

SAFEGUARDING

Protecting those in our care



Safeguarding throughout the
church family

Introduction



At Parklands Church, we endeavour to provide a safe and caring environment for our whole community. Safeguarding means enabling people to live their lives free from harm, abuse and neglect, and to have their health, well-being and human rights protected. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Our world is not always a safe place and threats may not always be obvious. We need to follow the correct procedures in order to protect children and vulnerable adults attending Parklands.

This resource is for everyone who attends Parklands Church; whether you are a parent or carer, you serve on a team, a member of the congregation or you are a staff member. Whatever our circumstances, it is essential that we are diligent in our steps to keep all those in our midst safe from harm in order to enable our church community to flourish.

What is Safeguarding?



Safeguarding means enabling people to live their lives free from harm, abuse and neglect, and to have their health, well-being and human rights protected. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and for those who have responsibility for the well-being of others, it is important they are aware of how to recognise abuse and when to report it.

As a church, we have a Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Handbook, and we have a Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Handbook. These policies are reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team here at Parklands Church. The policies are available on our website and there are paper copies in the church office.

At Parklands Church, we recognise our duty to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm. However we also recognise our responsibility to be willing and able to extend support to those who may have previously harmed children and vulnerable adults, but who are on the path to recovery and seeking to grow their faith in Jesus. This responsibility must be fulfilled with a balanced approach, careful consideration, sound judgment, and diligence, whilst ensuring the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults is our priority.

How does this impact me?



No matter where you live or how you might perceive the safety of the church, the reality is that we live in a broken world with broken people. The wisdom of the Bible tells us that wolves will wear sheep clothing – so we, as parents, carers, pastors or church members, cannot make assumptions simply based on appearances or stereotypes, and to realise how little we know about other people's histories, habits or mistakes.

We want to encourage you to be wise. There are always considerable pastoral challenges, including situations where certain individuals should not have one-on-one contact with children or vulnerable adults. We do not want to unnecessarily worry you or draw conclusions that do not need to be drawn. We want to ensure we are all informed, safe and sensible regarding the decisions we make with those in our care.

Grooming

The grooming of children and vulnerable adults in our society is an unpleasant reality, but it is a reality that we cannot ignore. Whilst the risks are low and we should not be unnecessarily alarmed, we must equally be sensible about the risks. We cannot be complacent, and as a church, we want to play our part in helping parents and carers remain appropriately and proportionately diligent.

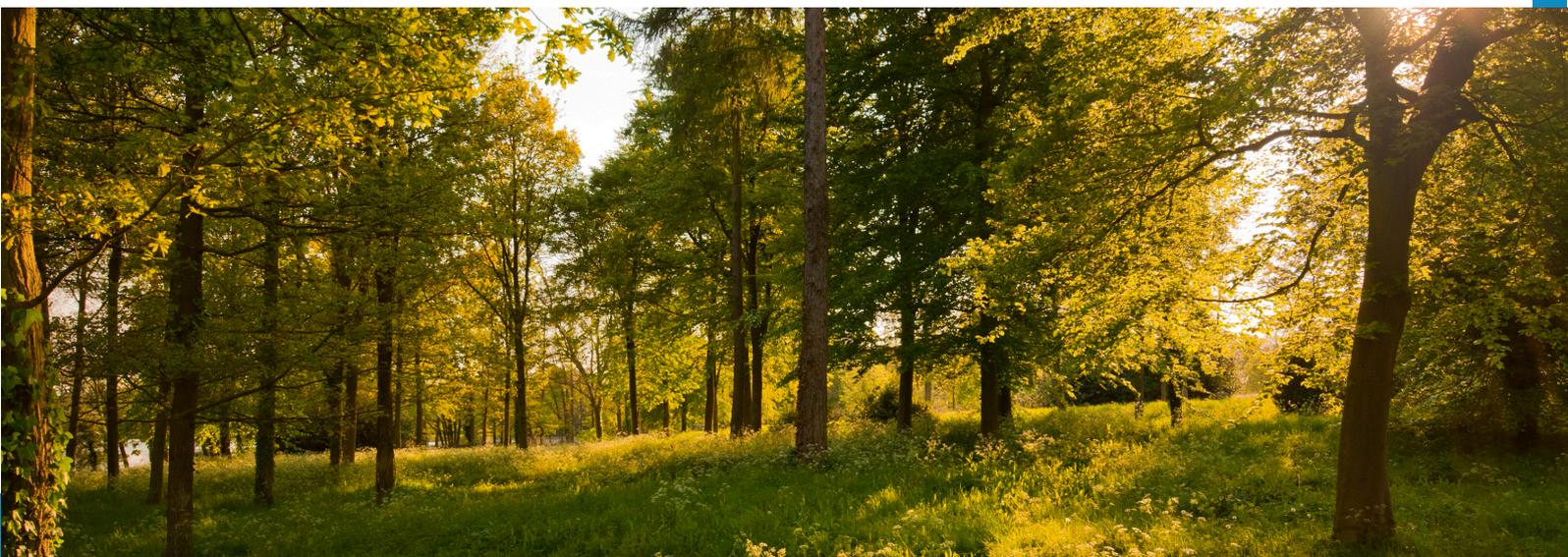
Therefore, it is also important that we are all familiar with what grooming means, how it can happen and how we can protect our children and vulnerable adults and how we can teach them about the dangers of grooming.

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child or a vulnerable adult to gain their trust for the purposes of harm.

Grooming can be done over years or in days. It can be online or face-to-face. It can be by someone (male or female, young or old) you know or trust, even a member of the family, or a stranger. It is not easy to identify someone being groomed or the groomer. It is not uncommon for a groomer to build trust with the family or loved ones of those they are targeting.

They can make use of positions of trust, reputation, reliance, or dependence to win favour. Many children and vulnerable adults don't understand that they have been groomed or that what is or has happened is abuse.

We realise this is very upsetting, but just by the adoption of consistent and sensible steps or good practice, we can reduce the risks considerably to those in our care.



What are the signs of grooming?

The signs of grooming are not always obvious and certainly not always the same.

Groomers will often go to great lengths to avoid being identified. Some indicators that those in your care may be at risk include:

- Secretive or concealed activity (online or offline)
- Strong personal or close relationships with those older than themselves
- Unhealthy emotional connections to others older than themselves
- Choosing unusual places to meet friends or socialise
- Unexplained possessions such as money, clothes or mobile phones
- Easy access to drugs and alcohol
- Self-harming or thoughts about suicide
- Unexplained changes in behaviour, mood, or personality
- Sudden unexpected changes e.g. bed wetting, eating habits
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge for their age or intelligence.

Please remember, these indicators may mean that an individual **MAY** be at **RISK** of being groomed, rather than they are. Some of these indicators are just normal behaviours in adolescence.





Further information

As a church, we take every possible step to create a safe environment for everyone at Parklands Church by implementing the following measures :

- We ensure the well-being and safety of others is of paramount importance.
- We routinely review and update our policies and create useful resources.
- We follow current legislation on safe recruitment for all our staff and volunteers.
- We provide Safeguarding Training and have an experienced Safeguarding team.
- We encourage honesty and transparency.
- We use external agencies and organisations to support our safeguarding.

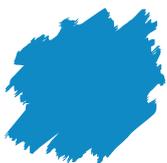
If you have a safeguarding concern, or you wish to have further advice on a subject that may be concerning you, then please scan the QR code to visit our website (www.parklandschurch.org.uk/safeguarding).



OUR TEAM



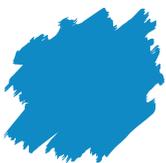
OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM



Mike Adams

Senior Leader

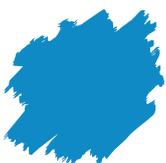
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