The Redeemed Christian Church of God,
The Altar of God , Herne Bay

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Section 1

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Status of policy, procedure and guidance

This document sets out the policy, procedures and guidance relating to safeguarding within The Altar of God (AoG), Herne Bay as a part of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). The provisions herein outlined are informed by current legislation and accepted good practice from within RCCG, statutory agencies and other community organisations with safeguarding responsibilities.

Following consultation, the policy and procedures laid down in this document are mandatory upon approval by RCCG Leadership and Board of Trustees to ensure that people in roles of leadership within RCCG AoG, Herne Bay behave in a way that is consistent with safeguarding. Sections that are clearly identified as 'guidance' are regarded as good practice. Therefore it is highly advisable, although not compulsory, to adhere to these guidelines.

1.2 Foundations

In developing and implementing the Safeguarding policy, RCCG AoG, Herne Bay is guided by the following foundations:

- The Word of God
- International and National law

The Church fully supports the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, as protected in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It recognises that safeguarding work is undertaken within a British legislative and associated government guidance framework which sets out a range of safeguarding duties and responsibilities (see Section 1.3 Societal context and legal framework).

1.3 Societal context and legal framework

This section only covers the legal arrangements, requirements and the general principles as applied to England. There has been widespread coverage in the media of the failure of various organisations and individuals to adequately prevent, and protect children from, abuse. In recent years, there has also been a growing understanding of the importance of recognising abuse against adults who are vulnerable, whether inflicted deliberately or as a consequence of neglect.

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Since the start of the millennium, a broad spectrum of legislation, guidance, research and reports from all sectors have led to the development of policy and procedures in the safeguarding arena. Closer working partnerships have been forged through both children and adult safeguarding boards and a growing commitment to all those who work with vulnerable groups is leading to improved working practices.

Relevant reports and legislation in relation to safeguarding practice for adults and children include, but are not limited to, the following:

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	Independent Safeguarding Authority established (later to become Disclosure and Barring Service)
The Data Protection Act 1998	Regulation of the possessing of information relating to individuals, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information
The Human Rights Act 1998	Article 8 Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence Article 9 Freedom of thought, belief and religion Article 10 Freedom of expression
The Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Act to make provision for preventing anti-social behaviour with references to children
Serious Crime Act 2015	Includes offences relating to child cruelty, sexual communication with a child and female genital mutilation (FGM) and coercive or controlling behaviour in an intimate or family relationship
Children Act 1989	Introduced comprehensive changes to legislation in England and Wales
Children Act 2004	Result of Lord Laming's report into the death of Victoria Climbié
Safeguarding children and young people from exploitation 2009	Statutory guidance outlining how organisations and individuals should work together to protect young people from sexual exploitation
Children and Families Act 2014	Practice guidance
What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015	Guidance to help practitioners identify the signs of child abuse and neglect and understand what action to take

Working Together 2015 (updated version of one published in 2010)	Updated guidance for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; names faith organisations as needing to have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	Defined a vulnerable adult ISA established
The Mental Health Act 2007	Amends the Mental Health Act 1983, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

Section 2

2.0 Safeguarding Policy Statement

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry. Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture. This means we will:

- promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- work to prevent abuse from occurring
- seek to protect and respond well to those that have been abused.

We will take care to identify where a person may pose a risk to others, and offer support to them whilst taking steps to mitigate such risks.

RCCG The Altar of God, Herne Bay affirms that safeguarding is a shared responsibility. Everyone associated with the Church who comes into contact with children, young people and adults who are vulnerable has a role to play. This is supported with consistent policies promoting good practice across all departments within the Church.

The Church and its individual members undertake to take all appropriate steps to maintain a safer environment for all. It will practise fully and positively Christ's ministry towards children, young people and adults who are vulnerable and respond sensitively and compassionately to their needs in order to help keep them safe from harm.

2.1 Commitments

Based on the foundations above, RCCG AoG commits to:

2.1.1 Promote a safer environment and culture

Church stewards, leaders and any contract workers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their well-being.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay will create and maintain an environment that:

- is safer for all
- promotes well-being
- prevents abuse
- creates nurturing, caring conditions within the Church for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

It will work to continue to strengthen and review this safe environment. This will be done by training, support, communication, learning and quality assurance processes.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay will challenge any abuse of power within church departments by ensuring that church stewards and any contract workers adhere to safer working good practice and are supported to challenge bullying and abusive behaviour. It will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults with the knowledge that they will be cared for.

2.1.2 Safely recruit, sub-contract and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay will select and scrutinise all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Church, in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. The church will also ensure that all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults have successfully completed the required Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

It will train and equip church stewards and contract workers to have the confidence and skills they need to care for and support children, young people and adults and to recognise and respond to abuse. This will be done by supporting the roll-out of consistent and accessible safeguarding training in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

2.1.3 Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of a departmental leader or minister within the Church

will be responded to respectfully, actively and following the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

All safeguarding work will be recorded in line with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that reach the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities, will be reported via the designated Safeguarding Officer (Church Manager) (Church Manager) and assistant to the appropriate statutory authorities. This will be done irrespective of the status of the person.

All church stewards and contract workers within the Church will cooperate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to ministers, the Church will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal and civil law and the constitutional practice and discipline of RCCG, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

2.1.4 Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay will offer care and support by way of referral to appropriate charities and/or authorities, to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred; in so far as the church is made aware of it.

Those who have suffered abuse within the Church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and believed. They will be offered appropriate pastoral care, counselling and support, according to their expressed and agreed need, as they seek to rebuild their lives.

Where necessary, an appropriate pastoral response to the family and wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice.

2.1.5 Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay in its responsibilities to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse will respect the rights under criminal, civil and standing orders law of an accused church steward, contract worker or minister. A legal presumption of innocence will be maintained during the statutory and church inquiry processes. As the processes develop, additional assessment, therapy and support services may be offered.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay will take responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others if any church steward, contract worker or minister is considered a risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will be done by working to mitigate any identified risks according to our safeguarding contract.

Members of RCCG AoG, Herne Bay who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belong to families, the congregation, possibly church department and/or the wider community. The Church will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families, congregation members, church group members and the wider community affected by the church steward, contract worker or minister's changed situation.

2.1.6 Respond to those that may pose a present risk to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay, based on the message of the gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church who may present a risk.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay will ensure that any risk has been assessed and is being managed in a safeguarding contract in accordance with the Church's safeguarding policy and practice guidance. This will be done in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and standing order law.

2.2 Putting the policy into action

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay has integrated these commitments into its safeguarding policy - See Section 3 for safeguarding policy.

The policy is an active statement underpinning safeguarding work within RCCG AoG, Herne Bay and the drive to improve practice. The Church needs to:

- ensure that all church stewards and contract workers have a copy of the policy
- promote and publicise the policy
- communicate the Church's safeguarding message as reflected in the policy
- develop processes to assess how well the policy is being implemented, lessons that are being learnt and what difference it is making
- undertake and keep records of an annual progress review of the safeguarding policy.

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Section 3

3.0 Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This policy was agreed at a Trustees Policy meeting held on **April 11th 2026**....
between RCCG AoG, Herne Bay's Leadership and Board of Trustees.

3.1 Our Belief on Safeguarding People

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay, in accordance with RCCG and along with the whole Christian community, believes each person has a value and dignity which comes directly from God's creation in God's own image and likeness. As Christians, we see this as fulfilled by God's re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

3.2 Our Commitment to Safeguard

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and affirms that the needs of children or of people when they are vulnerable and at risk are paramount.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay recognises that it has a particular care for all who are vulnerable whether by disabilities or by reduction in capacities or by their situation. It is recognised that this increased vulnerability may be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, but that it does not diminish our humanity and seeks to affirm the gifts and graces of all God's people.

This policy addresses the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It is intended to be a dynamic policy. It is intended to support RCCG AoG, Herne Bay in being a safe supportive and caring community for children, young people, vulnerable adults, for survivors of abuse, for communities and for those affected by abuse.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay fully agrees with the statement reiterated in Creating Safer Space 2007: As the people of RCCG AoG, Herne Bay we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community of all ages.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay recognises the serious issue of the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and recognises that this may take the form of physical, emotional, sexual, financial, spiritual, discriminatory, domestic or institutional abuse or neglect, abuse using social media or human trafficking (slavery). It acknowledges the effects these may have on people and their

development, including spiritual and religious development. It accepts its responsibility for ensuring that all people are safe in its care and that their dignity and right to be heard is maintained. It accepts its responsibility to support, listen to and work for healing with survivors, offenders, communities and those who care about them. It takes seriously the issues of promotion of welfare so that each of us can reach our full potential in God's grace.

RCCG AoG, Herne Bay commits itself to:

1. Respond without delay to any allegation or cause for concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed, whether in the church or in another context. It commits itself to challenge the abuse of power of anyone in a position of trust.

2. Ensure the Implementation of this Safeguarding Policy; government legislation and guidance and safe practice in the church.

3. The Provision of support, advice and training for church stewards, ministers and contract workers that will ensure people are clear and confident about their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults who may be vulnerable.

4. Affirm and give thanks for those who work with children and vulnerable adults and also acknowledge the shared responsibility of all of us for safeguarding vulnerable adults who are on our premises or at our events.

3.3 Role of Safeguarding Officers

The Board of Trustees of RCCG AoG, Herne Bay appoints the Church Manager as church Safeguarding Officer (Adults) and the Church Manager as church Safeguarding Officer (Children) and supports them in their role, which is to:

i) support and advise the pastorate and the stewards in fulfilling their roles

ii) provide a point of reference to advise on safeguarding issues

iii) liaise with the zonal / area / provincial / regional safeguarding officers OR the National RCCG Safeguarding Officer at Central Office, RCCG UK

iv) promote safeguarding best practice within this local assembly with the support of zonal / area / regional ministers in RCCG UK

v) ensure proper records are kept of all incidents/concerns

vi) ensure that all safeguarding training which is required is undertaken by those in post and appropriate records kept and made available

vii) attend training and meetings organised to support the role

viii) oversee safeguarding throughout the whole life of the church (e.g lettings, groups, property)

ix) report to the Board of Trustees annually

x) ensure the church completes a yearly audit/monitoring on safeguarding confirming that policies are in place for the church and all groups in the church and that these have been annually reviewed

xi) ensure the church completes a risk assessment on each area of activity in the church; that this is stored and reviewed at least annually, and that it is readily available on request

xii) ensure that the church recruits contract workers, staff and/or volunteers safely for all posts

xiii) ensure that the church has a signposting banner for safeguarding which displays relevant support information for specialised local or national charities and authorities; as well as contact numbers for local and national helplines and other suitable information.

ix) ensure that a copy of the current signed safeguarding policy is available on RCCG AoG, Herne Bay's website (https://www.rccgthealtarofgod.org/).

3.4 Purpose of Safeguarding Policy

The purposes of this safeguarding policy are to ensure procedures are in place and people are clear about roles and responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care and using our premises.

3.5 Good practice

We believe that good practice means:

i) All people are treated with respect and dignity.

ii) Those who act on behalf of RCCG AoG, Herne Bay should not meet or work alone with a child or vulnerable adult where the activity cannot be seen unless this is necessary for pastoral reasons, in which case a written note of this will be made and kept noting date, time and place of visit.

iii) The church premises, being a rented property, will be assessed by the church Safeguarding Officer (Church Manager) with the Beacon Centre Herne Bay activities and hiring manager at least annually for safety for children and vulnerable adults and the risk assessment report will be given annually to the Board of Trustees in written form. This will include fire safety procedures.

The Board of Trustees will consider the extent to which the premises and equipment are suitable or should be made more suitable.

iv) Any church-organised transport of children or vulnerable adults will be checked to ensure the vehicle is suitable and insured and that the driver and accompanying adult(s) are appropriate. An agreed record to be kept in the church file for each driver/vehicle.

v) Promotion of safeguarding is recognised to include undertaking those tasks which enable all God's people to reach their full potential. The Board of Trustees will actively consider the extent to which it is succeeding in this area.

These things are to safeguard those working with children, young people and those adults who may be vulnerable.

3.6 Appointment and training of contract workers and/or church stewards who work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Contract workers and/or church stewards who work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be appointed after a satisfactory DBS disclosure and following safer recruitment procedures of RCCG AoG, Herne Bay (See our HR Policy). Each of these contract workers or church stewards will have an identified supervisor to whom they will report and who will meet at regular intervals with them. A record of these meetings will be agreed and signed and the record kept. Each of these person will be expected to undergo basic safeguarding training, within the first 6 months of appointment or volunteering. The other training needs of each person will be considered (e.g. food hygiene, first aid, lifting and handling, and so on).

3.7 Pastoral visits or Ministers visits

In terms of safeguarding, pastorate and/or ministers who undertake pastoral visits or ministers visits to members will be supported in their role with the provision of basic safeguarding training upon appointment.

3.8 Guidelines for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

A training package outlining good practice and systems will be produced and given to everyone who works with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This training package will be reviewed annually.

3.9 Non-denominational Christian events

Whether non-denominational Christian events happen on or off RCCG AoG, Herne Bay premises, safeguarding is the responsibility of the church insofar as these events are organised by RCCG AoG, Herne Bay.

3.10 Events with church groups off the premises

Adequate staffing and/or volunteering, a risk assessment and a notification of the event to be given to the church Safeguarding Officer (Church Manager) PRIOR to the agreement for any event or off site activity. Notification of the event will be given to the church administrator.

If the activity is unusual or considered to be high risk the church Safeguarding Officer (Church Manager) will contact the zonal / area / provincial / regional safeguarding officer in order that it can be ratified or any queries raised.

3.11 Other groups on church premises

Where the building is hired for outside use, the person signing the letting agreement will be given a copy of the church safeguarding policy and the appropriate informative training documents. The church administrator will consider the various users of the building in making lettings. All lettings will be notified to the church Safeguarding Officer (Church Manager) who will keep the records and take advice as appropriate from the zonal / area / provincial / regional Safeguarding Officer and RCCG UK Central Office Safeguarding Officer.

3.12 Complaints procedure

It is hoped that complaints can generally be dealt with internally by RCCG AoG, Herne Bay. However, if the complaint is of a safeguarding nature, relating to possible abuse of children, young people or vulnerable adults, then it is very important that the zonal / area / provincial / regional Safeguarding Officer or RCCG UK Central Office Safeguarding Officer is consulted as statutory services may need to be informed. A complaint may be escalated to the Lead Pastor, who will arrange to meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint is regarding the Lead Pastor or a member of their family it will be referred to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

If the complaint remains unresolved or if it relates to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, consideration will be given to invoking the complaints system of RCCG UK which will involve initially escalating the complaint to the zonal pastor. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the zonal pastor, it will be further escalated to the area pastor, then the provincial pastor, then the regional pastor before being passed on to RCCG UK Central Office.

3.13 Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

The date of the next review is: **April 12th, 2027**……..

Name: **Kehinde Clement Lawrence……**Chairman, Board of Trustees

Email rccgthealtarofgod@gmail.com. Dated ….**April 11th, 2026**……..



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Key concepts and definitions

i) A child is anyone who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

ii) Vulnerable Adults: Any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care or protect themselves.

iii) Safeguarding and protecting children or vulnerable adults from maltreatment; preventing impairment of their health and ensuring safe and effective care.

iv) Adult/child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect children/specific adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm, including neglect.

v) Abuse and neglect may occur in a family, in a community and in an organisation. It may be perpetrated by a person or persons known to the child or vulnerable adult or by strangers; by an adult or by a child. It may be an infliction of harm or a failure to prevent harm.