the dissemination of any information to the wider CL. As a general rule of thumb this policy sets the following priorities:

1. Safety of the individual, support and pastoral care as appropriate

**The Vine Maidstone, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9QF**  
**Registered Company Number: 8476230    Registered Charity Number: 1152659**

2. Support of any individual, family or friends bringing concerns, disclosure or allegation (this does not imply ongoing commentary on what is happening once the matter has been passed to the safeguarding team or others to follow through)
3. Support and pastoral input for the alleged perpetrator (if they are part of the church) including restricting activities or attendance whilst matters are investigated.
4. Consideration of any implications for the church in terms of reputation or credibility
5. Confidentiality issues included risks around potential collusion accusations

There is also a requirement to inform the church's insurance provider if a proven allegation has been made against an individual within the church or if an incident occurs on church premises.

If the suspicions or allegations implicate the DSL or other members of the safeguarding team then the report should be made in the first instance to the delegated Vine trustee (contact information is found on page 1).

If the suspicions or allegations concern a trustee or elder the delegated trustee should be informed and they will work with the chair of trustees and seek further advice from 31:8 or other statutory agencies as appropriate. If either the delegated trustee or chair of trustees is implicated then another elder or trustee can be substituted.

If none of these are available, advice can be sought from 31:8 (formerly Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)) and KCC Adult Social Services. Contact details are on page 1

Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

A written record of the concerns should be made at the earliest opportunity and kept in a secure place before being passed to a DSL or Deputy DSL or delegated trustee.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DSL or the Deputy DSLs, the absence of these individuals should not delay seeking advice from Thirtyone:eight or KCC Children's Social Services or police if there is an immediate risk to an individual or family.

It is the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the child protection agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight, although the CL hopes that members of the church will use the church's procedure in the first instance. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the DSL, Deputy DSLs, delegated trustee, trustees or elders have not responded appropriately or where they have a disagreement as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. By making this statement the CL demonstrates the commitment of the church to effective safeguarding and its absolute desire for a fully robust process that minimises the possibility of bad practice, collusion or allegations of cover up.

The CL will support the DSL and Deputy DSLs in their roles and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

The DSL group will meet together at least quarterly to review issues relating to safeguarding, to provide insights into process and to forward any concerns about the policy for consideration to the relevant trustees.

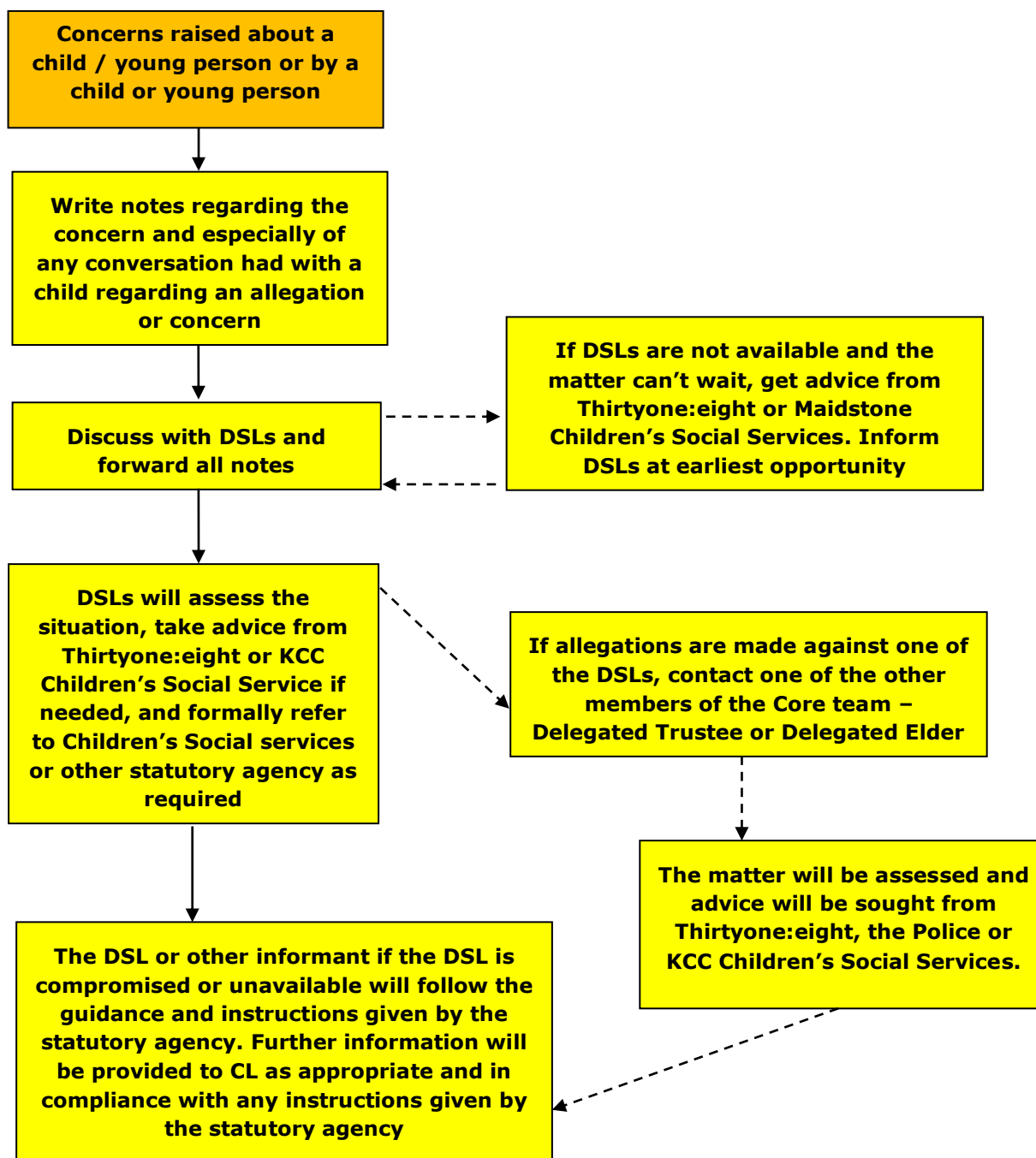
The Core Safeguarding team (Trustee, Elder and Safeguarding Lead) will also meet quarterly to review inputs from the DSL group and to relay any safeguarding or policy concerns to the CL for review and action.

If an accusation is made against a worker, paid or voluntary, that individual's role in any area of ministry will be reviewed and suspension from involvement will be considered. The role of the DSL and



Deputy DSLs is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion. Consultation with Thirtyone:eight and/or KCC Adult Social Services should be undertaken and advice duly followed including any disclosure to wider CL.

It is the statutory agencies task to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if formal referral is made.



## **TALKING TO CHILDREN WHERE ABUSE IS SUSPECTED OR ALLEGED**

Where a child or young person makes an allegation of abuse:

- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets under any circumstances.
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace.
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking leading questions.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Do not be judgemental.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.
- Pass this information on immediately as indicated above.
- If a child or young person has disclosed abuse, consideration should be given to whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions, and particularly if the DSL or a Deputy DSL is not available, it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Maidstone Children's Social Services to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

## **SUPERVISORY ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN CHURCH GROUPS**

We aim to protect children from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines:

- Every child or young person will require to have a joining and consent form completed by a parent or carer
- We will keep a register of all children attending our activities.
- We will keep a register of all those staffing activities (both paid staff members and volunteers).
- Our team members will record any unusual events and any accidents will be written into the accident book. (Note: there is an accident book in every church building).
- Where possible we would advise that we should not see children or young people alone, although we recognise that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful. Pastoral conversations often take place on a 1:1 basis and whilst this is not prohibited by this policy it is essential that due diligence with regard to risks is assessed and appropriate safeguards put in place. Where possible alert another leader that a conversation is taking place and place yourself clearly in a place where you can be easily observed. Follow the Lone Working policy, in particular if visiting someone's home.
- Children should be treated with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions.
- Ensure gender issues are assessed and due consideration given to ensuring someone of the same sex is present during meetings. If this raises an issue because elders are male then ensuring the person(s) being seen have appropriate support such as a parent or friend in attendance if they so wish.

**The Vine Maidstone, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9QF**  
**Registered Company Number: 8476230    Registered Charity Number: 1152659**

- Be aware of your surroundings, particularly of any health and safety issues present. If the latter cannot be addressed quickly and easily, advise the Vine's health & safety officer as soon as possible (see Page 1).

Guidance regarding the approach to children and young people is to be found in Appendix D.

### **GROUPS ATTENDED BY PARENTS/CARERS**

Where activities are attended by parents who retain responsibility for the children/young people (e.g. Oasis), an appropriate registration form should be signed and retained on file. The key clause in the form is recognition that responsibility for children/young people at the activity remains in the hands of the parent/carer.

Where a child is involved in an accident or incident during one of these group sessions, check that the parent is aware and is taking appropriate action. It is the parent's responsibility to deal with any issue relating to his or her child. However, assistance should be offered and, in the event of any accident, a record should be maintained through the church's accident book.

### **SUPPORT AND TRAINING OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH WORKERS**

The Vine is committed to the provision of safeguarding training for all children's and youth leaders.

Everyone has to undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date by refresher training at least annually.

We will provide leaders with the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and the child protection policy by taking into account leaders' views and personal safeguarding experiences.

### **SUPPORT TO THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE**

The CL is committed to offering pastoral care and support, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, to those attending the church who have been affected by abuse. If support is being provided, appropriate supervision and oversight will be put in place. It is not possible to provide a definite pathway of support as each person is unique and their connections to us are ultimately relational. That said we would encourage connections to Children and Youth Leadership teams. We would encourage all members of the church to be connected to and members of a community group. There is also a pastoral team with elder membership and oversight who are able to specifically support individuals and families requiring additional support and care.

### **WORKING WITH OFFENDERS**

When someone attending the church is known to have previous offending history, the CL will work with the offender, to review the relevance of the offending on the church community as a whole, consider the likelihood of further offending and identify any risk areas for the church, its members and the wider public we engage. A risk assessment plan will be drawn up, enacted and reviewed regularly (as a minimum every three months).

The CL will ensure that where possible it both cooperates and seeks advice and guidance from statutory agencies.

In its commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and to protect the abuser pastorally, boundaries will be set for that person, which they will be expected to keep. There is a duty to cooperate with statutory authorities where there is a known risk. The church retains the right to agree or decline involvement of an individual in the church.

**The Vine Maidstone, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9QF**  
**Registered Company Number: 8476230    Registered Charity Number: 1152659**

## **PASTORAL CARE**

Pastoral care is overseen by the Elders and is intrinsically linked to our safeguarding policies (both Child and Adult). Safeguarding policies lay out the process and expectations of everyone to respond in a timely and appropriate way. These policies take precedent over any pastoral care or confidentiality promises that have been given. Concerns should be raised and reported and good pastoral care should follow taking account of statutory guidance and advice.

Additional pastoral support may also be needed as part of appropriate follow up to support those raising concerns, those suffering from alleged or actual abuse, family and other friends affected by any issues and for the team overseeing and managing safeguarding work at the Vine. This is often complex and with overlapping and sometimes, conflicting pastoral needs. Whilst pastoral structures such as community groups, 1:1 pastoral support from Elders or other leaders and connections to external support groups can help, each situation is unique and requires timely planning, regular review and operational flexibility to respond to changing need(s). Those handling the reporting of concerns may not be best placed to deliver any pastoral support to others affected so planning and knowing who will undertake this area of pastoral care needs to be discussed and agreed at the earliest possible time – the safeguarding core team should consider this in the first instance.

The Elders welcome direct pastoral contact with those in need so that they can assist in supporting them. There is also a small pastoral group with elder oversight that meets to consider how pastoral care can be best delivered across the Vine and in individual and family situations. Community groups are also overseen by elders and regular conversations with the leaders that facilitate these groups take place, to look at support needs for individuals and those that are caring within a community group.

A pastoral care diagram can be found in the appendix k. It is not prescriptive as individual situations require an individual response but it does provide a framework from which we at the Vine operate.

## **SUPPORT AND TRAINING**

The CL is committed to the provision of safeguarding training for all leaders, staff and volunteers who have any contact in any ministry capacity.

Everyone has to undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding protection effectively, which is kept up to date by refresher training at least annually.

We will provide leaders with the opportunity to contribute to and shape safeguarding arrangements and policy by taking into account leaders' views and personal safeguarding experiences. There is a responsibility for us all to share good practice and to reflect, change and adapt practice that falls short of providing the care and support we expect from this policy.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We recognise that all matters relating to safeguarding are sensitive and are only discussed with the individual and with others who need to know.

The DSL or Deputy DSLs, delegated safeguarding trustee, elders or trustees will disclose personal information to one another on a need-to-know basis only.

Data obtained for one purpose should not be used for a different purpose.

In complying with our Data Protection policy and the requirements of GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (amended 2021), we are committed to ensuring that safeguarding concerns and allegations are

reported – this may from time-to-time conflict with an individual right to expect confidential discussions to be kept confidential.

### **COMMITMENT OF THE ELDERS AND TRUSTEES**

The CL is committed to safeguarding practices which protect children from harm; this commitment is shared by all those who lead or work in children's and youth groups.

The trustees have formally approved this policy and it is accepted by the whole CL.

The trustees will ensure that this safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is fully reviewed and/or revised on an annual basis or sooner if required

This policy will be made available to all who work with children and young people at the Vine and is freely available on request.

## APPENDIX A

### TYPES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

*Sources include: "Working Together to Safeguard Children", HM Government, July 2018 and "I Want to Understand Spiritual Abuse", CCPAS*

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Often there are physical signs of such abuse (e.g. unusual bruising) but there can also be indications of withdrawal or distress. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child 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 children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child 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 children.

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child'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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Spiritual:** this is the coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include

**The Vine Maidstone, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9QF**  
**Registered Company Number: 8476230    Registered Charity Number: 1152659**

manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has “divine” position and isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** A person under 18 is sexually exploited when they are coerced into sexual activities by one or more person(s) who have deliberately targeted their youth and inexperience in order to exercise power over them. Child sexual exploitation may occur through the use of technology without the child’s consent or immediate recognition; for example, through being persuaded to post sexual images over the internet or through mobile phone images. Child sexual exploitation is often conducted with actual violence or the threat of violence. This may be threats towards the child, or her or his family and may prevent the child from disclosing the abuse, or exiting the cycle of exploitation. Indeed, the child may be so confused by the process, that they do not perceive any abuse at all.

**Forced Marriage:** A forced marriage is one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** This constitutes all procedures which involve the partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs, whether for cultural or any non- therapeutic reason.

**Peer on Peer Abuse (includes bullying):** Abuse committed by a person under the age of 18 against another under the age of 18 will be regarded as Peer-on-Peer abuse. It may include domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence. Signs of such abuse may include a student being withdrawn, displaying age-inappropriate sexual behaviour or other unusual changes in behaviour. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated as banter or part of growing up.

**Honour Based Violence:** Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. Crimes of ‘honour’ do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of ‘honour’ might include domestic abuse, threats of violence, sexual or psychological abuse, forced marriage, being held against your will or taken somewhere you don’t want to go and assaulted.

**Radicalisation:** Radicalisation is a process which somebody goes through in order to become involved in extremist activities or terrorism, from a starting point of having no particular strong opinions or being a moderate person through to holding some extremist views, and it can be a process that happens online or in meeting people. Their conversations and their opinions are gradually changed over time.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Appointment Process**

No person shall be permitted to work with children and young people<sup>1</sup> unless appointed to such purpose by the elders of the Vine. The trustees will receive every 6 months a list of those people who have been subject to the Vine's recruitment process and have completed the necessary DBS clearance at either enhanced or basic level.

The appointment process contains some key components:

- Appointment decision by the elders
- Completion of application form
- Completion of self-disclosure form
- The taking up of references
- Disclosure & Barring Service check
- Assuming no questions are raised by the DBS check, sign-off is completed in line with the flow charts found in Appendix B for paid employees or volunteers. If any issues are raised a risk assessment is undertaken by the DSL and the designated trustee(s). See below.

Responsibility for forwarding documentation lies with the designated church administrator.

### **Recruitment and Appointment of Paid employees and Volunteers**

The CL will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the principles set out in government and church practice guidelines. All workers will be required to attend training sessions run by the church, which will occur at least annually.

No person shall be appointed to work with children without agreement of the Elders. Appointment will only be agreed if sufficient time has elapsed for that individual to be assessed as suitable. Application forms and self-disclosure forms will be required to be completed, Disclosure & Barring Service checks will be made, personal references will be taken and interviews may be arranged.

Appointed workers with children and young people shall be 18 years of age and over. Those under the age of 18 assisting in groups will be called Junior Helpers and will work under supervision, never being alone with children.

The church has a legal responsibility to refer information about individuals who may pose a risk to children to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Once all recruitment processes have been completed, including a satisfactory DBS check, the individual will be issued with a photo ID. This photo ID remains the property of the Vine and must be returned when the role has ceased or on request.

### **List of Appointed Staff**

The church will keep a register of all children's workers electronically which will be available to on request by statutory authorities where we have a duty to co-operate. All other requests will need to comply with the prevailing data protection legislation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Vine child protection regime defines children and young people as those up to the age of 18 years of age.



## **DBS Checks & Records**

DBS checks will be undertaken for all people over the age of 18 who are tasked with working with children. Junior Helpers, working under supervision, will not normally be DBS checked.

As part of our robust recruitment process at the Vine we have a process to assess the suitability of the individual to the role. This includes an application, interview and informal discussions, the taking up of references and the processing of DBS certificates if needed. Interviews and informal discussions are conducted by either the HR team or by the elder(s) responsible for the ministry area.

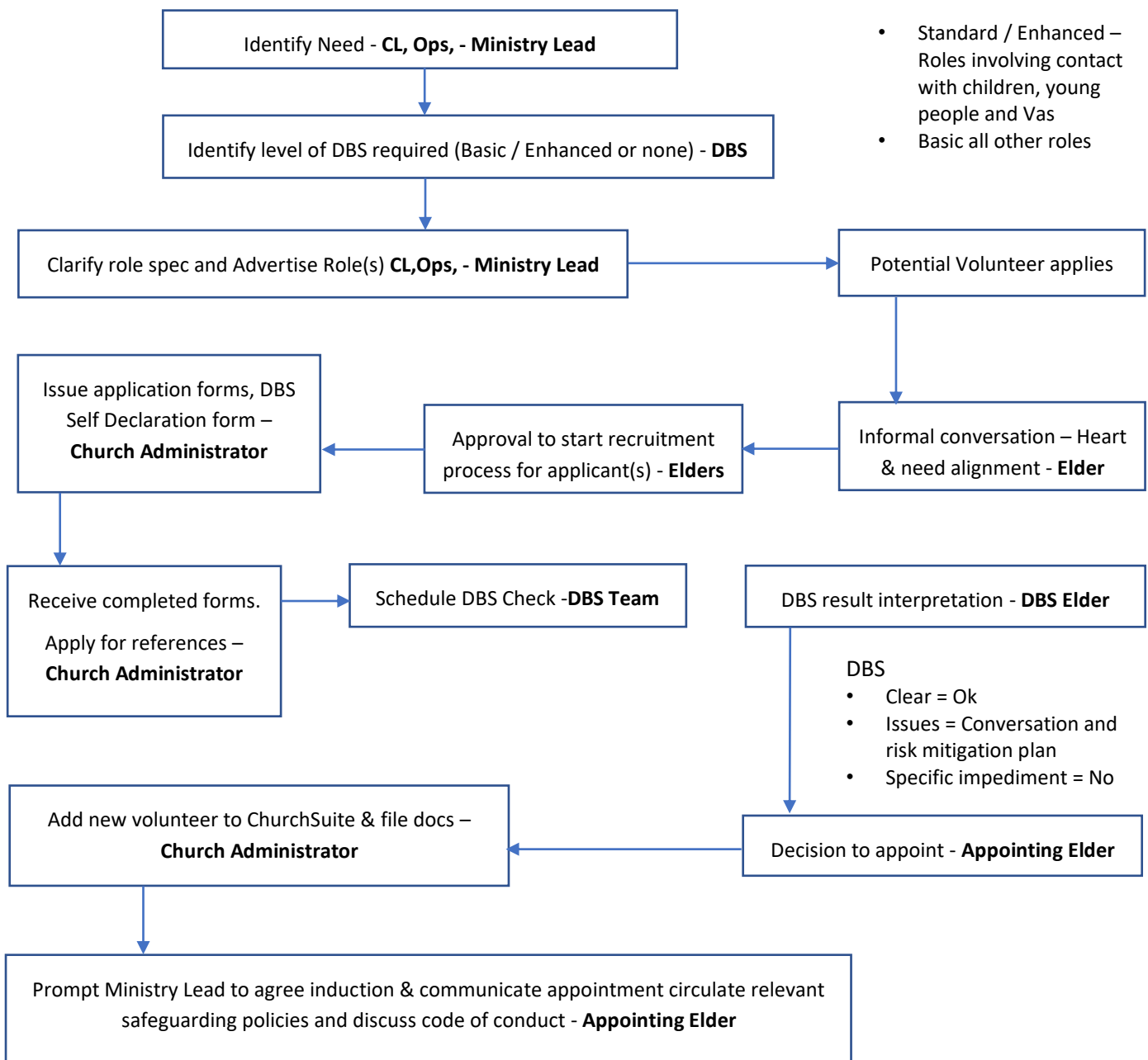
The DBS application is the final stage of our recruitment process but also requires an assessment of the information that is provided and appropriate decisions as to next steps to be made. This is undertaken by our Designated Safeguarding Lead and one other Trustee - normally the trustee with delegated oversight of safeguarding but may also include the HR Trustee.

If the DBS certificate is clear then, under normal circumstances, the person would be cleared to work within the applied-for area. If the DBS is not clear then a request will be made to the individual to see the certificate and a risk assessment made as to the suitability or continued suitability to appoint the person to the role. A criminal conviction does not necessarily bar someone from working with children and/or vulnerable adults but a number of factors will be assessed to make a decision, including:

- Whether the information in its entirety was declared by the individual on the self-disclosure form.
- The type of offence and its relevance.
- The date of the conviction.
- The length and type of sentence.
- Other previous convictions and volume.
- Rehabilitative factors including current support or supervision by statutory services.
- Media and public perception considerations.
- Other information or advice from statutory agencies or from Thirtyone:eight (CCPAS)

A decision will then be communicated to the individual as to the continuance of the appointment or not. In either case a written record of the decisions and the reason for it will be kept on file.

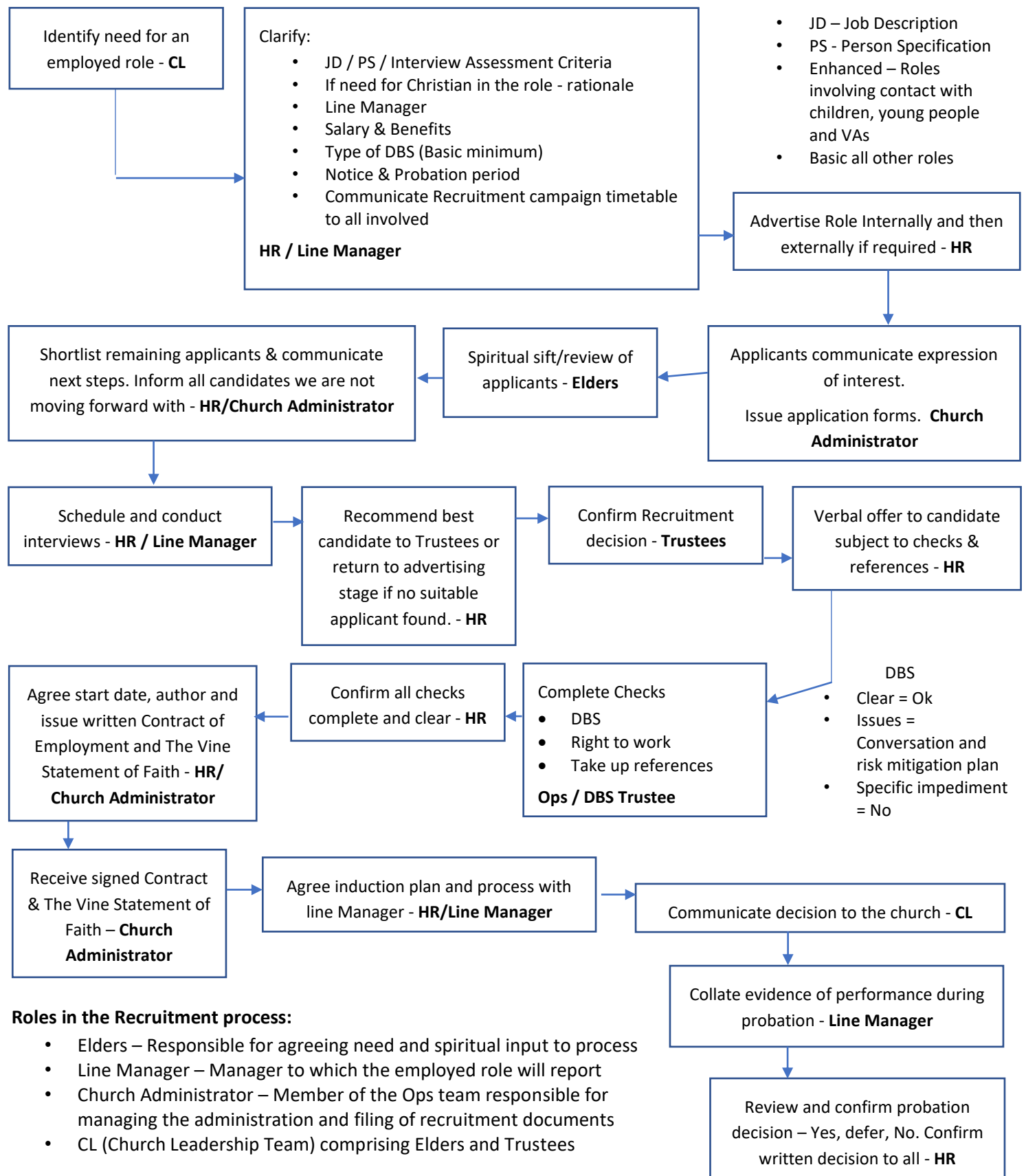
# The Vine – Volunteer Recruitment Process – 21/5/22



## Roles in the Recruitment process:

- Appointing Elder – responsible for deciding and confirming appointment of new volunteers
- Elders – Responsible for agreeing need and spiritual input to process
- Ministry Leads – Leading the area of ministry into which volunteers are needed
- Church Administrator – Member of the Ops team responsible for managing the Volunteer administration and filing of documents
- CL (Church Leadership Team) comprising Elders and Trustees

# The Vine – Employed Recruitment Process – 21/5/22



## Roles in the Recruitment process:

- Elders – Responsible for agreeing need and spiritual input to process
- Line Manager – Manager to which the employed role will report
- Church Administrator – Member of the Ops team responsible for managing the administration and filing of recruitment documents
- CL (Church Leadership Team) comprising Elders and Trustees

**The Vine Maidstone, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9QF**  
**Registered Company Number: 8476230 Registered Charity Number: 1152659**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **ONE-OFF EVENTS**

#### **Day Visits & Activities**

Day visits and activities that take place away from the church's premises should have leadership cover that at least meets minimum guidelines (see Appendix D). However, certain types of activities will require a higher ratio of leaders to children/young people and this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

A ***Day Visits and Activities Form*** should be completed. The signed form should be kept on file at the church with a photocopy to be carried by the group leader during the event/activity. Photocopies should be shredded once the activity is over.

#### **Residential Based Activities**

Residential activities either away from the church's premises or on it should have leadership cover that at least meets minimum guidelines (see Appendix D). However, it may be appropriate, depending on the age and gender mix of the children/young people, to have a higher ratio of leaders to children/young people and this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

A ***Camps & Residential Holiday Health, Information & Consent Form*** should be completed. The signed form should be kept on file at the church with a photocopy to be carried by the group leader during the event/activity. Photocopies should be shredded once the activity is over.

#### **Holiday Bible Club**

Holiday clubs will have a specific registration form which will be signed by parents/carers and kept on file at the church.

Leadership cover will be at least that which meets minimum guidelines (see above). However, it may be appropriate, depending on the age and gender mix of the children/young people and the activities planned to have a higher ratio of leaders to children/young people and this should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## APPENDIX D

### Guidance for Children's & Youth Meetings

#### Joining Forms

Every child or young person joining a group should have a joining form (**General Information and Consent Form**) completed and signed by a parent or guardian at the earliest opportunity. The joining form will include, inter alia, emergency contact details, information on allergies (food or otherwise) and/or relevant medical conditions, parental responsibility for delivery and pick-up of the child/young person to/from the group and the provision of refreshments. These forms should be reviewed at least every two years to ensure that information is current.

#### Keeping Records

A register of children or young people attending a club or activity should be maintained, together with a register of the workers present. A record of departure times should be maintained if the child/young person does not attend the whole session. Group leaders should be aware of other people/events in the building and should supervise accordingly. Attendance records should be kept centrally and securely in the church outside of group session times.

Workers should write down unusual events or conversations, recording what they witnessed, and inform the church's DSL or Deputy DSLs if deemed to be significant or if a cumulative pattern of concern emerges.

#### Adult/Child Ratios

Below are ratios of adults to children that will apply for a specific indoor/outdoor activity or one-off holiday club events, although it should be regarded as a minimum for any residential activities. These are the ratios required in regulations governing day care for under 8's.

Adult : Children			
Under 2 yrs	1	:	3
2 – 3 years	1	:	4
4 - 8 years	1	:	6
9 – 12 years	1	:	8

For children over 8, there is no official guidance. A suggested ratio for internal events is two adults (preferably one of each gender) for up to 20 children, with an additional leader for every 10 further children. Following a risk assessment, this ratio would need to be increased for outdoor activities or residential events, and more so if that activity is considered high risk or dangerous, or when catering for children with disabilities/special needs.

There should always be more than one adult for any group and at least one should be female.

Helpers under 18 years old count as children and not adults in these ratios. If you have a number of teenage helpers, you will need more adult leaders, not fewer.

For any group meeting on its own in the building, there needs to be a minimum of 3 workers present.

#### Parental Presence

Where parents are intended to be present, overall supervision by appointed and DBS checked workers is essential.

Whilst a person present may be a parent/carer for one or more of the children, to the rest of the children they are strangers.

Be aware that for some children with special needs it may be appropriate for their parent/carer to stay with them for an extended period. This should be considered on an individual basis to help the child become fully integrated into the group/activity.

### **Listening to Children**

Whilst the church leaders and worker are there to listen to and talk with children, it must be remembered that children will often decide themselves who they want to talk to. Because of this, all adults, including the children's or youth workers, need to understand the importance of listening to children and responding appropriately.

The children's or youth workers need to communicate effectively to children/young people that they are valued, that what they say is important and that there are people who are happy to listen to them.

If a child wants to talk:

- Suggest where you might meet
- Offer the child/young person privacy but remember their and your safety
- Remember not to promise confidentiality
- A child/young person may not be wanting to talk about abuse
- Be aware of how to respond if a child/young person does disclose abuse

### **Physical Contact with Children**

Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.

Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.

Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.

Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.

Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.

Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.

When giving first aid (or applying sun cream etc.), encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.

Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.

Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

Please note section on **toilets** below.

### **Discipline**

Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character,

prepares for life and is an expression of God's love for an individual. (Hebrews 12:5-12 & Proverbs 22:6)

Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding for the children in your care.

Work on each individual child's positives. Do not compare a child with another, but encourage and affirm them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.

Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect children to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.

Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and resist allowing demanding children to take all your time and energy.

Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.

If children are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly.

**NEVER** smack or hit a child and don't shout. Change voice tone if necessary.

Discipline out of love, NEVER in anger. (Call on support from other leaders/workers if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely.)

Lay down ground rules (e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property) and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if not kept.

Every child is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows, therefore, that each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.

Some children have a tendency to be disruptive in a group. This can be for a variety of reasons, often for attention. Give them a chance, warn them and only separate if they are disruptive as a last resort.

Guidelines for discipline:

Have a disruptive child sit right in front of you or get a leader/worker to sit next to them – be proactive and encourage leaders/workers to be proactive rather than wait to be asked to deal with a situation.

At the earliest opportunity, take a disruptive child to one side, speak to them and try to establish any reason for the upset, engaging with them to change their behaviour.

If a child/young person continues to be disruptive:

Warn the child/young person that you may speak to their parents/carers about their behaviour.

Inform the child/young person that they may be asked to leave the setting, either to go back into the church service or go outside the room, under supervision.

If the behaviour continues over a period of several sessions, after advising the parents/carers and informing and consulting with the church's DSL or Deputy DSLs, the child should be warned that their continuing disruptive behaviour may result in longer term exclusion from the group.

If a child/young person is harming him/herself, another person or property then other children/young people present should be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring. At the same time, and with a second worker present, request the child/young person to STOP. If your request is ignored, you might need to warn the individual that you will consider calling for additional help, (e.g. parents, police) if they do not stop. In exceptional circumstances

and with assistance, you might need to intervene to prevent them harming themselves, others or property whilst you wait for the parents or police.

## **Toilets**

Children of Infant School age and below should be accompanied to the toilet area by a DBS checked leader. Unless assistance is required, as either a function of age or disability, the leader should merely wait outside the toilet block and then escort the child back to the group.

If assistance is required, this should have been notified on the joining form and permission given.

Where children or young people are unescorted to the toilet block, the group leaders should be aware of their absence and, if absence is longer than is deemed appropriate, checks should be made.

If a child wets themselves, call a parent immediately if on site. If a parent is not available, there is a duty of care to the child. Try to contact a parent and, if a parent cannot attend quickly, get permission to take action. If unable to contact a parent, deal with the matter sensitively and promptly. Any action taken by those other than parents should always be in the presence of two DBS checked people.

## **Food & Drink**

Permission will be sought on the joining form to serve refreshments. This form will request information about relevant medical conditions and any food allergies.

Normal hygiene standards are expected to be maintained.



## **APPENDIX E**

### **Health & Safety**

All those involved with children and young people will be required to make themselves aware of relevant health and safety requirements.

#### **First Aid**

Where possible, children's and youth groups will have a qualified first aider on the premises during meetings. The Vine undertakes to arrange training for those volunteering to be first aiders.

A list of those with current first aid certificates will be maintained electronically and will be available on request.

First aid boxes are maintained in all Vine buildings (Shepway, Boughton lane and the chapel) and there is a process in place for recording any accidents requiring attention or first aid. A first aid box and the accident report book are in Store 2, at the corner of the main corridor in the Boughton Lane building. There is also a first aid box and accident book located in the Shepway building.

The first aid box and accident book are kept..... in the chapel.

See section on **accidents and incidents** below.

#### **Accidents & Incidents**

An accident book is maintained in all Vine buildings. (Note: if, for any reason, the accident book is unavailable, an accident report should be filled in on a separate piece of paper with the details transferred to the accident book at the earliest opportunity).

In the event of an accident, parents/carers will be informed by an accident form (***Accident and Incident Form for Parents/Carers***), which should be signed, returned and filed. A photocopy of the form should be put on file pending return of the copy signed by the parent/carer. The church's DSL or Deputy DSLs should be informed, as should the church's Health & Safety Officer.

#### **Risk Assessments**

While there is a formal risk assessment of buildings one a year, with a report to the trustees, group leaders should be aware of their surroundings and should identify any risks that might exist in the rooms or space being used. If any risk emerge that cannot be dealt with by simple immediate action, the Vine's Health & Safety Officer should be informed.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Photography**

Care must be exercised with regard to photographs, videos and web cams of clearly identifiable people. There are several issues to be aware of:

- Permission (verbal or written) must be obtained of all the people (children and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video or web cam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded. Note: this should not be overlooked if any child or young person has not had a joining form signed by the parent/carer, such form specifying whether photography of the individual is permitted or not.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, or telephone/mobile numbers.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this is regarded as a public area and permission from a crowd is not necessary.

Photographs can only be used in a Vine context and should not be shared on personal media platforms. Once photographs have been used in such a manner, they should be deleted from personal devices (e.g. camera, mobile phones). If the material is to be saved it should be downloaded to Vine password protected storage systems.

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Transporting Children**

These guidelines shall apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children and young people, organised by or on behalf of the church or any of its organised groups. They do not apply to private arrangements for transportation made, for example, between parties with parental responsibility.

A consent form should be signed by parents/carers where transport of children or young people is necessary or appropriate.

Guidelines on transporting children are as follows:

- Only those who have gone through the church recruitment procedures and have read and accepted the church's child protection policy should transport children. Each group should have an approved list of drivers if the transport of children and young people is a common practice.
- Parental consent should be given for all journeys.
- Use of minibuses by the Vine, for whatever purpose, requires adherence to all current regulation. Any motor vehicle adapted to carry more than eight passengers for hire or reward is regarded in law as a Public Service Vehicle (PSV). However, the Vine requires a Section 19 small bus permit to be in place for all drivers of mini buses used to carry between 6 or more passengers. In addition, all minibuses used must have the necessary insurance and have a driver who has a valid driving licence that entitles them to drive a minibus and meets the necessary age and health requirements.
- Car drivers shall be 21 years of age or over, have held a full driving licence for at least two years and have adequate insurance. The vehicle should be road worthy and, where applicable, should have a current MOT certificate. Drivers should inform their car insurance company that they are involved in or are planning to be involved in the transport of children or young people from the church.
- Having checked drivers, it is reasonable to expect that they may be alone with a child for short periods (e.g. dropping off the last child). Consideration could be given to dropping off the least vulnerable child last and plan routes accordingly. Two workers in a car does not in itself guarantee protection for a child - there have been incidents where workers have acted abusively together and in this situation a child could be less protected.
- If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should listen until the journey reaches a natural conclusion. If necessary seeks advice from the DSL or Deputy DSLs. If a subsequent meeting is considered desirable, arrange to meet the child/young person at a location where there are other adults around. (Remember a child/young person may want to talk to the driver about an abusive situation).
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist children stay in the same groups on the out-going and return journey. This will avoid the confusion over whether a child has been transported home or at worst left behind.
- If travelling in convoy with cars and minibuses, please note that the maximum speed for a minibus is 50 mph on derestricted single lane roads, 60 mph on dual carriageways, and 62.5 mph on motorways.
- At collection or dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an parent, guardian, carer or other appointed person. When a child is dropped off at home, ensure that the child has entered the premises.

- It is advisable to be aware of instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular child (e.g. where there has been a disagreement or where a child/young person has a 'crush' on a driver).
- If parents transport their children (e.g. to and from activities), ensure that all are made aware that such arrangements are the responsibility of the parents involved and not the church.
- Seatbelts should be fitted and used for all passengers and drivers.
- Appropriate child seats (baby seats, child seats, booster seats, booster cushions) should be used for children up to 135 cm in height or their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday (whichever they reach first).

## APPENDIX H

### Visiting Children At Home

Children's workers and leaders will need to visit children and their families at home from time to time. The parents/carers may or may not attend church and it is important therefore they have been given information about the group including contact telephone numbers.

Guidelines for visiting:

- Inform the church's the DSL, Deputy DSLs or another worker of the proposed visit.
- Never go into a child's home if a parent/carer is absent.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
  - Purpose
  - Time you arrived and left
  - Who was present
  - What was discussed
- The written record should be forwarded to a DSL or Deputy DSL and kept securely on church premises.
- If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them if the child is home alone or with other children. **Do not enter the house if the parent, guardian or carer is absent.** Note: if the child is alone and there is deemed to be a safeguarding risk, seek advice from the DSL or a Deputy DSL.
- The invitation of a child to a worker's home, other than as part of a group/programme meeting, must **only** be done with the knowledge and permission of the parent, guardian or carer. Under no circumstances should a child visit a worker without another person being present.
- Any visitor to the home of a child or young person should carry a church photo ID badge, supplemented by other ID if necessary (e.g. driving licence, passport).

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Electronic Media & Communication**

- Electronic communication with a child or young person should generally relate to group activities or should be in response to electronic communication received. The author of any electronic communication should be clearly identified and, where appropriate, the name of the group should be specified.
- When using social networking sites, children's or youth leaders should not accept or invite children or young people under the age of 18 as "friends" or personal contacts. They should also consider whether the content of their home page is appropriate for children or young people.
- No electronic communication should be entered into with a child or young person unless there is an audit trail.
- Official church computers should not be used by children or young people for any purpose.
- Any discovered misuse of church internet access should be reported to the church's DSL or Deputy DSLs

## **APPENDIX: J**

### **Data Protection**

The Vine recognises the importance of privacy and security of personal information and this policy outlines the way in which information is collected and handled. The Vine is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and strives to comply fully with data protection law applying in England and Wales. Individuals' rights, as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation as defined in the Data Protection Act 2018 (amended 2021) will be respected. The Vine's privacy policy is found on the church website: [www.thevineuk.net](http://www.thevineuk.net)

Do not collect information about individuals which is not necessary for the purpose intended. Do not ask questions or seek data without ensuring that the information is relevant. If data is given or obtained which is excessive for the purpose it should be immediately deleted or destroyed.

If data is kept for a considerable length of time it must be reviewed and if necessary updated. No data should be kept unless it is reasonable to assume it is accurate.

There should be regular reviews of files containing data to ensure that it is not kept for longer than required for the particular purpose.

You should always consider the rights of the individual in respect of their data. These are, briefly, that consent should be obtained if data is to be kept and used for any purpose; that individuals are entitled to know what data is kept about them; and that no personal data must be disclosed to anyone outside or inside the church who does not strictly need to know, without the individual's consent.

Personal data must be kept in a secure place (e.g. in filing cabinet which can be locked or in a room which can be locked when unoccupied). Unauthorised access to any computers that contain personal data should be prevented.

No data can be transferred, even for a legitimate purpose, outside of the EEA (European Economic Area - most of Europe) without the consent of the individual. Further, information about children should not be shared outside the Vine unless there is an urgent, child protection reason for doing so.

## Appendix: K

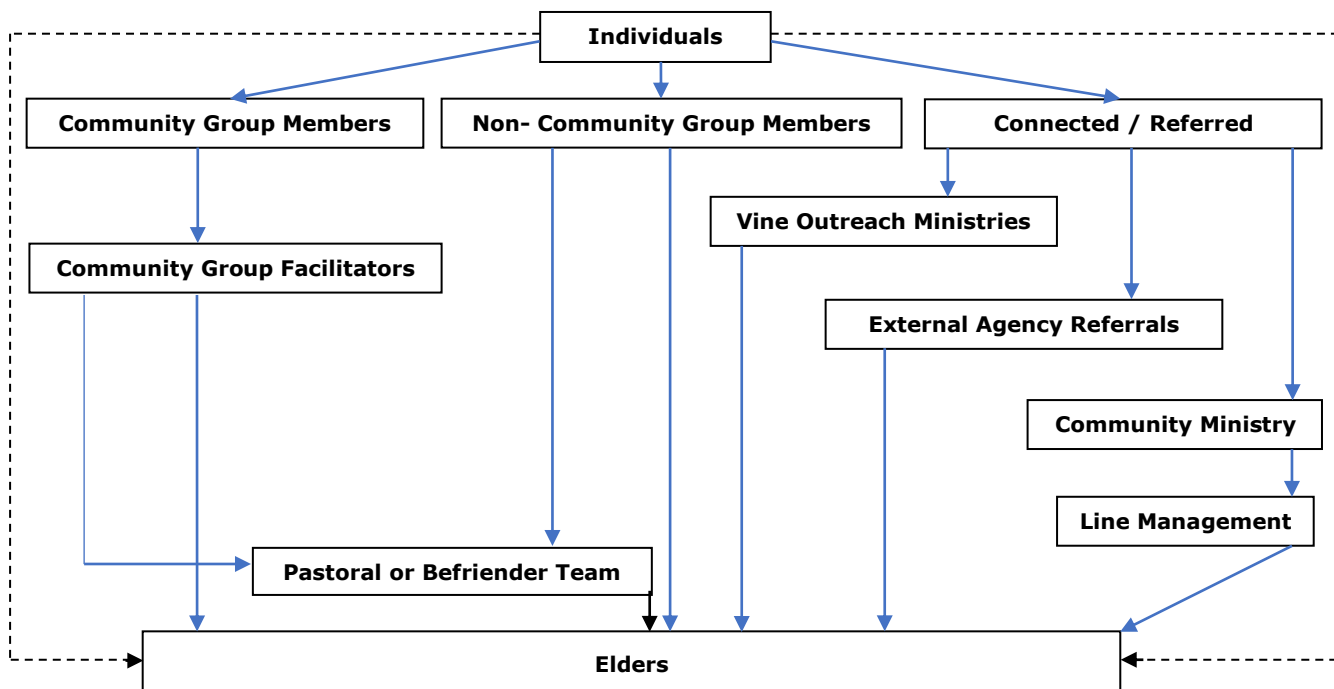
### Pastoral & Ministry Pathways

The flow chart below is an indication of the type of pathways that Individuals come into contact with the Vine and how our pastoral framework meets general care needs. All pastoral care is overseen by the elders although pastoral work is often delivered by other delegated groups or individuals including the Pastoral Care team overseen by the eldership team. The key is that anyone who comes into contact with the Vine has access to the eldership team for pastoral care and support.

There are 3 broad access points. These are:

1. Those individuals and families who are members of the Vine and connected to a Community Group. We would generally see the primary route for pastoral care to be delivered via the Community Group itself and those that facilitate these groups. Additional support for areas of pastoral care that cannot be delivered in this way is provided via a Pastoral Team and the elders.
2. Non-Community Group members who are members of the Vine can access pastoral support via the pastoral team or elders. We do encourage all members of the Vine however to be connected to a community group.
3. The Vine also provides pastoral care to individuals and families who are not members of the Vine. This is often via community ministries such as Oasis or Christians Against Poverty. It could also be delivered as part of Vine outreach ministries such as Alpha. The Vine also accepts referrals from other agencies, both statutory (such as schools or criminal justice agencies) or from other voluntary sector partners.

It is important to note that whilst we undertake pastoral work, support and advocacy, we recognise that others are more qualified to deliver specific areas such as counselling, particularly when people are vulnerable and in need of additional professional support. Assisting and helping people to maintain access to appropriate external services is very much part of our overall pastoral approach in serving those in crisis or difficulty.



The Vine Maidstone, Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9QF  
Registered Company Number: 8476230 Registered Charity Number: 1152659