

Protection Policy for Children & Vulnerable Adults 2025

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

POLICY

Lee Abbey Devon recognises that it has a responsibility to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. Lee Abbey Devon takes seriously its duty to protect and safeguard their welfare whilst entrusted to the care of Lee Abbey, Devon.

Lee Abbey is committed to:

- Listening to and relating effectively with vulnerable groups whilst they are part of Lee Abbey activities.
- Providing a system for dealing with concerns related to the safety and wellbeing of children and adults
- encouraging and supporting parent / carers
- ensuring that children's/youth team members, community and pastoral workers are given ongoing support and training.

AREAS OF POLICY

Lee Abbey recognises that many children and adults are vulnerable within society and may have issues to do with wellbeing, economic and social pressures and in addition some children may experience physical, emotional, spiritual and sexual abuse within their family and community context. Accordingly, Lee Abbey, Devon Trustees, volunteers and employees have adopted the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults policy contained within this document (hereafter "the policy"). The policy sets out guidelines relating to the following areas:

- responding to all allegations of abuse or concerns raised, including those made against leaders or members of the Lee Abbey Community.
- helping and supporting victims of abuse.
- appointing children's / youth / Pastoral Community workers
- supervision of activities and practice issues

Lee Abbey recognises the need to build constructive links with other agencies involved in childcare:

Exeter Diocesan Safeguarding Team
ThirtyOneEight (previously called CCPAS)
NSPCC

1. RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE

For possible signs and symptoms see 'guidance notes' (**Appendix 1**).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT THAT ABUSE MAY HAVE OCCURRED

- 1.1 You must report concerns as soon as possible to the **DSL or Safeguarding Team** who are nominated by Lee Abbey to act on their behalf in referring allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities.

Any specific concerns, conversations or observations should be written down immediately after the events or conversation that regard the safeguarding of a child or adult or as soon as possible thereafter and then passed on to the designated safeguarding team. For a list of appointed personnel please refer to Youth Notice Boards and Display boards in the House and Beacon.

- 1.2 Report your discussion as soon as possible to the DSL or Safeguarding team. If the DSL is implicated report to the Warden. If any of these Safeguarding Leads are implicated, report to the Diocese for advice.

Diocese of Exeter – Safeguarding Team – 01392 294969.

Alternatively contact:

ThirtyOneEight on Tel: 0303 003 1111,

A Christian Organisation with experts who are able to give advice.

Social Services on Tel: 0345 155 1007

- 1.3 Concerns/suspicions will only be discussed with those nominated above, i.e. the designated safeguarding Lead (DSL) , the Safeguarding team and on a strict need to know basis e.g. leadership. The Warden will always be informed of the current situation.

- 1.4 It is of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make direct referrals to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Diocese, although we expect that members of Community will use the policy. Guests will be signposted to the policy through the website or a copy can be obtained from reception. If however a person feels that the DSL or Safeguarding team does not respond appropriately to his/her concerns, then it is open to him/her to contact the relevant organisation directly.

- 1.5 If you have a cause for concern about a child, adult or team member please speak to the DSL or Safeguarding team.

Every adult within Lee Abbey has a responsibility to protect all children and adults.

2. ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY OF NEGLECT

If a child or adult displays any physical abuse or neglect, the DSL or Safeguarding team will:

- 2.1 Contact Safeguarding Team (of the Diocese) in the first instance or ThirtyOneEight for advice if concerned about the vulnerable individual safety. The DSL or Safeguarding team will if necessary speak to the parent/carer.
- 2.2 In certain circumstances only, it may be appropriate to speak to the parent / guardian and encourage them to seek medical help or advice. Alternatively, it may be appropriate to help the parent / carer to seek ThirtyOneEight support.

If they are unwilling and there is a real concern for the child's safety, the DSL or Safeguarding team should contact Social Services directly.

- 2.3 Where the DSL or Safeguarding team are unsure whether or not to refer a case to Social Services, then advice from Diocese will be sought. The Diocese will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
- 2.4 Where EMERGENCY MEDICAL ATTENTION IS REQUIRED, IT WILL BE SOUGHT IMMEDIATELY.

3. ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL or Safeguarding team will:

- 3.1 Contact Safeguarding Team (or the Diocese) in the first instance or ThirtyOneEight for advice if concerned about the vulnerable individual's safety.
- 3.2 In certain circumstances only, it may be appropriate to speak to the parent / carer and encourage them to seek medical help or advice. Alternatively, it may be appropriate to help the parent / carer to seek ThirtyOneEight / Social services support.

If they are unwilling and there is a real concern for the child's safety, the DSL or Safeguarding team should contact Social Services directly.

- 3.3 If the DSL or Safeguarding team are unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from Diocese will be sought and followed. The Diocese will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
- 3.4 Under no circumstances will the DSL or Safeguarding team attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the DSL or Safeguarding team is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to ThirtyOneEight, whose task it is to investigate the matter under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 3.5 Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the DSL or Safeguarding team, the absence of the DSL or Safeguarding team, or the Warden should **NOT** delay referral to ThirtyOneEight.
- 3.6 Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the DSL or Safeguarding team as to the appropriateness of a referral to the ThirtyOneEight, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to ThirtyOneEight, and should do so without hesitation.
- 3.7 Lee Abbey Leadership Team will support the DSL or Safeguarding team in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

4. RESPONDING TO A VULNERABLE INDIVIDUAL

The main points to remember when a child or adult is talking about possible abuse are:

- Do NOT promise confidentiality. Explain that for their safety you may need to tell someone
- Do NOT show shock, disbelief, or panic
- Do NOT push them for information, or ask leading questions
- Do NOT blame them

- DO show compassion and acceptance
- DO explain what you are going to do about what they've told you; who you need to tell and what will happen next etc.,
- DO reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you

Recognize that if a vulnerable individual is under age 18, then it must be reported to the relevant safeguarding authorities. If over 18 the DSL will determine if reporting is appropriate.

WHAT TO DO ONCE A VULNERABLE INDIVIDUAL HAS TALKED TO YOU ABOUT ABUSE

- 4.1 Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what the vulnerable individual said, what you said in reply to the vulnerable individual, when he/she said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity/circumstances). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand written notes, (for an indefinite period) even if these have been typed subsequently. Sign all records.
- 4.2 Report your discussion as soon as possible to the DSL or Safeguarding team. If the DSL is implicated report to the Warden. If any of these Safeguarding Leads are implicated, report to the Diocese for advice. (see contacts at the end of this policy).
- 4.3 You should not discuss your concerns, suspicions or allegations with anyone other than those nominated above.
- 4.4 Once a vulnerable individual has talked about abuse, consideration must be given to whether or not it is safe for a vulnerable individual to return to a potentially abusive situation. In this instance, it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact ThirtyOneEight to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the vulnerable individual so that they do not return to further harm.

5. ENSURING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

All community receive Safeguarding Induction, and a handout will be provided to each person. All community have annual safeguarding training provided by the Diocese. In appointing new Community Youth Workers/Pastoral Team, Lee Abbey will be responsible for the following:

1. All prospective Community Youth and Beacon Workers/Pastoral Team will be required to complete an application form.
2. All prospective Community Youth and Beacon Workers/Pastoral Team will be requested to provide an enhanced DBS check.
3. Personnel will discuss the application and appointment with the prospective worker, and make them aware of the policy.

Youth and Beacon Team

Each new Community Youth Leader will be required to:-

1. Read and understand the Protection Policy for Children and Adults and sign to indicate this.
2. Attend relevant training sessions, and read the information packs given.
3. Abide by the relevant 'Standard Operating Procedure' (SOP) for each activity undertaken in the Youth Team.

Leaders of each activity will be required to:

1. Ensure standard operating procedures (SOPs) are followed.
2. Ensure logbooks and incident forms are used as appropriate.
3. Ensure that the DSL or Safeguarding team are informed of any suspicions of abuse, and that confidentiality is maintained.
4. Encourage teamwork within a supportive environment, where there are opportunities to discuss problems and share concerns.
5. Maintain an accurate list of members, i.e. children/young people who attend the different activity. This should include names, addresses, who to contact in an emergency and any medical conditions.
6. Ensure that for any trips away from Lee Abbey, the parent/guardian of each vulnerable individual has given written consent for their vulnerable individual to participate in that particular trip.

Also we will ensure that during any trip there will be two leaders. The driver / leader will never be left alone with individuals.

House Guests

We notify parents that their children are their responsibility when not in an organised guest session.

6. LOST & MISSING PERSONS

Where individuals are reported lost or missing the procedure should be followed.
(See Appendix 2)

7. DEALING WITH KNOWN OFFENDERS

Lee Abbey in its recruitment and selection process for positions working with children and vulnerable adults is rigorous and incorporates a number of pre-employment checks. This is to ensure we safeguard those with whom we work and only engage those with the right skills, abilities, experience and qualifications required for the particular position.

An enhanced disclosure will be undertaken for positions whose normal duties include regularly interacting with children or vulnerable adults.

Lee Abbey is committed to extending compassion and help as appropriate to offenders. In this situation boundaries would be set and contracts adhered to, to ensure the safety and well being of all. Wherever appropriate and possible, advice will be sought from the Diocese.

8. Contact Numbers:

Lee Abbey Contacts:

DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mark Scyner	01598 754226
Beacon Manager	Rob Cotton	01598 754248
Youth & Children Team Leader	Tanya Crowder	01598 754225
Warden		01598 754200
Diocese of Exeter		01392 272686
Thirty One Eight (Previously CCPAS)		0303 0031111
Police		08452 777444

Help for Children:

Childline	0800 1111
The Children's Legal Centre	0171 3596251
NSPCC Helpline	0800 8005000

Help for Adults:

Family Lives	0808 800 2222
Parents Against Injustice	01279 850545
Family Rights Group Helpline	0808 801 0366

Appendices

1. Guidance notes
2. Lost and Missing persons procedure

Appendix 1: Guidance Notes

Recognising abuse-signs and symptoms

Introduction

Recognising child abuse is not easy, and it is **not** your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. You do, however, have a responsibility to act if you have a concern.

The following information is not designed to turn you into an expert but it will help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

The main forms of abuse are:

Physical abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily life. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of their bodies, like elbows, knees and shins.

Some children, however, will have bruising which can almost only have been caused non-accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury, or when it appears on part of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely e.g. on the cheeks or thighs. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

Bruising may be more or less noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different racial groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure and often children who appear well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:

- A failure to thrive and grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from their parents' care
- Sudden speech disorders
- Developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

Sexual abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers.

Usually in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money

- Not allowed to have friends (especially in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or smelly
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse has been defined as “the subtle but nevertheless extremely damaging use of spiritual authority to persuade a person to act in ways which are damaging to her or to his individual identity and integrity in the name of obedience to a higher purpose.” (J law 2004, The Cost of Certainty, Darton Longman and Todd). Child abuse occurs in all cultures, religions and classes. Within faith communities harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, or obtrusive healing and deliverance ministries, any of each may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in the usual way. Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of children should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of spiritual harm include the denial to children of the right to faith or the opportunity to explore a range of belief systems including growth in the knowledge and love of God.

The above list is not meant to be definitive but as a guide to assist you. It is important to remember that many children and young people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

There may well be other reasons for changes of behaviour, such as a death or the birth of a new baby in the family, relationship problems between their parents/carers etc.

Domestic Abuse

All Forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- Ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- Protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;
- Recognise equality amongst people and within relationships;
- Enable and encourage concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently.

Appendix 2: Lost & Missing Persons Procedure

Lost / Missing Guests Procedure for Lee Abbey, Beacon and Youth Camps

When a guest is reported as lost or missing, the following procedure should be adhered to by Lee Abbey staff.

The person informed of the missing/ lost person must immediately contact the designated people below for guidance.

Designated persons in charge of Search (in order and according to their availability)

Main House Guests – Duty Manager/ Youth Ministries Manager/ Pastoral Director/ Most senior Community (eg warden or Directors)

Beacon Guests – Youth Ministries Manager/ Deputy/ Duty Manager

Camp Guests – Youth Ministries Manager/ Duty Manager/ Camp Leaders in charge

Community (Staff) – Duty manager/ Pastoral Director/ Youth Ministries Manager

Note – *The Duty Manager and Youth Ministries manager will have access to radios for help with searches.*

Beacon Groups

It is hoped that normal levels of supervision would be adequate to maintain accountability of a group and the individuals that make up a party. Where a group comes with a leader, the leader/s are responsible for the whereabouts of the guests under their charge at all times. However, there are times when it can be predicted that there may be some issues to suggest that such control may be difficult under certain circumstances or situations. Lee Abbey are committed to serving as wide a spectrum of individuals as is possible and would only refuse access to a potential guest if it was deemed that by their attendance, they themselves or others were put at too high a risk.

As soon as we are made aware that a person is missing all Beacon activities must stop and all Beacon guests should be guided back to the beacon dining room. 1 Beacon instructor along with 1 group leader will remain with this group for the duration of the search and stay in radio contact with the searching groups. The remainder of the leaders and instructors will pair off, ensuring there is 1 beacon instructor with a radio, first aid kit and whistle in each pairing.

Children, Vulnerable and other Adults

Some guests can suffer from confusion when exploring the estate and believe they are lost, if the guidelines are followed that are given to them during the welcomes notices (ie. maps available from reception) they should quickly be able to re-orientate themselves and find their way to their planned destination. Young children or those suffering from conditions that present confusion, disorientation, panic or other debilitating signs may not so readily find their way, for these reasons the plans set out below under '**search procedure**' must be adhered to as soon as reasonably possible, under the supervision of those listed above. Likewise for any guest of Lee Abbey that is reported missing.

Search Procedure (to be implemented by the Designated leader)

The search pattern and timings should be dependant upon the last known position, direction of travel (if applicable), age and state of mind of the lost individual. So it is important that these details are requested. The guest's accommodation (ie room or tent) should also be checked before sending out pairs.

1. The Designated leader will draw together groups of adults from the staff and guests who know the area well and then ask them to search for the missing person. Radio contact should be maintained with all pairs wherever possible.

2. Searching pairs should look out for signs of the lost person and call the name of the individual in a clear but calm manner.

3. On finding the individual report location to other search groups, do not give out personal or medical information over the radio, but do request medical assistance and coastguard if required.

4. Pairs should search the buildings as well as outside.

Night time or Dark/ foggy conditions

At night the use of the whistle may assist in guiding searching groups to your location. Torches for each person will also be required.

Person reported lost from the south of the road dividing the estate:

Initiate plan as above.

Send pairings immediately to the beach, viewing point of crockpits, the glade and top lodge.

Call emergency services if the individual has not been found after 20 minutes from the first report of missing.

Person reported lost from the north side of the road dividing the estate:

Initiate plan as above.

Send pairings immediately to the Crosses, Lower Jennies, Tower and the Beach

Call emergency services if the individual has not been found after 5 minutes from the first report of missing.