

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Greek Orthodox Community of the Annunciation of the Mother of God - Middlesbrough

The following policy was agreed at the Interim Parish Council meeting held on: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

In accordance with the Safeguarding Policy of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain our church is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture. Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Community will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Community Safeguarding Officer to work with the priest- in-charge and the Committee of the Greek Orthodox Community of the Annunciation of Mother of God in Middlesbrough to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the Community.
- Display in church premises and on the Community website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following guidance from the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, including notifying the hierarchs and all statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Ensure we have a robust commitment to safeguarding in our health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments and respond dynamically, creating and updating these as new activities arise.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.
- Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

This Community appoints:

- **Mrs Eirini Vasilaki** as the Community Safeguarding Officer (07776156734)
- **Mrs Dimitra Papakosta** as the Assistant Community Safeguarding Officer (07870951283)

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Signatures:

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### POINTERS TO REMEMBER WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

These have been written to accompany the Safeguarding Policy of the Archdiocese of Thyateira.<sup>1</sup> All leaders and helpers should be familiar with these documents.

1. Welcome and be friendly towards each child, particularly those who may feel left out. Treat children and young people as individuals, taking into account their needs, gifts and capabilities.
2. Try not to exclude any child from group activities or organise programme activities that undermine someone's ability or confidence.
3. Be careful about physical contact, and do not allow rough, hurtful or sexually provocative games or activities.
4. Be alert to bullying, scapegoating, ridiculing, rejecting and mockery. Do not allow it. Never use abusive language or behaviour yourself.
5. Do not assume that it is right to touch a child.
6. Do not assume that it is wrong to touch a child.
7. Be aware that for some children physical contact can be inappropriately sexualised.
8. Avoid being alone with any child or young person. If, in exceptional circumstances, you are alone with one - or with a group - make sure that you are only seconds and an open door away from another authorised leader or helper.
9. With this in mind, however, make sure that each child or young person can privately voice any worries they may have with someone they trust. Stop and think before you criticise a child's behaviour. If something is wrong with a child's behaviour something may be wrong with the child, or with their circumstances.
10. Be aware. Be alert. Consider what you see, hear and feel. Encourage discussion of what is appropriate behaviour for the group and leaders. Trust your own instincts and seek advice if you are worried about the behaviour of any child or adult in your group.
11. Only breach these guidelines if you are sure that to do so is for the greater good of the child or young person you are with. If possible, discuss it with another leader first.
12. Remember that you are responsible for your actions, and that the welfare of the child is paramount.
13. Know the name and telephone number of people you can contact if you are concerned for the safety of any child or young person you know. If you are unsure about how to behave yourself, talk to someone with more experience.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thyateira.org.uk/archdiocese/communities/deanery/deanery/>

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### **Safeguarding Children: Emergency contact numbers**

If you're worried that a child in your church might be suffering from some kind of ABUSE

- DO NOT try to diagnose, investigate or sort it out yourself
- THINK HARD about what it is about the child's appearance or behaviour that is making you worried or suspicious
- DO NOT promise confidentiality if someone talks to you about what might be abuse
- DECIDE who you should TALK to and TALK TO THEM within 24 hours. This might be another leader or the minister

If the child is in the care of the Church, you can contact:

**Mrs Eirini Vasilaki, 07776156734** vasrena@yahoo.com

**Mrs Dimitra Papakosta, 07870951283**

Safeguarding Adviser to listen to your concerns and advise.

You may think it necessary to contact<sup>2</sup>

**Middlesbrough** 01642 726004 01642 524552

MiddlesbroughMACH@middlesbrough.gov.uk

**Hartlepool** 01429 284284 01642 524552

childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

**Redcar and Cleveland** 01642 130700 01642 524552

RedcarMACH@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

**Stockton on Tees** 01429 284284 01642 524552

childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

- Or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000
- In cases where the child is clearly in immediate danger you should contact the police by ringing 999.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/children-families-and-safeguarding/abuse-and-safeguarding-children/child-safeguarding-concern/>