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# International Christian Fellowship of Phnom Penh

## Safeguarding Policy

Updated October 2023

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## Introduction

**The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church.**

Everyone who participates in the life of the International Christian Fellowship (ICF) has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all. This document sets out the safeguarding children, young people, vulnerable adults and adults and is the policy of the International Christian Fellowship of Phnom Penh (ICF).

Safeguarding means the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, work to prevent abuse from occurring, seek to protect those that are at risk of being abused and respond well to those that have been abused. We will take care to identify where a person may present a risk

In the event of any perceived or potential conflict of interest the welfare of any children, young people and vulnerable adult involved will always take precedence over all adults.

## Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all Church Bodies and Church Staff, Elders and members. Full understanding of, and adherence to, this policy should lead to a deepening in the understanding of, and respect for, the rights of children, young people, vulnerable adults and adults as people of faith in the life of the Church.

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## Foundations

In developing and implementing the Safeguarding Policy, the ICF is guided by the following foundations.

- Gospel - The Church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The life of our communities and institutions is integral to how we address this task. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.
  - Human rights and the law - The Church recognises the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
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## Definitions

In an ICF setting the following definitions apply:

- **Child** - means any individual(s) aged 18 years old and below.
  - **Young people/person** – means any individual(s) aged 14 to 18 years old
  - **Vulnerable adult** - as ‘a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired’.
  - **Church Leaders** – anyone appointed/elected by or on behalf of the Church to a post or role, whether they are ordained, paid or unpaid. This includes staff, elders and volunteers in all positions.
  - **ICF Community**- ICFN - The congregation who meet in the north of the city.  
ICFS - The congregation who meet in the south of the city. All small group settings.
  - **Sunday School**: includes all ages from birth to Grade 5 (Primary school).
  - **Youth**: includes all ages from Grade 6 to Grade 12 (Secondary school and High school).
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## Aim of the Policy

To ensure that the International Christian Fellowship provides an environment where: The welfare of the child, young person and vulnerable adult is paramount.

- ICF members and visitors are empowered to make their own choices about their safety
  - commitment to preventing any abuse and providing mechanisms for abuse to be reported
  - any intervention will be proportionate to the given circumstances
  - partnerships within the community are sought to ensure safeguarding and to respond to abuse
  - good active, ongoing risk management
  - regular evaluation to ensure best practice
  - there is accountability and transparency for all parties in each of these areas
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## Identifying and Responding to Abuse

**Abuse** is one person holding and improperly using power over another person, either intentionally or unintentionally. Within the context of ICF, abuse can involve staff members, elders, volunteers, members of the church in all church settings including services, small groups, the wider community, children, or adults.

ICF recognises that addressing abuse is relevant regardless of whether the abuse was a one-time incident or repeated; whether the abuse happened in the past or is on-going.

ICF believes that abuse is never acceptable under any circumstances, and should be challenged, reported, and managed in a way that is appropriate in the given situation. Steps will always be taken to address the abuse in a safe, ethical and informed way.

ICF will always disclose and report abuse when it concerns:

- Harm to another person
- A violation of the laws of Cambodia

ICF recognises that in some situations – excluding those listed above – abuse is not able to be reported to a higher authority, whether due to the type of abuse that occurred, when the abuse occurred, limitations in the coverage of the law of Cambodia, or because the person who was abused does not wish the abuse to be reported. In these situations, ICF will seek to ensure: the safety of all parties; to hear the voices of all parties; to work towards safe, healthy change for all parties, resulting in the restoration of healthy, equitable relationships, as far as is possible. ICF will enlist the help of relevant people with expertise within the community to assist them in this process.

### Types of Abuse

Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Psychological or emotional abuse, Organizational or institutional abuse, Spiritual abuse, Financial or material abuse, Modern slavery, Domestic and family violence, Discrimination, Neglect and self-neglect.

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## Definitions of Abuse

**Physical Abuse** is physical harm to another, which is deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Examples of physical abuse can include:

- Assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, shoving, shaking
- Rough handling
- Scalding and burning
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- Involuntary isolation or confinement
- Misuse of medication
- Forcible feeding or withholding food
- Unauthorized restraint, restricting movement or other physical force that may cause harm
- Threats of physical harm or abandonment

**Emotional or Psychological Abuse** is the persistent or significant emotional or psychological ill-treatment of another person resulting in adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of the person. Examples of emotional and psychological abuse can include:

- Threats and verbal abuse
  - Humiliation
  - Blaming
  - Swearing, shouting, name-calling, demeaning the other person
  - Addressing the other person in a way that diminishes their personhood
  - Controlling and manipulation (including Gaslighting)
  - Pressuring and coercion
  - Intimidating and causing fear
  - Ignoring the person and dismissive behaviours
  - Not giving the person a chance to express their views
  - Withholding love or affection
  - Making someone feel worthless
  - Making someone purposefully uncomfortable
  - Withholding privacy
  - Withholding choice
  - Causing or forcing isolation, or withdrawal from family and friends or support networks
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- Bullying, including cyberbullying
  - Verbal harassment
  - Preventing someone from accessing services, educational and social opportunities
  - Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities
  - Threats of emotional abandonment

**Sexual Abuse** is the sexual exploitation of one person for another person's own sexual gratification, including the involvement in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which the other person does not give consent to; the other person does not understand; to which they are unable to give informed consent; or, that violate normal family roles. Examples of sexual abuse can include:

- Rape or attempted rape
- Sexual assault
- Unwanted kissing
- Unwanted fondling/caressing
- Looking at, sharing or producing sexual images, including or involving children
- Sexual photography
- Any sexual acts to which the adults have not consented, or consent was forced
- Inappropriate or offensive language, including sexual innuendo, sexual harassment, or sexually suggestive language
- Inappropriate or offensive touch and exposure, including masturbation
- Encouraging children or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Sending unwanted sexualised texts or emails and transmitting sexually explicit images through social media
- Grooming (deliberate and premeditated actions to build trust with an individual child / vulnerable adult and surrounding adults with the purpose of gaining access to and control of the person for the purpose of causing harm)

**Organizational or Institutional Abuse** occurs when an organisation, institution, system of power, or any individual within these settings systematically uses the power of the organisation to abuse or mistreat another person. Examples of organizational or institutional abuse can include:

- Authoritarian management
  - Rigid regimes that fail to consider individual needs and circumstances
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- Lack of leadership and supervision
  - Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
  - Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards clients or other staff
  - Forcing viewpoints or belief systems onto clients or other staff
  - Inappropriate use of restraints
  - Unsafe building and/or overcrowded establishment
  - Lack of respect for dignity and privacy of clients or other staff
  - Failure to manage clients or residents without abusive behaviour
  - Not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating where required
  - Not offering a choice or promoting independence
  - Overuse, unsupervised use, withholding use, or encouraging inappropriate use of medication
  - Discouraging or preventing a person's access to further support structures
  - Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
  - Failure to respond to abuse appropriately (i.e. any physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, financial or spiritual abuse carried out by an organisation or individual within the organisation, or if the abuse occurs on the organisation's property)
  - Interference with personal correspondence or communication
  - Failure to respond to complaints
  - Indiscriminate breaches of confidentiality of staff and clients
  - Failure to comply with the labour laws of Cambodia

**Spiritual Abuse** occurs when one person or an organisation uses spiritual or religious beliefs to harm or control another person, particularly in settings where pastoral care is provided. Spiritual abuse can occur deliberately or through a lack of awareness and reflective practice. Examples of spiritual abuse can include:

- Forcing another person to participate in spiritual or religious practices against their will, or against their wishes
  - Refusing to allow another person to participate in spiritual or religious practices that are deemed important or valuable to them
  - Using religious beliefs to control, coerce or manipulate another person
  - Discouraging or preventing people from making informed choices about their spiritual or religious practices
  - Using religious beliefs to justify behaviours that would otherwise be defined as abuse
  - Failure to protect children and other vulnerable people from exposure to religious practices (for example, oppressive teachings, intrusive healings, conversion therapies, or deliverance ministries) which may result in harm
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- Using religious beliefs to encourage other people to stay in abusive situations
  - Using religious beliefs to justify not reporting or appropriately addressing abuse
  - Using religious beliefs to discourage or prevent others from accessing proper support structures

**Financial or Material Abuse** occurs when an individual or organisation uses their power to exploit another person's financial or material possessions or withholds financial or material resources which the person is legally entitled to. Examples of financial or material abuse can include:

- Theft of money or possessions
- Fraud, scamming, identity theft, or forging a person's signature
- Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- Staff taking a loan from a client
- Undue pressure, duress, threat or influence put on the person in connection with financial transactions
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money and/or maximise profit
- Using the therapeutic relationship to solicit money or material goods
- Overcharging for provision of services
- Making unapproved or unnecessary financial transactions
- Doctoring transactions
- Unnecessary or overpriced property repairs; failure to carry out agreed repairs; deliberately poor workmanship

**Neglect and other Acts of Omission** is the persistent and/or significant neglect of a person, or the failure to protect a person from exposure to any kind of harm, which results in impairment of development and/or failure to thrive. Neglect can occur deliberately or through a lack of awareness and reflective practice. Examples of neglect can include:

- Failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care
  - Providing care in a way that is disrespectful
  - Failure to administer medication as prescribed
  - Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
  - Not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs
  - Ignoring or isolating the person
  - Withholding love and affection, where appropriate or usually expected
  - Failure to ensure privacy and dignity
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- Preventing someone from accessing services, stimulation, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends
  - Removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance
  - Neglecting to care for personal hygiene, health or surroundings
  - Failure to access or seek support services to meet health and social care needs
  - Inability or unwillingness to manage one's personal affairs
  - Lack of appropriate supervision
  - Failure to report abuse, or respond to abuse in a safe, ethical way

**Modern Slavery** includes “human trafficking, forced labour, forced domestic servitude, sexual exploitation (such as escort work, prostitution and pornography), debt bondage (being forced to pay off debts that realistically they will never be able to” (The Church of England 2018).

**Domestic or Family Violence** is any abuse that occurs between people who were or are intimate partners, family, or connected by recognised kinship bonds. Any of the abuses defined above (physical, emotional or psychological, sexual, spiritual, financial or material, and neglect) can be classified as domestic or family violence when they occur within the context of these relationships.

**Discrimination** is unfair and unequal treatment, harassment, or deliberate exclusion based on:

- Age
  - Gender or gender identity
  - Sexual orientation, sexuality, or sexual practices
  - Disability
  - Marital or civil partnership status
  - Race or ethnicity
  - Religion
  - Personal beliefs
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## Prevention of Abuse

### Creating safety through culture

- All Church leaders and volunteers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their well-being. Always ensure that their behaviour is responsible towards those they are working with.
- The Church will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication, learning, governance and quality assurance processes.

### Creating safety through ongoing practices

- **Sunday School** - There are at least two adults (may include a parent) in the classroom or youth activity at any one time. A teacher or volunteer may not be alone with an individual child where they cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open. In classes where it is not possible to comply with the two-adult rule, random checks will be made on the class by a designated adult. Where older children are invited to take part in classes with younger children, this serves the purpose of a learning experience, as well as providing help with the younger children. The adult leader will be responsible to mentor older children while continuing to provide overall supervision of the class.
  - **Youth** - In a counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality are important, another adult must know the interview is taking place and with whom. Another adult should be in the immediate vicinity and the young person should know that they are there. In a mentoring/friendship-building situation, whether in a small group or with individual youth, this should always take place in a public environment and the Pastor should always be informed of the time, place, and reason for the meeting.
  - **Adults** – In a counselling type situation, the person whose advice, time, prayer is being sought should ensure that the support session happens in a public space. At the beginning of the session, they should ensure that the person feels safe and comfortable with the setting. If there is a request from the person being counselled/ prayed for, for a more private setting, another adult should be informed that this is taking place. It is in the interest of the person seeking support that the person supporting recognises their own
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limitations and if this turns into ongoing support, they should seek advice from the Pastor or one of the designated persons.

### **Creating safety through recruitment**

The Church will select and vet all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the Church through the following process in recruiting volunteers

- ensure that the volunteer is over the age of 18 (or at the discretion of the council)
- the volunteer has been a Christian for at least a year and able to have a good understanding of the bible and a commitment to Jesus
- be known in the ICF community and been an attendee for 3 months or in the case of short-term teams have had prior screening up to the requirements within this policy
- have a commitment to ICF
- have filled out a registration form
- agree to references being taken up by ICF
- have a police clearance check from their country of origin or agree to one being carried out
- sign an agreement to follow this safeguarding policy

### **Creating safety through Support and Supervision**

- The staff and coordinators will encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care that allows all teachers/volunteers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.
  - The Sunday School Coordinators will facilitate at least regular teacher/volunteer meetings per year. Likewise, the Pastor will facilitate regular team meetings, with the aim of supporting the Sunday School / Youth teams through discussion, problem solving and prayer.
  - Teachers and volunteers are strongly encouraged to speak with the Pastor / Sunday School Coordinators concerning any issues or practical matters where they are experiencing difficulty.
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- If another staff, teacher or volunteer is seen, or it is heard from children, youth or a vulnerable adult that they are acting in ways that may be misconstrued, individuals must be prepared to speak to them and/or the staff or Sunday School Coordinator about these concerns.

### **Creating Safety through dissemination**

ICF recognises that the ICF community is constantly changing and that keeping people informed of the safeguarding policy is a priority.

- ICF commits to reviewing this policy on yearly basis
  - the policy will be posted on ICF website and any changes will be noted there
  - ICF will display and inform that we have and adhere to a safeguarding policy
  - ICF will display the names and contact details of the nominate persons
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## Response to Reports of Abuse

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the Church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with the Safeguarding Policy of the International Christian Fellowship.

### Principles

- all allegations should be taken seriously
- every decision should be guided by the person who experienced being abused
- the person experiencing abuse should not be held responsible for the abuser's actions
- the safety and wellbeing of the person experiencing abuse should be the highest priority

### Procedure

If abuse is reported to you that has occurred within the ICF community, the following steps should be taken:

- **Listen** to what is being reported and do not probe for details or clarification
  - **Reassure** the person that you are taking this seriously and will follow the policy (use a copy if necessary)
  - **Ask their permission** to take the next step and if they want anyone else to be involved in the process
  - **Take note** of the main points and any agreements you made with the person
  - **Inform** the Pastor, Sunday School Coordinators or designated person immediately and set up a meeting to give all the information you have either with the person who has experienced abuse (if they choose) or by yourself
  - **Step out** of the process unless requested by either the designated person or the person reporting the abuse to continue and maintain confidentiality
  - All discussions about the incident will only happen between the designated persons
  - They will meet with the person reporting the abuse and decide if the abuse needs to be reported to any relevant authorities prior to meeting with the person accused of abuse
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- If the incident involves a child or young person the parents will be informed immediately unless this puts the child or young person at further risk
  - The person named as the abuser will be asked to step out of their role at ICF until the investigation is complete
  - a careful record will be kept of the incident, what happened, location what was said including dates and times, this will be held by the pastor or a member of the council if the pastor is involved
  - if the abuse is deemed severe, they will inform the embassies of both parties and seek advice from them
  - if the abuse comes under the law of Cambodia, they will report the offence to the relevant authorities
  - if the abuse is not criminal in nature or it is not appropriate to involve the embassies, the Designated persons will determine the appropriate action required
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## Persons Responsibilities

- **Sunday School Coordinators** responsible to ensure that all teachers, helpers and youth workers are following the safeguarding policy. To ensure that any questionable behaviour not following the spirit of the policy within their section is challenged and either people asked to step out of their volunteer role or support provided to change behaviours.
- **Pastor** responsible for ensuring adherence to the policy throughout the whole church community. To support the Sunday School Coordinators in carrying out their roles. To bring to the attention of the designated persons any concerns or worries regarding the implementation of the policy or specific questionable behaviours noted within the congregation. To facilitate good implementation of the policy, including dissemination and trainings for all church leaders
- **Designated Person and Council member** to be available to deal with any issues brought to their attention. Support the Pastor and Sunday School Coordinators in fulfilling their responsibilities. To foster good relationships within the wider community to ensure that if an incident occurs help and guidance can be easily sought.

### Designated Persons are:

1. Pastor Daniel Newby [pastor.daniel@icfpp.org](mailto:pastor.daniel@icfpp.org)
  2. Crystal Conklin [crystaljoy29@gmail.com](mailto:crystaljoy29@gmail.com)
  3. Sarah Chhin [sycamoretree74@gmail.com](mailto:sycamoretree74@gmail.com)
  4. ICF Council [icf-elders@icfpp.org](mailto:icf-elders@icfpp.org)
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