



# Safeguarding Requirements and Serious Incident Reporting in AMiE Churches

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## Introduction

We believe that every person has a value and dignity, which comes directly from the creation of people in God's image. We have a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm. We commit ourselves to nurture, protect and safeguard all our members, particularly children, young people and adults at risk.

We recognise that safeguarding is the responsibility of the whole fellowship and it is our responsibility to seek to promote their welfare, to keep them safe while in our care and to take necessary steps to seek to protect them from harm, abuse or exploitation.

Ensuring that we have safeguarding policies and procedures in place is of utmost importance to us. Therefore, we **require the following of all AMiE churches**:

- Each AMiE church takes responsibility for its own safeguarding.
- Each church must have an up-to-date Safeguarding Policy in place, which is reviewed annually by the church's trustees or other legal governance body. The policy must include guidance on safer recruitment. A copy of the policy is to be sent to the AMiE Operations Manager to be stored centrally.
- Each church must publish a Safeguarding Statement on their website which demonstrates the commitment to protect and safeguard all members of the church family.
- Each church must have a named safeguarding officer. The name and number for this person are to be given to the AMiE Operations Manager to be stored centrally.
- Each church is to register with Thirtyone:Eight or Christian Safeguarding Services (Silver or Gold membership) and ensure that policies in place are aligned to the guidance provided by the service. If a church wishes to use a different safeguarding organisation this must be agreed with the AMiE Trustee with Responsibility for Safeguarding (currently Vicki Bonnett).
- The AMiE Safeguarding Trustee must be informed if there has been a serious safeguarding incident.

## Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS)

DBS checks are essential to ensure the suitability of people working with vulnerable groups, including children. We require all AMiE churches to ensure:

- all members of the clergy have an Enhanced DBS check and subscribe to the DBS Update Service. The Update Service must be checked at least annually for all members of clergy.
- all those in a leadership position have an appropriate level of DBS check in accordance with Safeguarding Agency guidelines. Best practice is that they subscribe to the DBS Update Service and individual records are checked at least annually. If they do not wish to subscribe, a new check must be carried out every three years.

AMiE will continue to require confirmation of the above via the AMiE Annual Partnership Form.

## Safeguarding Training

Each church is responsible for ensuring individuals have the required, highest level of learning for their role in accordance with the safeguarding organisation guidelines. A record of all safeguarding training and the date it was undertaken must be maintained.

Licensed Ministers are required to undertake the minimum level of safeguarding training with either Thirtyone-Eight **or** Christian Safeguarding Services, see Table 1 below, as determined by the AMiE Standing Committee<sup>1</sup>, and undertake refresher training **every 3 years**.

**Table 1**

Training Options	Level
Thirtyone-Eight	<b>Safeguarding Children and Young People</b> <b>Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm</b> Safeguarding for Trustees (covers overall governance responsibilities).
Christian Safeguarding Services	<b>Essential Awareness in Safeguarding for Church/ Charity Staff and Volunteers.</b>  'Safe and Sound' Session- Church Leaders & Trustees and faith based organisations

**A serious Safeguarding incident for reporting to AMiE is any incident meeting any of the following criteria:**

- Any allegation made against an ordained or non-ordained member of the church's leadership team.
- Any allegation which has been or could potentially be reported or inferred in the media (including local press, Christian press or social media, blogs and vlogs) referencing the name of the church.
- Any allegation of an incident or incidents which took place on church premises or within the context of the church's ministry activities (including weekends away, small groups, youth work).

**Other serious incident reporting to AMiE is any incident meeting any other the following criteria:**

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<sup>1</sup> Agreed by AMiE Standing Committee on 14 July 2021.

- Where an action or allegation has been made against the church, a church member or AMiE minister which could cause the AMiE church's name, and so AMiE's name by association, to be referred to negatively in the press.
- Where a matter has occurred which, should it come to light, would be likely to cause the media (including social media) to write negatively about AMiE, the AMiE church or an AMiE minister.

### Mechanism for reporting safeguarding incidents to AMiE:

- For safeguarding incidents, the AMiE Safeguarding Trustee must be contacted within 24 hours of the church's safeguarding officer becoming aware.
- Follow up with a brief written report (within 48 hours of reporting to the AMiE Safeguarding Trustee) to the AMiE Safeguarding Trustee, noting the key points and the decision process for any actions for the church and AMiE.
- When sending sensitive information electronically, it is best practice for this to be sent using a secure method (e.g., password protected document or as a zipped and encrypted folder). For guidance on how to zip and encrypt a folder, click here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d2K681ZsLoZ51KTZsIBGhTNSyhlyA3tG/view?usp=sharing>

### Actions to be taken by the AMiE Safeguarding Trustee:

- Hear the oral report from the church's safeguarding officer.
- Be satisfied that the church's safeguarding officer has taken appropriate action and decisions on reporting to Thirtyone:Eight/CSS and a SIR to the Charity Commission.
- Make a decision as to whether any action is required at an AMiE level, which might include:
  - ❖ Notifying the AMiE Standing Committee
  - ❖ Notifying the ANiE Standing Committee.
  - ❖ Consideration of an SIR report to the Charity Commission.

### Mechanism for reporting other serious incidents to AMiE:

- Other serious incidents as defined above should be reported to one or more of the AMiE Trustees as soon as practical after the AMiE minister becomes aware of the matter and where, assuming no significant delay results, the matter has been discussed by the AMiE church trustees/elders. Where online media is involved, a 'significant delay' could be anything more than a few hours.
- When sending sensitive information electronically, it is best practice for this to be sent using a secure method (e.g., password protected document or as a zipped and encrypted folder). For guidance on how to zip and encrypt a folder, click here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d2K681ZsLoZ51KTZsIBGhTNSyhlyA3tG/view?usp=sharing>

### AMiE Events

As we continue to grow as a fellowship of churches, our desire is to ensure that we provide a healthy, nurturing, and protective environment for everyone who engages with our community, including at diocesan gatherings such as the annual AMiE Conference. With this in mind, and following advice from our Safeguarding Consultants, we have made an amendment to the safeguarding requirements for churches. This guidance is intended to ensure that where a member of an AMiE church has a risk assessment, safeguarding contract, or specific pastoral support plan in place for an individual who wishes to attend a diocesan event, event organisers are able to carry out an appropriate risk assessment. If appropriate this will allow appropriate

measures in place to safeguard all attendees. We believe this approach is reasonable and proportionate.

To ensure GDPR compliance, should such a situation arise, we ask that the church's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a member of the Leadership Team speaks with the individual concerned. This conversation should explain the need for relevant safeguarding information to be shared with an AMiE Safeguarding Lead in order for a risk assessment to be undertaken. If consent to share this information is not given, then, with regret, the individual will not be able to attend the event.

**Vicki Bonnett (AMiE Safeguarding Trustee)**

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