



Gateway Theology School

Safeguarding Policy

Gateway Theology School (GTS) seeks to provide a safe environment for all, where people can work together confidently within a learning community as well as engage in their own personal development. We do and will take every reasonable precaution to minimise risk. GTS is committed to ensuring that everyone, and in particular those who may be considered vulnerable, are kept safe from harm while they are involved with GTS in any way.

GTS employees and volunteers working with the public have a personal responsibility for safeguarding the welfare and wellbeing of vulnerable adults by protecting them from abuse, discrimination, or avoidable risk. This policy reflects the ideals set out in the Care Act 2014.

Our Commitment to Safeguarding

GTS is committed to ensuring that vulnerable people are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of abuse;

GTS is committed to working with the main statutory agencies – local councils, the police and NHS organisations and other local voluntary organisations to promote safer communities, to prevent harm and abuse and to deal with suspected or actual cases of abuse;

GTS procedures aim to make sure that the safety, needs and interests of adults at risk are always respected and upheld. This includes upholding human rights.

GTS is committed to providing an environment which will:

- prevent abuse, harm or neglect whenever possible
- promote the general welfare, health, wellbeing and development of all and take every reasonable precaution to minimise risk
- protect, maintain and uphold the human rights of vulnerable adults
- eliminate discrimination
- take steps to deal with bullying or exploitation of any kind
- provide support and care for all involved in GTS activities

To meet this commitment GTS will ensure that:

- employees and volunteers are familiar with and have access to the safeguarding policy
- the organisation continues to monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policy and takes any measures required to strengthen and improve existing practice
- effective procedures are in place for responding to complaints, concerns and allegations of suspected or actual abuse
- Every employee and volunteer working with the public is trained in the fundamentals of safeguarding
- DBS checks are carried out for any employee or volunteer working with the public

Safeguarding Children

GTS does not work with anyone under the age of 18 unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, or in the context of an authorised school classroom setting.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

An 'adult at risk' is someone who is 18 years or over who may be in need of community care due to a mental health problem, learning disability, physical disability, age or illness. As a result, they may find it difficult to protect themselves from abuse. GTS will endeavor to make certain that any vulnerable adults have appropriate carers or authorities responsible for their welfare during the duration of GTS course activities.

Reducing Risk

GTS does not engage in one-to-one activities. Courses are taught in a group context, usually in a local church, or online. Where relevant, church leaders are always invited to be present. In the case of on-site or in-person courses, facilitators work closely with designated personnel from the local venue regarding the safe set-up and use of equipment, tables and chairs, heat and lights, kitchen facilities, and any Covid protocols. External communication and social media are limited to general group communications, marketing of courses, and responses to personal inquiries.

Recognising Abuse

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights, often for gratification. Abuse can be self-inflicted or inflicted by another person or persons. In the context of safeguarding it is used to refer to any knowing, intentional or negligent act that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to another. Any form of abuse is usually perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent. However vulnerable people can also be harmed, damaged or distressed by acts of neglect or ignorance. Abusers are usually known to their victims and are trusted by them or dependant on them.

Types of abuse

- cyber and internet abuse
- discriminatory abuse
- domestic abuse
- emotional or psychological abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- financial or material abuse
- neglect or acts of omission
- organisational abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- abusive behaviour, such as bullying, grooming, radicalisation, substance misuse, self-harm, sexual exploitation and modern slavery.

Responding to Concerns

If GTS personnel have any suspicions, concerns or are made aware of possible abuse they will in the first case notify the authorities responsible for the safeguarding of that particular group, normally the church leader. Response procedures will be followed as outlined below. If information is required by an outside agency (eg. social services or police), relevant information will be shared on the basis that the safety, protection and wellbeing of a child or vulnerable adult is paramount and will override the normal rules of confidentiality.

If one becomes aware of possible abuse, the following procedures apply:

- Remain calm, approachable and receptive
- Listen carefully without interrupting
- Make it clear that you are taking what is being said seriously
- Acknowledge you understand how difficult this may be
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Let them know that you will do everything you can to help them
- Record carefully using the words of the child or vulnerable adult and sign, date and time your notes
- Record only what has been said, heard, seen and what you have done
- Report the incident to the organisational safeguarding team or representative immediately

If there is an imminent risk of significant harm the police or local social services must be contacted immediately. You must stay with the person until you can hand them over to the appropriate responsible authority.

Reporting abuse to local authorities

All concerns of abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult at risk can be reported to:

- The Adult Social Care Help Desk: 01452-426868
or by email: socialcare.eng@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- Out of hours Emergency Duty Team: 01452-614194.
- Police: 101 (non-emergency)
- Emergency services: 999

Referrals will be taken from anyone who has a concern that an adult is at risk. Details from the referrer about the allegation of abuse will be needed so it is helpful to have the facts of the circumstances ready to hand.

The referral may be passed to the local safeguarding adults team or allocated to a worker who will seek to:

- clarify the circumstances of the alleged abuse or neglect
- take any immediate steps to protect the adult at risk, if needed
- decide if the safeguarding adult procedures are the required and appropriate response to the situation
- work in partnership with other agencies, like the police or health services, where necessary.

The allocated worker will call a multi-agency strategy meeting where details of the investigation and responsibilities will be agreed. Protecting adults at risk is the responsibility of all the agencies working together.

Allegations of abuse by volunteers or staff

Volunteers and staff themselves may be the subject of an allegation of abuse. If you are the subject of such an allegation or made aware of an allegation then you must immediately report this to the GTS safeguarding representative. In such a case, GTS will report the allegation to Social Services and ensure that they are given all assistance pursuing any investigation. GTS will be as supportive as possible to the employee or volunteer concerned, who will also be encouraged to seek appropriate external help and support.

Policy Period – Three-year review period. Current version approved by trustees 30/11/21.