

Lansdowne Evangelical Free Church

Children and Young People Safeguarding Policy

Completed by Les Davis

Approved by the church Elders on 21/03/22

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Church name: Lansdowne Evangelical Free Church

Address: Lansdowne Hill
West Norwood
London
SE27 0AR

Tel No: 020 8766 8598

Email address: office@lansdownechurch.org

Web: www.lansdownechurch.org

Denomination: FIEC

Charity Number: 241507

LEFC has a children's and young people's ministry as part of the life of the church. The following is a brief description of the type of activities we undertake with children:

- Sunday School / Youth Church and crèche during the main Church service
- Midweek Parent/Carer and Toddlers' group
- Midweek Youth club
- Holiday Bible Club
- Youth club sleepovers / weekends away

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children and young people. We acknowledge that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the rights and freedoms of all children and assert that they all are entitled to not face discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. We also believe that children should be able to develop to their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child. As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight, (formerly the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service - CCPAS).

The Leadership undertakes to:

- endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures
- provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will regularly review the operational guidelines attached
- support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children
- remind the church members of the Safeguarding policies and practices during the quarterly fellowship meetings.

The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations.

SECTION 2

Recognising and responding appropriately to an allegation or suspicion of abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child.

In order to safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:

1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Detailed definitions, and signs and symptoms of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included here in our policy.

Definitions of abuse – see Appendix 3

Signs and symptoms of abuse – see Appendix 4

How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse – see Appendix 5

Safeguarding Incident Form – see Appendix 6

Safeguarding awareness

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will receive induction training on this policy and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis by attending the Facing the Unthinkable seminar run by Thirtyone:eight. Training for staff will be tracked and recorded using the form in Appendix 7

The Leadership will also ensure that children are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The procedures below are to be followed:

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to Peter Day (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator") tel no: **020 8766 8598** who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to Les Davis (hereafter the "Deputy ") tel no: **07435902083**. In the absence of both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy or if the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made to Thirtyone:eight, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Telephone no. **0303 003 11 11**. Alternatively contact Lambeth Children Services on **020 7926 5555** or the police on **101**, (or **999** if it is an emergency).
- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact Lambeth Children Services. Their telephone number is **020 7926 5555**, and is available 24 hours a day. Their website is: <https://www.lambethsaferchildren.org.uk/report-concerns>.
- The Police Child Protection Team should be contacted using **101** (or **999** if it is an emergency).
- The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern (for example the Chair of Trustees to log that a safeguarding concern is being dealt with, Insurance company to log that there is a possibility of a serious incident concerning safeguarding).
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures using the form in Appendix 6 and kept in the Lansdowne Safeguarding filing cabinet.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Lambeth Children Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.
- The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy 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.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of the church will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of children who may be at risk of harm or abuse.

The role of the safeguarding co-ordinator / deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL INJURY, NEGLECT OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Lambeth Children Services (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Lambeth Children Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Lambeth Children Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight, (who will confirm their advice in writing), if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Lambeth Children Services.

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Lambeth Children Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if, for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Lambeth Children Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will need to liaise with Lambeth Children Services in regards to the suspension of the worker, also making a referral to a Safeguarding Adviser (SA) / Local Authority Designated Officer.

SECTION 3

Prevention

Safer recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safer recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of this safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

All information collected during the recruitment process will be used according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with a code of conduct towards children and young people. The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

SECTION 4

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the church.

Working with offenders

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to them, the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children who may be at risk of harm, will set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep.

For example:

- they should make their presence known to an Elder on arrival at church.
- they should not enter the Sunday School/Youth Church rooms on a Sunday morning or any other occasion when the children are present.

A Care contract such as that shown in Appendix 8 will be signed by anyone known to be a risk to children who wants to worship at Lansdowne.

SECTION 5

Practice Guidelines

As a church working with children, young people we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in as follows:

- Activities with children should always involve at least two adults who have been through the safer recruitment process outlined above. This includes online meetings as well as face to face meetings.
- Social media contact should be via groups and not individual messages between a worker and a child.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything which could be misunderstood.
- Praying for children should be conducted in public and when other people are around.
- When praying keep physical contact appropriate to the situation and be aware that children will probably not understand the laying on of hands.
- Home visits should always be carried out with another youth worker and only when a parent or guardian is at home. A note of the date and time of the visit should be taken by one of the youth workers making the visit and kept in the Safeguarding filing cabinet in the church office.
- Consent forms are to be used for activities where children under 18 are left in the care of youth workers including any activity away from the church and for any overnight activity. (The information provided in the consent form will be used according to the GDPR).
- Workers should avoid giving lifts to children / young people on their own unless absolutely necessary. If this is unavoidable, the child/young person should be asked to sit in the rear of the vehicle.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children and young people. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets Thirtyone:eight' safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

We will display safeguarding posters with helpline numbers. We will ensure the church members are informed of our Safeguarding policy and who the coordinators are.

Signed by:

Peter Day – Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Pastor

Date:

APPENDIX 1

Leadership Safeguarding Statement

The Pastor and Elders, (hereafter referred to as Leadership), recognise the importance of its ministry / work with children and young people and our responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

The following statement was agreed by the Leadership on: _____

Lansdowne Evangelical Free Church is committed to the safeguarding of children and ensuring their well-being. Specifically:

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people (those under 18 years of age) and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that children we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
- All children and young people have the right to be treated with respect, to be listened to and to be protected from all forms of abuse.
- We believe all adults should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of the place of worship/organisation unless they pose a risk to the safety of those we serve.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children.

We are committed to:

- Following the requirements for UK legislation in relation to safeguarding children and good practice recommendations.
- Respecting the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensuring that workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Supporting the safeguarding co-ordinator/s in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by Lansdowne Evangelical Free Church.
- Supporting parents and families
- Nurturing, protecting and safeguarding of children and young people
- Supporting, resourcing, training, monitoring and providing supervision to all those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all in Lansdowne Evangelical Free Church affected by abuse.
- Adopting and following the 'Safe and Secure' safeguarding standards developed by Thirtyone:eight.

We recognise:

- Lambeth Children Services (or equivalent) has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child then speak to one of the following who have been approved as safeguarding co-ordinators for this place of worship/organisation.

Peter Day _____ Child Safeguarding Coordinator

Les Davis _____ Deputy Child Safeguarding Coordinator

A copy of the full policy and procedures is available from the Church Office.

Signed by the Church Elders

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Peter Day

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Les Davis

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Lawrence Ovenden

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Luciano Petry

APPENDIX 2

SAFEGUARDING IS A PRIORITY HERE



We work to a formal safeguarding policy and it can be seen on request from:

If you have any concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a child you can speak to:

----- or -----

If you have any concerns regarding the safety or welfare of an adult at risk you can speak to:

----- or -----

They have been appointed by the leadership to respond to any safeguarding concerns.

Signed _____ Date _____
On behalf of the Leadership

Call us with your Safeguarding questions:

0303 003 11 11

We are committed to following government and CCPAS guidelines on safeguarding children and adults at risk (with care and support needs) and good working practice, including safer recruitment of workers.

APPENDIX 3

Definitions of Abuse

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)'.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Child sexual abuse can happen online (including via the internet or online meetings). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

APPENDIX 4

Signs and symptoms of abuse

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc. which do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Sexual

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care, etc.

*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming.

APPENDIX 5

How to respond to a child wishing to disclose abuse – Effective Listening

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place.

It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk.

Above everything else listen without interrupting.

Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking.

Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used.

Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different.

Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality.

If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, Braille etc.


HELPFUL RESPONSES

- You have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

DON'T SAY

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else

APPENDIX 6



Lansdowne Safeguarding Incident Form

This form should be completed immediately after any discussion or observation that raises a concern.

Day, date and time of the incident: ____ / ____ / ____

Names of those involved in the incident:

Where did this incident take place?


Name of the group:

Who is normally responsible for group?

Who was responsible for the group at the time of the incident, if different from the above?

Which other workers were supervising the group at the time of the incident?

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Lansdowne Safeguarding Incident Form

Description of the incident:

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Incident referred to: _____

Position: (Safeguarding Co-ordinator / Deputy / Elder)

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

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APPENDIX 8

Care Contract to facilitate _____ to participate safely in the life of Lansdowne Evangelical Free Church

This is a written agreement between _____, of _____, and Lansdowne Evangelical Free Church, Lansdowne Hill, London SE27 0AR, regarding his/her attendance and participation in the life of the fellowship.

As a church we believe the scriptures clearly state that every believer is a child of God through faith and is precious in God's sight no matter who they are or what they have done. At the same time, for those who have offended against children, it is prudent for the church leaders to seek their co-operation in creating a safe environment surrounding their activities and participation in the fellowship.

Therefore, as a condition of his/her attendance and participation in the life of the fellowship, _____ commits him/herself to the following:

- I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children/young people.
- I will attend meetings/house groups as directed by the church leadership.
- I will arrive within five minutes of the start of the service/meetings and make my presence known to one of the elders on arrival. I understand I am welcome to stay after the service for fellowship.
- I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of children and young people.
- I will remain in the main worship area, foyer, and, with prior agreement of the eldership, the hall for prayer meetings or a church lunch.
- I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home.
- I accept there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order for them to protect the children/young people for whom they care, namely: Peter Day (pastor), plus other named leaders.
- I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer and/or the police Jigsaw team, who will meet with church leaders as and when necessary (where appropriate).
- I accept that Peter will provide me with pastoral care. I understand that if I do not keep to these conditions, then I may be barred from attending the church, and in such circumstances the leadership may choose to inform the statutory agencies (e.g. police, probation and Lambeth Children Services) and any other relevant organisation, and the church congregation.
- I understand that any other concerns will be taken seriously and reported.
- I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every 3 months and will remain for an indefinite period.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Peter Day
(on behalf of Lansdowne)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ Police

Date: _____