

Love's Farm Community Church
Safeguarding Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Children and young people are valued yet potentially vulnerable members of the Christian community who need our special care. Each one is a whole person with qualities, gifts, needs and rights, and should be honoured and respected by us all. At Love's Farm Community Church and any other activities, we take very seriously our responsibility to welcome, nurture and protect all children in our care. We will not be satisfied until we are sure that we have done all in our power to protect them from harm of any kind.
- 1.2 The Children Act, passed in 1989, was a landmark in promoting good, safe practice in long-term child care and was followed in 1993 by the Home Office Code of Practice *Safe from Harm*. This aimed to help volunteer organisations working with children for shorter periods by providing a framework for the promotion of children's welfare and the prevention of abuse.
- 1.3 Love's Farm Community Church aims to be a community where:
 - children are listened to, given a sense of belonging, nurtured and kept safe;
 - parents are supported and encouraged;
 - those who work with children and young people are supported and protected.

2. Diocese of Ely Safeguarding Statement for Children and Vulnerable Adults

- 2.1 Love's Farm Community Church is committed to safeguarding all those who attend the worship and other activities that we offer. We follow the House of Bishops' Policy, 'Protecting All God's Children' (2010), and the Diocese of Ely Policy and Procedures (2011). We seek to create a culture where everyone is included, respected, listened to and taken seriously. We accept the prime duty of care for children and vulnerable adults, and have appointed a Safeguarding Co-ordinator to ensure that what we do is informed by up-to-date policies and procedures from local and national authorities.
- 2.2 We follow recommended safeguarding practice in recruiting, training and supporting our ordained and lay ministers, our employees and our volunteers. Recruitment includes Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks for those working regularly or substantially with children and/or vulnerable adults. Health and safety policies are in place and we have provided adequate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of Love's Farm Community Church. All those working on behalf of Love's Farm Community Church have agreed to comply with the Safeguarding Policy and with the good practice guidelines for their work.
- 2.3 We respond without delay to any complaint that a child or vulnerable adult in our care may have been harmed by the behaviour of an employee or volunteer working on behalf of the church. We always seek advice on such matters from outside this church, and we will co-operate with statutory agencies during any enquiries they need to make into allegations against a member of the church community. During those enquiries we will do our best to ensure that those making an allegation, and those against whom an allegation is made, are supported appropriately.
- 2.4 We seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to any child or adult whose life has been affected by abuse, whether the abuse was recent or long ago. Where there is a current risk to vulnerable people that has not yet been brought to light, we support the person who has suffered abuse in taking information to the appropriate agencies.
- 2.5 The church wishes to welcome and support all members of its community. Those who have a history of offences against children or vulnerable adults, and/or who may pose a risk to them are offered a supportive agreement to help them take part in church life; they are supported pastorally, and boundaries are set to protect those who might be vulnerable within the church.
- 2.6 We regularly review and update our Safeguarding Policy, and we welcome comments from those using our services on how we could improve our awareness and safeguarding practices.

3. A Policy Statement on Young People and the Church

- 3.1 As part of our commitment to young people it is our intention to appoint two people, preferably one male and one female, to be their **Young Persons' Advisors**. Their role will be regularly explained to the young people and their names and telephone numbers will be publicly displayed.
- 3.2 We have appointed a **Responsible Person** who acts as the central point of contact for any child protection concerns raised within the church.

Children and young people are part of our church today.
They have much to give, as well as to receive.
We will listen to them.
As we nurture them in worship, learning and community life,
we will respect their wishes and feelings.

4. The Responsible Person

4.1 Introduction

At Love's Farm Community Church one person will be appointed to be the Responsible Person. He or she will be the central point of contact for any child protection concerns. This person will, wherever possible, have had experience of child protection matters in his or her professional life, but will not necessarily be an expert. He or she will be fully conversant with the Love's Farm Community Church Safeguarding Policy and will know where to go to find advice when needed.

4.2 The Role of the Responsible Person

The Responsible Person will be one of the people to whom youth workers and other adults turn if they have any concerns about a young person or about the behaviour of a church worker. He or she will help them to consider the best response to the situation and may wish to turn to other sources of advice before taking any action. Any referrals to Social Services will normally be through this person.

4.3 Person Specification for Appointment

The Responsible Person will demonstrate the following qualities:

- maturity
- ability to keep confidences
- emotional stability
- an interest in and/or knowledge of child protection
- confidence to deal with a situation when it arises
- ability to seek advice and consult agencies
- ability to make an independent decision in the young person's interest
- willingness to undergo training.

5. “Good Practice” Guidelines for the Prevention of Abuse

5.1 Introduction

As followers of Jesus, we welcome young people and want to give them time and attention. Our young people should be treated with respect, listened to and kept safe.

Many people would say that good practice in youth work is just common sense. However, the variation in what is considered to be “common sense” in terms of child care is enormous, so this section of our policy document endeavours to define what we believe to be good practice. Much of what is presented would be good practice irrespective of child protection issues. These are the standards we want to operate because we strive to do the very best for children and young people.

These good practice measures are first and foremost about protecting young people. However, they will also help to protect workers from false accusation or unnecessary and unwarranted suspicion.

5.2 Good Practice - Ratios

- a) As far as possible, workers will not be left alone with a young person or young people where their activity cannot be seen. On premises used by the church, this may mean leaving doors open or having two groups working in the same room.
- b) Principal Leaders are responsible for ensuring that there is a suitable ratio of staff to young people. This may depend on the age of the young people concerned and the activities being undertaken, but should also take into account “emergencies” (e.g. having enough staff to cope when a child has an accident and needs immediate medical attention). The gender balance of the workers should also be considered. There must always be at least two staff present, and more staff should be used for outdoor or off-site activities. The following minimum staffing ratios are recommended:

For indoor activities:	Age 0 - 2 years	1 : 3
	Age 2 - 3 years	1 : 4
	Age 3 - 8 years	1 : 8
	Age 8 years and over	2 : 20 (1 male and 1 female), plus 1 extra adult for every 10 children

For outdoor activities:	Age 0 - 2 years	1 : 3
	Age 2 - 3 years	1 : 4
	Age 3 - 8 years	1 : 6
	Age 8 - 13 years	2 : 15 (1 male and 1 female), plus 1 extra adult for every 8 children
	Age 13 years and over	2 : 20 (1 male and 1 female), plus 1 extra adult for every 10 young people

- c) Young people should not be given access to premises used by the church unless responsible adults are present. For their own safety, unsupervised children under the age of 11 are not permitted in the kitchen at any time.
- d) At no time should one adult be alone on premises used by the church with an individual young person or group. This means that when young people are leaving the premises, at least two adults should remain on site until the last one has departed.

- e) Youth workers should not invite young people into their homes alone. It is acceptable to invite a group if another adult is in the house. Parents should know where their children are and at what time they should return home.
- f) In a counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place, and with whom. Whenever possible, another adult should be in the building, and the young person should be aware that this person is there. It is good practice to set an agreed time-limit prior to the counselling session and stick to it. If necessary, make another appointment to continue at a later date.

5.3 Good Practice - The Way We Work

Youth Workers should treat all young people with respect and dignity.

- a) They should be careful in the use of language and tone of voice, and be aware of their own body language and the effect they are having on the individual young person.
- b) They should listen well and be careful that they do not assume they know what a young person is thinking or feeling.
- c) They should not engage in any of the following:
 - invading the privacy of young people when they are showering or using the toilet;
 - rough, physically or sexually provocative games;
 - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in "fun";
 - inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form;
 - any scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing or rejecting of a young person;
 - allowing young people to involve them in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
- d) They should learn to control and discipline young people without using physical punishment. (Occasionally, however, there may be a need to restrain a young person for his own or others' protection.)
- e) They should make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled his underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed. If possible, the child's parent/carer should be called in to carry out such a task.

5.4 Good Practice - Can I Touch a Child?

- a) It is hard to conceive how anyone can be a nurturing, caring worker with young people, without some physical contact happening at least occasionally! For example, if a young person is distressed, it would be natural to want to put an arm round his or her shoulder. It could even be considered as abusive not to respond by touching a young person in such circumstances. However, workers must be conscious that a touch, which to many people would seem innocent, may be unacceptable for some young people. If a young person appears to be cringing or responding in a negative way to being touched, workers should stop immediately and find an alternative, non-tactile way to convey their concern. They should also avoid touching a young person when no-one else is in the room. Make it your aim to exercise cautious common sense and if, following an interaction with a child that has included physical contact, you feel that your attention could be misconstrued, report the incident/encounter to one of your co-workers or the Responsible Person for safeguarding.

- b) If a worker sees a colleague acting in a way which might be misconstrued, he should be prepared to speak to that person, the Principal Leader or Responsible Person about his 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.

5.5 Good Practice - Transportation and Off-Premises Activities

- a) Lifts should not be given to young people on their own, other than for short journeys. If they are alone, they must be asked to sit in the rear of the car.
- b) All drivers must have correct insurance cover for transporting young people in their care.
- c) All drivers must be over the age of 21 years and must have held a full driving licence for at least one year.
- d) Parents shall be notified of any intention to take young people off a premises used by the church in advance of the day of the event and should give written consent before the event (see Appendices).
- e) When a minibus is used and people make a contribution towards its cost, the Principal Leader is required to obtain a "Section 19" Small Bus Permit which must be displayed on the vehicle. Contact the Traffic Area Office for the Eastern Area at Terrington House, 13-15 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 1NP. Tel 01223 358922.
- f) When using a coach, ensure that the company has full insurance cover. Check on the limit of passenger numbers and do not exceed this figure.
- g) Young people must be required to wear seat-belts at all times when travelling by car, minibus or coach and should remain seated. Until children reach either their 12th birthday or 135 cm in height, they must travel on a correctly fitted booster seat in the rear of the car. Rear-facing baby seats must not be used in a seat protected by a front air-bag, unless the air-bag has been deactivated manually or automatically. For forward-facing travel, the guidance given in the individual car's manual should always be followed, as this may vary from car to car.
- h) On every outing, each adult should be allocated a small group of young people for whom they have responsibility and should be given a written list to minimise the risk of anyone going astray. For the same reason, if travelling in several vehicles, it is good practice to insist that the same group of young people should travel with the same adult on both the outgoing and return journeys.
- i) It is the responsibility of the Principal Leader to ensure that anyone assisting with transport is made aware of these rules.

5.6 Good Practice – Sharing Information

- a) All young people should be registered and parents/carers asked for details of full name, date of birth, address and contact telephone number(s), as well as consent for emergency medical treatment. A standard registration form is used (see Appendices). For certain activities, events and residential holidays, it will be necessary to obtain further consent from parents (see Appendices). There should always be a clear understanding of the type of activities in which the young people will be participating.

- b) Workers should be aware that in some families there are legal constraints on contact with children by absent fathers or mothers.
- c) Parents/carers are expected to notify youth leaders if a different adult is going to be collecting their child at the end of the session. Youth workers should not allow any child to leave the premises with another adult unless a prior arrangement has been made. In the event of a child being removed without prior notification or consent, the registered parent/carer should be contacted immediately. Where this proves impossible, 999 will be called.
- d) Parents/carers should be advised of the church's Safeguarding Policy and should be given the leaders' names and a contact telephone number.

5.7 Good Practice – Looking After Young People Overnight

- a) Workers should not share sleeping accommodation with an individual young person. Males and females should sleep separately.
- b) Before the event, parents/carers should be given written details, including the address and telephone number of the overnight location, a person to contact in case of emergency and brief information about the planned activities. Suggested information to be given to parents is included in the Event and Activity Checklist (see Appendices). The parents should also complete a consent form, stating any special dietary requirements and current medication and giving the name and telephone number of their child's doctor (see Appendices).
- c) Leaders are responsible for checking that all forms have been returned in advance of the event and are taken to the overnight location, along with a mobile phone for use in emergencies. They should check the insurance cover of any building being used for sleeping and make sure that limits on numbers are not exceeded, rendering the insurance invalid. They should also know the location of the nearest accident and emergency hospital and doctor, and should consider informing the doctor, local police and fire brigade of the overnight event.
- d) All reasonable precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of the young people, including checking that fire exits are clear, knowing where fire extinguishers are, knowing where water, gas and electricity can be turned off, checking that there are always two exits from rooms used for sleeping, etc. It is helpful to establish rules and boundaries with the young people very soon after arrival.
- e) Where outdoor and adventurous activities are concerned, leaders must ensure that all supervisors are appropriately qualified. If an activity is being provided by an outside organisation, they should check that this organisation is registered with the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority and has appropriate insurance.

5.8 Good Practice - Abuse of Trust

- a) Relationships between young people and their leaders take many forms, but all of them can be described as "relationships of trust". The leader is someone in whom the young person has placed a degree of trust, perhaps because he or she has an educational role, is a provider of leisure activities or even is a significant adult friend. In every case, however, that relationship is not one of equal partners and there is the potential, for the trust to be abused by the leader, who is in a position of power over the young person.
- b) It is always wrong for a leader to enter into a sexual relationship with a young person, neither is it acceptable for a leader to form a romantic relationship with a young person.

5.9 Good Practice - Health and Safety

- a) Love's Farm Community Church and most of its associated activities meet in Love's Farm House. Love's Farm House Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the premises are maintained in a good condition. It is the responsibility of Love's Farm House to check that the buildings and equipment such as furniture and electrical appliances are safe for both adults and children to use. They also ensure that the access points are safe and well lit. A Health and Safety Policy is in place.
- b) All potentially hazardous tools and cleaning fluids are stored in a locked cupboard.
- c) We have a First Aid Officer, an accident book and a first aid box which is regularly checked and well supplied.
- d) Love's Farm Community Church is responsible for arranging and updating the church's insurance cover.

5.10 Good Practice - Supervision

- a) Supervision and support is not just about seeing what is going on but it can also be about discussing together how work is being done and trying to identify the needs of the young people.
- b) Principal Leaders should watch for any young person receiving exceptional treatment, being highly favoured or treated unduly harshly.
- c) They should meet with workers regularly to review and plan the work. They should ask about working and personal relationships with the young people. They should also take or create opportunities for observing each worker with the young people.
- d) It is very helpful to keep a brief written record of the facts of all meetings.
- e) If Principal Leaders have any doubts about a worker's relationships, they should explore further by talking with him/her, then confidentially with other workers and with the young person or people concerned. The issue should not be dropped until they are sure that there is no possibility of abuse.

5.11 Good Practice - Photos and Videos

- a) Signed consent should be obtained from parents/carers for photos or digital images to be taken at church run activities.
- b) Images of children will not be used on the church website or for other publicity purposes, unless specific permission has been obtained.
- c) If photos or other digital images are to include visiting children for whom written permission does not exist, a verbal consent should be sought by speaking to the parent or carer.
- d) Photos/videos will be taken in public areas and no child will be named, except in the case of historical records.
- e) Workers should not retain images of young people on their mobile phones.

- f) When photos or videos are taken of children, they should be stored securely on computers or as hard copies.
- g) Copies of photographs must not be distributed to other individuals without the permission of a parent/carer. This includes digital images.
- h) When church events are to be recorded or photographed, signs will be displayed saying: *There will be photographs and video recording during the event today. Afterwards DVDs or copies of photographs may be distributed to those taking part. If you do not wish your child to be part of this, please speak to the Responsible Person.*

5.12 Good Practice - Electronic Communication

- a) Electronic communication includes the use of mobile phones, e-mail and social networking sites. They are an easy way to communicate with young people in particular. However, there are dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance.
- b) Parents/carers and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have e-mail addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.
- c) Signed consent should be obtained from parents/carers for communicating in these ways.
- d) Direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided. Any contact with children of primary school age should be via the parents/carers.
- e) Contact with young people by electronic communication should be at sensible times of day and generally for information-giving purposes only.
- f) Instant messaging should not be used.
- g) Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this way of communicating with a worker then significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and a log kept of when they communicated and who was involved. The worker should seek further guidance. This may be from the Principal Leader or the Responsible Person.
- h) Workers should be careful in their communications with young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives.
- i) Clear, unambiguous language should be used, avoiding unnecessary abbreviations.

Social Networking Sites (including Facebook)

- j) If workers use their own personal site they should ensure that all of its content is appropriate for young people to see. They should check their privacy settings are appropriate for young people who may access their profile.
- k) If they feel unable to do this then they should not have young people as Facebook friends on their personal site. Instead they could have a site that is solely used for youth work communications.

- l) Workers should wait for a young person to contact them to be their friend rather than the other way around.
- m) Workers should attempt to communicate with young people through a public domain (e.g. facebook wall). If a young person starts a communication via a private message, copies should be retained and where possible other workers should be copied in.
- n) If a worker feels that a communication is developing into a situation that does not fit within the above guidelines, then it should be stopped as soon as possible and further guidance sought, having informed the young person. This may be from the Principal Leader or Responsible Person.

6. Procedures if Abuse is Disclosed or Discovered

6.1 Types of Abuse

- a) Physical Abuse - where children are physically hurt. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. 90% of children who are abused have visible injuries. Physical abuse should be suspected when the explanation of the injury does not fit the facts or if the child is reluctant to say how the injury happened. However, it is important to remember that children do sometimes hurt themselves accidentally. It is when the same event seems to occur more than once that you should be wary.
- b) Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs or where a child's basic needs (e.g. food, warmth, clothing, medical care, shelter) are not met.
- c) Emotional Abuse - the persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development and behaviour, and where a child suffers as a result of a constant lack of affection, verbal attacks, bullying, racial and other harassment which undermines a child's confidence.
- d) Sexual Abuse - where adults (and sometimes other children) use children to satisfy their sexual desires and where children are exploited by others to meet their own sexual needs. This may be sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation, oral sex and exposure to pornographic material including videos.

6.2 Signs of Abuse

Knowing whether a child is being abused or neglected may be difficult to judge. However, those working with young people should be alert to the potential indicators.

- a) Physical Abuse
 - repeated injuries;
 - unexplained or hidden injuries;
 - lack of medical attention;
 - injuries for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- b) Neglect
 - consistently looking uncared for and unhappy;
 - being withdrawn or aggressive;
 - having lingering injuries or health problems.
- c) Emotional Abuse
 - change in behaviour pattern;
 - reverting to younger behaviour;
 - wetting during the day;
 - nervousness
 - sudden under-achievement;
 - attention-seeking;
 - running away;
 - turning to drink or drugs.
- d) Sexual Abuse
 - pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in work, play and drawings;
 - being sexually provocative with adults;
 - disturbed sleep;

- nightmares;
- bed-wetting;
- secretive relationships with adults or children;
- tummy pains with no apparent cause;
- lack of confidence and self-esteem.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is also important to remember that there might be other reasons why most of the above are occurring. It is also important to recognise that young people can be subject to abuse in any and every setting where they have contact with adults.

6.3 What Should be Done if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

a) Individuals should:

- not take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place;
- not act alone;
- not take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns they may have;
- not start to investigate – but in listening to the child/vulnerable adult ask open ended questions to establish the details of the account being shared e.g. – where were you – who else was there – what happened next – who else have you spoken with?
- do not promise confidentiality – explain that you will need to let someone else know so that everyone can get the right help.

b) Individuals must:

- discuss concerns without delay with the Responsible Person. In the first instance, it will usually be appropriate to inform their Principal Leader. One of them should then consult with the Responsible Person, who will take the appropriate action. Information about abuse may need to be passed to the relevant agencies. Remember that any information given must be regarded as confidential. It must not be discussed in front of young people or parents collecting their children. The nature and severity of concerns that a young person or an adult may share will vary considerably. The response expressed by a young person or worker in the church will be determined by the seriousness of what has been shared.

c) Recording Concerns and Disclosures of Abuse

When a young person tells you about the abuse, or an incident takes place that gives rise to concern, a written record should be made and forwarded to the Responsible Person immediately. The record should:

- be legible;
- state the facts accurately;
- be made as soon as possible after the disclosure/incident.

Written record should include:

- the young person's name, address and date of birth;
- the nature of the concern/allegation/disclosure;
- a description of any visible bruising or other injuries;
- an exact record of what the young person has said, **using his or her own words**. A young person's behaviour and demeanour might also give some indication of what he or she means to say, and these should also be noted.
- what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported;

- any action taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. who was spoken to and resulting action, including any contact with parents or the Responsible Person within the church).

Records should be:

- signed and dated;
- kept secure and made available only to the Responsible Person, as well as representatives of professional agencies as required by them.

6.4 The Role of the Responsible Person if Abuse is Disclosed or Discovered

When there is an incident, it is the role of the Responsible Person to consider how best to respond to the reported concerns. He or she should be aware of limitations in assessing the seriousness of the concern and be ready to consult with people who have greater experience and expertise.

The Responsible Person will need to make decisions about the following:

a) Do I Consult with Someone Outside the Church?

- Unless the Responsible Person is confident that other advice need not be sought in any given instance, the presumption should be to consult.
- At this stage, care should be given not to identify the young person or others involved.
- A Responsible Person who has professional expertise in child protection will be more competent to judge the seriousness of concerns and to act accordingly.
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Officer should be contacted if you are in any doubt as to the best course of action.

b) Do I Inform the Parents/Carers?

- In situations where abuse from outside the immediate family is suspected, all agencies and organisations working with young people are encouraged to inform parents/carers of actions that are taken or concerns that are raised.
- The Responsible Person should share with the parents/carers if it is his/her intention to consult with or refer to Social Services, unless this puts the young person at further risk. The advice of Social Services should be sought on how best to proceed.
- When it is believed that a parent/carer may be physically or sexually abusing a young person, a referral should always be made to Social Services and the Responsible Person should not inform the parents/carers that the referral has been made.
- After a referral has been made to Social Services, the Responsible Person will be advised about what action to take to respond to the concerns.
- When the cause for concern has been dealt with, an Incident Report Form (see Appendices) should be completed for the purpose of keeping records.

6.5 How to Care for the People Involved

Once concerns, suspicions or disclosures of abuse have been addressed appropriately, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected.

6.6 How to Care for an Offender in the Church

Those with convictions for harming children or young people should be welcomed into the church. However, they should not be involved with the youth work or have direct contact with them for any reason.

An open discussion must be held with the person concerned in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract should be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour and the person should be asked to sign this (advice will be sought from Ely Diocese). Consideration should be given as to who is present at such a meeting. It is likely to include a small number from the following: Minister, Responsible Person, an independent person. There may also be someone not included in this list who could lead the meeting and keep everyone in focus.

7. Disclosure and Barring Service

7.1 DBS Checks for Those in Regulated Activity

All paid workers and volunteers who work with children in regulated activity will be required to:-

- a) complete and sign a self-declaration form;
- b) apply for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure (this will be obtained through/via the Diocese of Ely);
- c) provide names of referees as requested.

7.2 Handling of DBS Certificate Information

- a) Secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates and certificate information where applicable.
- b) General Principles

As an organisation uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to help assess the suitability of applicants for positions of trust, the Diocese of Ely complies fully with the Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificates and certificate information. It also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of certificate information and has a written policy on these matters, which is available to those who wish to see it on request.

- c) Storage and Access

Certificate information should be kept securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

- d) Handling

In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, certificate information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. We maintain a record of all those to whom certificates or certificate information has been revealed and it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

- e) Usage

Certificate information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

- f) Retention

Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, we do not keep certificate information for any longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to 6 months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in very exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep

certificate information for longer than 6 months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the Data Protection and Human Rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

g) Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that any DBS certificate information is immediately destroyed by secure means, i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. While awaiting destruction, certificate information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not keep any photocopy or other image of the certificate or any copy or representation of the contents of a certificate. However, notwithstanding the above, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a certificate, the name of the subject, the type of certificate requested, the position for which the certificate was requested, the unique reference number of the certificate and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

h) Acting as an Umbrella Body

Before acting as an Umbrella Body (an Umbrella Body being a Registered Body which countersigns applications and receives certificate information on behalf of other employers or recruiting organisations), we will take all reasonable steps to satisfy ourselves that they will handle, use, store, retain and dispose of certificate information in full compliance with the Code of Practice and in full accordance with this policy. We will also ensure that any body or individual, at whose request applications for DBS certificates are countersigned, has such a written policy and, if necessary, will provide a model policy for that body or individual to use or adapt for this purpose.