NEW LAIGH KIRK
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SAFEGUARDING POLICY
2026

Preamble

Safeguarding underpins the theoretical imperative to care for the most vulnerable people. It is a theme which is replicated throughout the bible and is a permanent and necessary part of church life.

New Laigh Kirk, Kilmarnock is committed to ensuring a safe church for children, young people, vulnerable adults and anyone worshipping or visiting our Kirk. This policy reflects Church of Scotland safeguarding principles and seeks to protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The policy of the Church of Scotland, to which New Laigh Kirk adheres, includes clear guidelines appropriate training for staff and volunteers and procedures for handling suspected or alleged abuse.

The Church of Scotland safe-guarding policy statement (2010) is concerned with the welfare of all individuals connected with the church and seeks to reduce risk and safeguard the well-being of its people. Everyone within the church is responsible for preventing harm (physical, sexual or emotional)

Church of Scotland Safeguarding Policy and Handbook

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/departments/safeguarding-service/safeguarding-handbook

A hard copy of The Church of Scotland policy statement is displayed in New Laigh, as required by the Kirk's Safeguarding Service

Leadership and Key Safeguarding Oversight in New Laigh Kirk

- Minister: The Rev. D.S. Cameron
- Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Mr I. Anderson
- The Kirk Session of New Laigh Kirk retains overall responsibility for safeguarding governance and compliance. Trustees (Kirk Session Elders) carry the responsibility for safeguarding decisions and attend Trustee safe-guarding training every three to five years

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is appointed by the Kirk Session to implement safeguarding legislation and guidelines as decreed by The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The Co-ordinator attends advanced safeguarding training every three to five years.

The New Laigh Kirk Safeguarding panel is a group of at least three members, appointed by the Kirk Session, to manage safeguarding matters and who shall meet quickly when required. Members also attend advanced safeguarding training every three to five years. The current panel members for New Laigh Kirk are John Dale, Ellen Stewart & Derek I'Anson (covering vacancy)

Safeguarding is also a standing agenda item at New Laigh Kirk Session meetings

Safeguarding Principles

New Laigh Kirk is committed to the following principles:

- Everyone has the right to be safe and treated with dignity and respect.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- The welfare and protection of children, young people and adults at risk are paramount.
- Abuse, neglect, exploitation and inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Individuals will be treated fairly, respectfully and without discrimination.
- Concerns will be taken seriously and acted on promptly.
- Safeguarding practice will promote prevention, accountability and partnership working

Scope

This policy applies to the minister, elders, office bearers, employees, volunteers, contractors, hall users and all organisations operating on New Laigh Kirk premises.

Roles and Responsibilities of Congregation

Safeguarding relies on three key actions – RECOGNISE, REPORT, PROTECT
Any suspicion, witness or report of abuse or risk must be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Mr Ian Ianderson immediately. The Co-ordinator will then contact the Church of Scotland's Safeguarding Service in Edinburgh, if appropriate. Appropriate risk assessments and safeguarding arrangements will be considered for church activities, events, groups and for use of New Laigh Kirk premises

Safer Recruitment

The congregation will follow Church of Scotland safer recruitment procedures.

This will include, where applicable:

- Appropriate application and selection procedures
- Verification of identity and relevant experience
- References and other appropriate checks
- Disclosure and PVG checks, where legally required
- Appropriate induction and safeguarding training
- Clear communication of roles, responsibilities and expected standards of conduct

No individual will be permitted to undertake a regulated role until the necessary legal and Church of Scotland requirements have been satisfied

Training

Everyone at New Laigh Kirk recognises the importance of appropriate safeguarding knowledge and awareness and therefore all relevant workers and volunteers will complete safeguarding training and refresher training as required by the Church of Scotland.

Code of Conduct

Workers must maintain appropriate boundaries, act transparently, treat all people with dignity and never abuse a position of trust.

Individuals are expected to:

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness
- Maintain appropriate and professional boundaries
- Avoid situations which could place themselves or others at risk
- Communicate openly and appropriately
- Respect confidentiality and personal privacy
- Never use their position of trust or authority to exploit, manipulate or harm another person
- Report inappropriate behaviour or safe-guarding concerns promptly

Responding to Concerns

Any allegation, suspicion or disclosure of abuse must be treated seriously and reported immediately. Emergency situations should be referred to Police Scotland or emergency services.

Anyone receiving a disclosure or identifying a safeguarding concern must:

- Listen carefully and remain calm
- Take the individual seriously and respond sensitively
- Avoid asking leading questions or attempting to investigate the matter
- Never promise absolute confidentiality

- Record the information accurately, using the individual's own words where possible
- Report the concern immediately to Mr Anderson, the NLK Safeguarding Co-ordinator, who will, where appropriate, liaise with the Church of Scotland Safe-guarding service

Where someone is in immediate danger or requires urgent protection, Police Scotland or appropriate emergency service must be contacted without delay

Record Keeping

Safeguarding records will be accurate factual, completed promptly, kept securely, confidential and retained in accordance with Church requirements and data protection law.

Online Safety

Appropriate safeguards will apply to digital communication, social media, online meetings and electronic records.

Appropriate safeguards will apply to:

- Email, messaging and social media communication
- Online meetings and virtual church activities
- Sharing and storage of photographs and recordings
- Electronic safeguarding records
- Communication between workers, volunteers and children or adults at risk

Digital communication must be appropriate, transparent and consistent with the 2010 Church of Scotland Safe-guarding guidance.

Whistleblowing

Concerns about safeguarding practice at New Laigh Kirk may be raised without fear of retaliation. Everyone has the right and responsibility to raise concerns about unsafe practices, inappropriate behaviour or failures in safeguarding arrangements. All concerns will be taken seriously and referred through the appropriate safeguarding and/or church of Scotland arrangements.

Support for Survivors

The congregation will respond with dignity, respect and compassion to assist individuals in accessing appropriate support services (see appendix for additional support services)

Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Kirk Session to ensure that it remains current and effective. An earlier review shall take place where necessary e.g. following

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in Church of Scotland Safeguarding Guidance
- Changes in congregational activities

or significant safeguarding incidents at New Laigh Kirk

Future amendments shall be approved and recorded by the Kirk Session of New Laigh Kirk

We confirm our commitment to supporting and implementing New Laigh's safeguarding policy and to an annual review:

Minister: The Rev. D.S. Cameron David S. Cameron

Safeguarding Co-ordinator: Mr I. Anderson Ian Anderson

Session Clerk: Mr D. I'Anson Derek I'Anson

SAFEGUARDING KEY CONTACTS AT NLK & C.O.S.

IF YOU THINK A CHILD OR ADULT IS OF IMMEDIATE RISK OR HARM OR A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED YOU SHOULD CALL 999. If you have any concerns around the welfare of a child or a vulnerable adult at New Laigh Kirk please contact our Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Mr Ian Anderson email anderdma@aol.com or others below, as appropriate

Safeguarding panel member: Mr John Dale alldales@hotmail.com
Safeguarding panel member: Mrs Ellen Stewart ellenstewart@btinternet.com
Safeguarding panel member (covering vacancy) Mr Derek I'Anson dia-nlk@hotmail.com

The Safeguarding Service in Edinburgh (contact info below) contributes to the National Protection Agenda and their work is overseen and scrutinised by the Church of Scotland's Safeguarding Committee

The Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service
The Church of Scotland
121 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4YN
Telephone 0131 240 2256
email safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk

The Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service employs eight permanent staff. The team has expertise in:

- Responding to suspected or reported abuse
- Safeguarding policy and procedure enquiries
- Safe recruitment (PVG Scheme & Disclosure and Barring checks)
- Child protection
- Adult protection
- Supporting survivors of historical abuse
- Work with convicted sex offenders
- The provision of tailored safeguarding training programmes

EXTERNAL CONTACTS/SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

East Ayrshire Council Social Services: 01563 554200

Social Work Urgent Care Service 0800 328 7758

Police Scotland 101 or 999

Children First 0800 282233

NAPAC 0808 801 0331

Childline 0800 1111

Samaritans 116123

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

The National Careline 08000699784