Safeguarding Policy

Oxford Schools Chaplaincy

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Introduction

1.1 The work of Oxford Schools Chaplaincy (OSC)

OSC's vision is for a lively, relevant and consistent witness to Christian truth and standards to be established and maintained in all the secondary schools in Oxford.
OSC communicates Christian beliefs to pupils in a relevant and clear way and provides a recognised link between churches and schools. OSC offers schools a wide range of inputs, including lessons and assemblies. Lessons are interactive and may include individual opportunities for personal reflection. OSC workers also come into schools to provide one-to-one and group pastoral and wellbeing support. Outside lesson times they run Christian Unions. Students may be invited to events outside school, such as gatherings of CUs in Oxford or Year 6 transition activities.
The OSC team comprises a small core staff, including the Director and a part-time Administrator. The front-line team of staff and volunteers is supported by the office team. Ultimate overall responsibility for the work of OSC is taken by the Board of Trustees.

1.2 Recognition of responsibility on the part of OSC

OSC takes extremely seriously its responsibility to protect and keep from harm all children and young people with whom it has contact. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

- Working with schools, churches, relevant statutory bodies and voluntary agencies to promote the safety and welfare of children.
- Acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult.
- Ensuring that an appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is in place, together with a Nominated Trustee responsible for safeguarding, and that relevant contact details are available to those who need them.
- Maintaining a safeguarding culture in which concerns are listened to, reported, recorded and followed up appropriately.
- Implementing this policy thoroughly and reviewing it regularly for effective operation.

1.3 Purpose of policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that OSC furthers its responsibilities to safeguard the children and young people with whom it has contact by ensuring that its staff and volunteers are equipped to:

- Recognise when a child is suffering, or may be at risk of, abuse, neglect or other harm.

- Recognise that safeguarding concerns can arise from a child's behaviour, words, presentation, relationships, online activity or circumstances.
- Respond promptly, proportionately and appropriately, without undertaking an investigation themselves.
- Report and record concerns accurately and securely.
- Work effectively with schools and statutory or voluntary safeguarding partners.

A concern might arise from something said by a child or someone else, something observed about a child, a disclosure made directly to an OSC staff member or volunteer, or concern about an adult's behaviour.

1.4 Application of policy

This policy applies to all members of the OSC team who have any contact with children or young people in the context of any activity undertaken by, on behalf of, or in association with OSC. This includes the Director, the Administrator, Volunteers and Trustees where relevant.

All OSC staff and volunteers must be familiar with this policy and the safeguarding arrangements of the school or organisation in which they are working. All staff and volunteers should read Part One of KCSIE 2026. The former condensed Annex A is no longer used in KCSIE 2026.

The DSL is responsible for ensuring induction, annual safeguarding refreshers, communication of policy changes, appropriate training and secure safeguarding records. Trustees must oversee implementation, maintain awareness of the legal and safeguarding framework, ensure the policy reflects current OSCP and KCSIE expectations, and arrange regular review.

Concerns must be reported internally to the DSL. If the DSL cannot be contacted, the concern should be escalated to the Nominated Trustee. Where a child is in immediate danger or a referral cannot safely wait, staff and volunteers must contact the appropriate emergency/statutory service directly and then inform the DSL as soon as possible.

2 Key contacts in OSC

Role	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Hemara Earl 07716 897382 Hemara.earl@oxfordschoolschaplaincy.org
Trustee responsible for Safeguarding	Moira Dorey 01865 311511 / 07951 381394 Moira.dorey@oxfordschoolschaplaincy.org

Each school will have its own safeguarding policy and DSL. School-specific safeguarding arrangements must be followed when OSC is working in that school.

3 Recognising abuse, neglect and safeguarding concerns

A child is anyone under the age of 18. Abuse can occur in the home, school, community, online or any other setting. The perpetrator may be an adult or another child. Harm may arise through acts or failures to act. Indicators do not necessarily prove abuse, but they should prompt appropriate curiosity and action. Staff and volunteers should not wait for certainty before reporting a safeguarding concern.

3.1 Types of abuse and wider safeguarding concerns

- Physical abuse: unexplained or implausibly explained injuries, fear of physical contact, aggression or other changes in presentation.
- Emotional abuse: persistent humiliation or criticism, fearfulness, withdrawal, extreme passivity/aggression, low self-worth or other significant behavioural change.
- Sexual abuse: sexualised behaviour or knowledge inappropriate to age, changes in behaviour, withdrawal, distress, unexplained physical symptoms, or concerns about sexual exploitation.
- Neglect: persistent hunger or tiredness, poor hygiene or clothing, untreated medical needs, lack of appropriate care or supervision, or other unmet basic needs.
- Domestic abuse and teenage relationship abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, stalking, coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse.
- Child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation, including county lines, organised networks, trafficking, modern slavery and financial exploitation.
- Child-on-child abuse (including harassment and violence), including bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, misogyny/misandry and image-based abuse.

- Sharing of nude or semi-nude images: this may involve consensual or non-consensual sharing and may include digitally altered or wholly AI-generated images, including deepfakes/deep nudes.
- Mental health and serious violence concerns where safeguarding risks are present.
- Discrimination, racism, derogatory behaviour and physical violence or conflict where these create or contribute to safeguarding risk.
- Online safety concerns, including content, contact, conduct and commerce risks.
- Spiritual abuse: misuse of religious or spiritual belief, practice or authority to manipulate, control, shame, coerce or harm a child.
- Safeguarding concerns connected with SEND, disability, medical needs, being a young carer, attendance/missing education, or other circumstances that may increase vulnerability.
- Staff should be alert to changes in behaviour, mood, attendance, relationships, online activity or presentation and should exercise professional curiosity where something does not appear right.

3.2 Generative AI and online safeguarding

- OSC staff and volunteers must not upload identifiable safeguarding information, confidential pupil information, photographs or case details to public generative-AI services.
- AI must not be used to create, alter or distribute images of children in ways that could cause harm or breach school/OSC policies.
- Concerns about AI-generated sexual images, deepfakes, grooming, harassment or other online harm must be reported through the same safeguarding routes as other concerns.
- When working in schools, OSC staff and volunteers must follow the school's acceptable-use, mobile-phone, filtering and monitoring arrangements.

4 Procedure when concerns arise in a class or school activity

When an OSC staff member or volunteer is teaching or helping in a class or activity where school staff are present, the school's safeguarding arrangements should normally be the first reporting route.

- Raise the concern promptly with the member of school staff present, where safe and appropriate.
- If the school staff member confirms that the concern is known and being dealt with, inform the OSC DSL and record the concern. The OSC DSL will liaise with the school as appropriate.

- If the concern is new, not being acted on, or the response is unclear, contact the school DSL/deputy promptly and inform the OSC DSL.
- If there is immediate danger or a need for urgent statutory intervention, contact the police/MASH/appropriate emergency service directly rather than waiting.
- Make a factual record as soon as possible, including observations and the child's words where relevant. Do not investigate.
- Pass the record securely to the OSC DSL for secure storage and any necessary onward action.

5 Procedure when concerns arise in school outside a class

If an OSC staff member or volunteer is undertaking relational work, mentoring, pastoral or other informal activity in school and recognises signs of abuse or receives a disclosure, the concern should be reported promptly to the school DSL/deputy and to the OSC DSL. The member of staff should not investigate further. A factual Incident Record Form should be completed and passed securely to the OSC DSL.

6 Procedure when concerns arise outside school

The correct response depends on who is responsible for the activity and the role in which the OSC worker is acting.

- If the event is run by another organisation and the OSC worker is acting solely on behalf of that organisation, follow that organisation's safeguarding procedure and ensure any OSC internal reporting requirement is also met where relevant.
- If the event is run by another organisation but the OSC worker is present on behalf of OSC, report promptly to the organisation's named safeguarding/responsible person and to the OSC DSL. The DSL should liaise with the organisation and consider whether statutory action is required.
- If OSC has overall responsibility for the event, report the concern immediately to the OSC DSL. If the DSL is unavailable, report it to the Nominated Trustee. The DSL/Nominated Trustee will determine the appropriate action.
- For one-to-one meetings outside school, safeguarding and lone-working precautions must be followed. Another OSC colleague should know about the meeting, the location and expected duration. Public or otherwise appropriate settings should be used wherever possible.
- Transport of children must be avoided unless necessary, appropriately risk assessed and covered by insurance and safeguarding arrangements. Parents/carers and relevant colleagues should be informed as appropriate.

If a child is suffering or may be at risk of significant harm, the DSL must take immediate action to seek advice or make a referral to the appropriate agency. The Nominated Trustee should be informed as appropriate.

7 When a child confides

7.1 Opening a conversation

- Remain calm, approachable and open.
- Listen and allow the child to speak.
- Use open prompts such as Tell me, Explain and Describe rather than leading questions.
- Do not investigate, interrogate or seek to establish proof.

- Explain, when appropriate, that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed because information may need to be shared to keep the child safe.

7.2 Conducting the conversation

- Take what the child says seriously.
- Do not promise secrecy.
- Do not show shock, disgust or disbelief.
- Do not criticise or confront an alleged perpetrator.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Record the child's words as accurately as possible and report without delay.

7.3 Following up

The OSC staff member or volunteer must report and record the concern promptly. They must not investigate further. The DSL decides, in consultation with the school and/or statutory agencies as appropriate, what action is required.

8 Safer staffing

Children are safeguarded through appropriate recruitment, induction, supervision, training and management of staff and volunteers.

- Recruitment procedures must be followed for all paid staff and volunteers.
- OSC will obtain DBS checks at the level appropriate to the role and legal eligibility. Where a role is regulated activity, the relevant barred-list information and other required checks will be obtained in accordance with current DBS requirements.
- No person should undertake regulated activity until the required pre-appointment checks have been completed or an explicitly permitted exception applies.
- Volunteers undertaking regulated activity are subject to the applicable DBS and referral requirements.

- New staff and volunteers receive safeguarding induction and this policy.
- Staff and volunteers should be accompanied or appropriately supported when first undertaking work with children.
- Safeguarding knowledge is refreshed at least annually, with additional updates when guidance or local procedures change.
- Safeguarding training for the DSL is maintained in line with current KCSIE expectations.

9 Safeguarding the OSC staff member or volunteer's own position

OSC staff and volunteers must take care not to place themselves in situations where their actions could be misunderstood or where safeguarding risks are increased.

- Keep professional boundaries in face-to-face and online communication.
- Use professional OSC/school communication routes rather than private messaging wherever possible.
- Hold one-to-one conversations where others can see or hear that the interaction is taking place, while preserving appropriate privacy.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact.
- Follow school rules concerning mobile phones, photography, recording and social media.
- Do not create or retain unnecessary personal records or images of children.
- Where an unusual or unavoidable one-to-one meeting occurs, inform the DSL/appropriate colleague and record the arrangement.

10 Managing allegations and concerns about OSC staff or volunteers

An allegation or concern may relate to an OSC staff member or volunteer who has harmed or may have harmed a child, may have committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, may pose a risk of harm, or whose behaviour may indicate that they are unsuitable to work with children. Concerns about behaviour that do not meet this threshold may still require action as a low-level concern.

- The person receiving the allegation must take it seriously, avoid investigating and report it immediately to the DSL and, where appropriate, the Nominated Trustee.
- The initial record should use the informant's own words as far as possible and include what is alleged, dates/times/places and who was present.
- The DSL/case manager should contact the Oxfordshire LADO without delay where the allegation meets the relevant threshold, or seek advice where uncertain.
- OSC must not conduct its own detailed investigation before LADO/police/statutory advice where this could prejudice a safeguarding or criminal investigation.

- Suspension is not automatic. The case manager should consider suspension alongside reasonable alternatives and undertake a case-by-case risk assessment with LADO advice.
- The welfare of the child and the welfare of the adult who is the subject of the allegation should both be considered, while protecting confidentiality.
- If the concern relates to the DSL, the concern must be taken directly to the Nominated Trustee and/or LADO as appropriate.
- If the concern is about OSC's failure as an organisation to safeguard children, a staff member or volunteer may refer the matter directly to the LADO.

Current Oxfordshire LADO: 01865 810603;
lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

11 Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern about an adult's behaviour towards a child that does not meet the harm threshold but may indicate a breach of professional boundaries or expected standards. Low-level concerns should be reported to the DSL, recorded factually and reviewed for patterns. Repeated or accumulating concerns may require escalation to formal safeguarding or disciplinary processes.

12 Liaison with schools

The OSC DSL should maintain effective communication with the DSLs of schools where OSC works, with particular attention to schools where OSC provides mentoring, pastoral support or courses.

- OSC staff and volunteers must comply with the school's safeguarding policy and local reporting procedures while on school premises.
- OSC should provide schools with appropriate information about staff/volunteers who are likely to work in school and cooperate with school safeguarding requirements.
- Where there is safeguarding information relevant to a person being proposed for work in school, OSC should share appropriate information with the school in a lawful, necessary and proportionate way, without unnecessary disclosure of confidential detail.
- Schools should be able to raise concerns about OSC staff or volunteers directly with the OSC DSL.
- Any safeguarding concern involving a child remains a safeguarding concern even where another organisation is also involved; OSC must ensure appropriate follow-up rather than assuming another organisation will deal with it.


OSC

13 Working with other agencies and information sharing

OSC will work with organisations that demonstrate appropriate safeguarding standards. Partner organisations should have suitable safeguarding policies, reporting routes and safer recruitment arrangements.

Information sharing for safeguarding should be necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure. Data protection law does not prevent safeguarding information being shared where there is a lawful basis and a safeguarding need. OSC will comply with applicable data-protection requirements, including the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and relevant provisions of the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

- Do not delay urgent safeguarding action because consent or paperwork is unavailable where sharing is necessary to protect a child.
- Share only information necessary for the safeguarding purpose.
- Keep safeguarding records factual, clear and secure.
- Distinguish observed facts from professional opinion and clearly record the source of information.
- Record actions, decisions, advice received, referrals and outcomes where known.
- Access to safeguarding records must be restricted to those who need the information.

14 Key service contacts

Service	Current contact
Oxfordshire MASH – immediate child safeguarding concerns	0345 050 7666 (office hours) Emergency Duty Team: 0800 833 408 (out of hours) Emergency: 999 Non-emergency police: 101
Oxfordshire Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS)	0345 241 2705 LCSS@oxfordshire.gov.uk Office hours: Mon-Thu 8.30am-5pm; Fri 8.30am-4pm
Oxfordshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01865 810603 lado.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 800 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285
Thirtyone:eight	0303 003 1111 helpline@thirtyoneeight.org

For immediate safeguarding concerns, use MASH/emergency routes as appropriate. If you are unsure whether a referral is needed, seek advice from the DSL and/or LCSS where appropriate. Current Oxfordshire safeguarding arrangements should always be checked at the point of use.

Appendix 1 – Summary Safeguarding Flowcharts

These flow charts provide a quick reference to the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy. They are intended as an aide memoire only and must be read alongside the full Safeguarding Policy.

Where there is immediate danger or an urgent safeguarding concern requiring emergency or statutory intervention, contact the appropriate emergency or statutory service without delay (including 999 or MASH where appropriate), and then inform the OSC Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.

If the OSC DSL is unavailable, concerns should be reported to the Nominated Trustee.

All safeguarding concerns, decisions and actions must be recorded factually, promptly and securely in accordance with this policy.

Chart 1: In School, During a Class or Activity

Concern or disclosure arises during an OSC class/activity in school

Listen, reassure and do not investigate

▼

Is there immediate danger or an urgent safeguarding risk?

▼

YES:	**NO:**
Contact 999, MASH or the appropriate emergency/statutory service without delay. **Then inform the OSC DSL.**	**Follow the school's safeguarding arrangements.** **Raise concern with school staff/safeguarding lead.**

▼

Inform the OSC DSL of the concern.
Where the concern is new or unclear, contact the school's DSL/deputy promptly and inform the OSC DSL.

▼

The OSC DSL considers whether any further OSC action is required, including liaison with the school and/or statutory agencies where appropriate.

▼

Record the concern and actions taken on the OSC Incident Record Form.

Remember: School procedures remain the primary route for concerns arising within school. OSC's internal reporting and recording requirements must also be followed.

Chart 2: In School Outside a Class/Activity

Concern or disclosure arises in school outside an OSC class/activity

Listen, reassure and do not investigate.

▼

Is there immediate danger or an urgent safeguarding risk?

▼

YES:	**NO:**
Contact 999, MASH or the appropriate emergency/statutory service without delay. **Then inform the OSC DSL.**	**Report the concern to the appropriate school member of staff / school safeguarding lead, following the school's safeguarding procedures.**

▼

Inform the OSC DSL.

▼

The OSC DSL considers whether further OSC action is required and, where appropriate, liaises with the school DSL and/or relevant safeguarding agency.

▼

Record the concern, advice received and action taken on the OSC Incident Record Form.

Remember: Do not investigate the concern yourself. Follow the school's safeguarding arrangements and ensure OSC's internal reporting and recording requirements are met.

Chart 3: Outside School, Another Organisation's Event

Concern or disclosure arises at an event organised by another organisation where the worker is NOT on OSC duty.

Listen, reassure and do not investigate.

▼

Is there immediate danger or an urgent safeguarding risk?

▼

YES:	**NO:**
Contact 999, MASH or the appropriate emergency/statutory service without delay. **Then inform the OSC DSL where appropriate.**	**Follow the safeguarding procedures of the organisation responsible for the event.**

▼

Report the concern to the organisation's named safeguarding/responsible person and follow their instructions.

▼

Ensure any OSC internal reporting requirement is also met where relevant.

▼

Record the concern and action taken where OSC's internal reporting requirements apply.

Remember: Where the OSC worker is acting solely on behalf of another organisation, that organisation's safeguarding arrangements should normally be followed. This does not remove the need to act immediately where there is danger or an urgent safeguarding concern.

Chart 4: Outside School, Another Organisation's Event

(Acting on behalf of OSC)

Concern or disclosure arises at an event organised by another organisation where the worker represents OSC.

Listen, reassure and do not investigate.

▼

Is there immediate danger or an urgent safeguarding risk?

▼

YES:	**NO:**
Contact 999, MASH or the appropriate emergency/statutory service without delay. **Then inform the OSC DSL.**	**Report the concern to the organisation's named safeguarding/responsible person AND the OSC DSL.**

▼

The OSC DSL liaises with the organisation's safeguarding lead/responsible person.

▼

The OSC DSL considers whether further action is required, including referral to or liaison with statutory safeguarding agencies where appropriate.

▼

Follow the agreed safeguarding action.

Complete the OSC Incident Record Form, recording the concern, actions taken, advice received and outcome. Remember: do not investigate the concern yourself. Ensure both the organisation's safeguarding arrangements and OSC's internal reporting requirements are followed.

Chart 5: Outside School where OSC has Overall Responsibility

Concern or disclosure arises during an OSC activity/event for which OSC has full operational responsibility.

Listen, reassure and do not investigate.

▼

Is there immediate danger or an urgent safeguarding risk?

▼

YES:	**NO:**
Contact 999, MASH or the appropriate emergency/statutory service without delay. **Then inform the OSC DSL.**	**Report the concern immediately to the OSC DSL.** **If the OSC DSL is unavailable, report to the Nominated Trustee.**

▼

The OSC DSL / Nominated Trustee considers what action is required. This may include: taking immediate steps to safeguard the child, contacting parents/carers, liaising with school/organisation, contacting MASH/statutory agency, and/or seeking further safeguarding advice.

▼

Implement the agreed safeguarding action.

Complete the OSC Incident Record Form, recording the concern, decisions, advice received, actions taken and outcome. Do not investigate the concern yourself. The OSC DSL is responsible for determining the appropriate safeguarding response.

Chart 6: Safeguarding Concern During an Unavoidable One-to-One Meeting Outside School

A one-to-one situation with a child or young person occurs outside a school setting.

Where possible, avoid being alone with a child or young person.
Move to an open, visible or otherwise appropriate setting.

▼

If a one-to-one situation cannot be avoided:
Ensure another OSC colleague knows who you are with, where you are, and the expected duration of the meeting.

▼

Always maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
Do not arrange or engage in unnecessary private contact with a child or young person.

▼

If you have any safeguarding concern:
Report it to the OSC Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay and record the concern in accordance with the OSC Safeguarding Policy.

Chart 7: Concern About an OSC Staff Member or Volunteer

Concern arises about the behaviour of an OSC staff member or volunteer towards a child.

Is the concern about possible harm, abuse or behaviour that may meet the threshold for referral?

▼

YES / POSSIBLY:
Report immediately to the OSC DSL or Nominated Trustee, as appropriate.

DSL/Trustee considers referral to LADO/statutory agency.

Follow advice and agreed process.

LOW-LEVEL CONCERN:
Report to the OSC DSL.

Record the concern factually and securely.

DSL reviews for patterns or cumulative concerns.

▼

CRITICAL: If the concern relates to the OSC DSL, report it directly to the Nominated Trustee and seek advice from the LADO where appropriate.

Appendix 2: Incident Record Form

This form should be completed by the OSC staff member or volunteer concerned as soon as possible after an incident, disclosure or other concern relating to the safeguarding of a child or young person.

- Any safeguarding concern must be reported without delay to the appropriate school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or OSC Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with OSC's safeguarding procedures. It should be completed electronically and must be kept strictly confidential to those directly involved. Completing this form must not delay reporting or any urgent action needed to protect a child. If a child is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services on 999.
- Record the facts accurately, including the child's own words wherever possible. Distinguish between what you observed, what was reported to you and any actions taken. Do not investigate the concern yourself or ask leading questions.
- It should be filed securely by the Director or the nominated Trustee and other copies destroyed. It should not be necessary to print out hard copies, but any made must be destroyed together with any manuscript notes.

Child / Young Person **Name** **DOB (if known)** **School** **Relevant contact details** **(if known and appropriate)**	
Person Completing the Record **Name** **Role** **Date / Time** **Incident**	
Context (school / class / event / other) **OSC role** **Location** **Date / Activity** **People present**	

Concern / Disclosure **Factual observations and, where possible, the child or young person's actual words**	
Immediate Action Taken **Date / Time** **Safeguarding advice / action**	
School / OSC DSL contacted? (Include name of person contacted Date / Time?) **Advice taken and advice received**	
Referral to MASH, LCSS, police, LADO or another safeguarding agency (if required)? **Include date / time, agency / person contacted and any advice or reference number where applicable**	
Outcome / Follow up **Any further action required?**	
Secure Storage **Date record submitted / stored** **Location / storage method**	