



# Keeping Our Church Family Safe



British Union Conference

## **Child and Adult Protection Policy and Procedures**

# KEEPING OUR CHURCH FAMILY SAFE

## (Safeguarding Policy)

### FOREWORD

Promoting the well-being of those created in the image of God is integral to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As a church body we care for and strengthen each other physically and emotionally as well as spiritually. *Keeping Our Church Family Safe* calls for us to do no more than purposefully reflect our God-given commission in the principles of how we behave towards one another.

This policy is accompanied by its related procedures which are country specific. Our union of churches covers England, Ireland (Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland), Scotland and Wales. Each nation has its own legislation, statutory guidance and processes for responding to concerns regarding the abuse and protection of children and adults. The policy and the procedures for your country should always be read together. They are provided to guide and support you in fulfilling our shared safeguarding responsibility.

The real activity to safeguard our children and adults at risk comes through your purposeful attitudes and actions in your daily Christian walk. I sincerely trust that we will work together under God's guidance in keeping our church family safe.



**Ian Sweeney**

BUC President

### INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church places great importance upon family life. In line with our world church position statement<sup>1</sup> we affirm the dignity and worth of each human being and decry all forms of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and family violence. The church recognises the global extent of this problem and the serious, long-term effects upon the lives of all involved. We therefore believe that Seventh-day Adventists must respond to abuse and family violence within both the church and the community. We believe that to remain indifferent and unresponsive is to condone, perpetuate and potentially extend such behaviour.

The law and guidance relating to the protection of children and adults differs in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Each must be used accordingly to guide all our safeguarding and child protection activities. Details of these are located within the separate country procedures that accompany this document. The Church makes a commitment to respond to concerns without delay and in cooperation with statutory agencies.

Churches, other places of worship and faith-based organisations provide a wide range of activities for children and have an important role in safeguarding children and supporting families. Like other organisations who work with children they need to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children<sup>2</sup>.

Keeping Our Church Family Safe (KCFS) sets out the church's guidelines relating to safeguarding our church family. It also provides the procedures to be followed in order to reduce, to the minimum, the risk of abuse to children and adults we have contact with through our paid and voluntary activities.

***Please remember:***

*If you have concerns, talk to your responsible person or Designated Safeguarding Person.*

*The Designated person and the pastor will evaluate all concerns and refer these on where needed.*

**NB:** The term safeguarding is used in England, but in Scotland and Northern Ireland this is referred to as child protection or adult protection. Hence, in these documents the term safeguarding should be understood to refer to both.

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<sup>1</sup>General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists position statement on abuse and family violence (1995)

<sup>2</sup> *Working together to safeguard children – a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, HM Government 2015.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/419595/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)