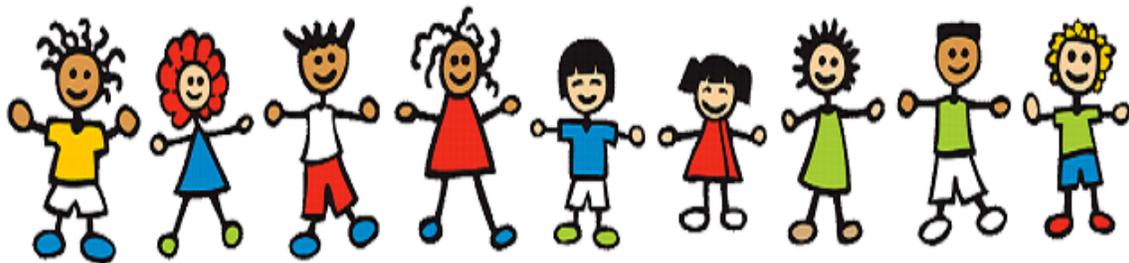


**Hope Baptist Church  
Bridgend**

**Safeguarding Children and  
Young People  
Policy & Procedures  
March 2019**



# **Policy Statement on Safeguarding Children and Young People in Hope Baptist Church**

Hope Baptist Church (referred to as "the church" in the Policy Statement)

The purpose of the church is to evangelize our community and beyond, to encourage people to become more Christ-like through discipleship and we are committed to meeting the needs of those inside and outside our walls through ministry. We value fellowship and will come before the Lord in obedience to worship Him.

In fulfilling this purpose the church

- ➔ has a programme of activities with children and young people
- ➔ welcomes children and young people into the life of our community
- ➔ makes our premises available to organisations working with children and young people

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children and young people under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, Safe from Harm (HM Government 1994) and Working Together under the Children Act (Welsh Assembly Government 2006).

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all children and young people associated with the church and will pray for them regularly.

In pursuit of this we commit ourselves to the following policies and to the development of procedures to ensure their implementation.

## **1. Prevention and reporting of abuse**

It is the duty of each church member to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

## **2. Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers**

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or volunteer. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children.

## **3. Respecting children and young people**

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

#### **4. Safe working practices**

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

#### **5. A safe community**

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

##### **Responsible people**

The church has appointed **Ms Hannelie Jonus** as the Safeguarding Trustee to oversee and monitor implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church's charity trustees.

The church has appointed **Mrs Sally George** as the Designated Person for Safeguarding to:

- ➔ advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and young people;
- ➔ Take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

To contact please ring 07974 834957 or 01656 668791

##### **Pastoral care**

The Church will ensure that in cases where abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected, appropriate pastoral care is provided (either from within the Church or externally) for both alleged victim(s) and/or alleged abuser(s).

##### **Availability of policy and procedures**

The Safeguarding Children Policy will be read out to the Annual General Meeting of the Church, together with a report on the outcome of the annual review. A copy of the Safeguarding Children Policy will be displayed permanently in the Church vestibule and Junior Church porch, and will be made available on request to any member of, or other person associated with the church, their parent or their carer.

Each worker with children and young people will be given a full copy of the policy and procedures and will be required to follow them.

Signed (Church Deacon)

Date 15 February 2019

Review date March 2020

**Hope Baptist Church  
Safeguarding Children and  
Young People procedures  
March 2019**



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## **Safeguarding Children Procedures**

Many people say that good practice in this area of activity is just common sense. However, the variation in what is considered to be common sense in childcare terms is enormous. It is because of this that we have to make a special effort to try and define good practice. Sometimes good practice needs to deal with issues that we may take for granted, but because we are dealing with other people's children, we have to be especially careful. Good practice is not a straightjacket, designed to stop us doing things. On the contrary, it is to enable us to do the things children and young people enjoy in a safe environment.

**Much of what is presented as good practice is good practice irrespective of Safeguarding Children issues. These are the standards we want to operate because we strive to do the very best for children and young people.**

These procedures are first and foremost about protecting children and young people. However, they will also help to protect workers from false accusation or unnecessary and unwarranted suspicion.

### **Introduction**

Following the example of Jesus, we want to welcome children and young people into our Church and give them time and attention. All children and young people, whatever their age, gender, racial background, culture or disability should have the opportunity to grow up safe from harm, as valued members of the Church community. They should be treated with respect, listened to, kept safe and prayed for.

**These procedures recognise and reflect:**

- ✿ The UN Convention on the rights of the Child
- ✿ The Children Act 1989 & 2004
- ✿ All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008
- ✿ Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2015
- ✿ Safe From Harm: a code of practice for safeguarding the Welfare of children in Voluntary Organisations in England and Wales
- ✿ Safe to Grow: A Safeguarding Children and Young People Resource for the Local Church from Baptist Union of Great Britain. 2011

## **Scope and Definitions**

The following procedures apply to children and young people associated with the Church.

"Children and young people" means a person under the age of 18 years.

"Associated with the Church" means:

- ✿ Attendance at services, meetings and activities organised or promoted in the name of Hope Baptist Church, Bridgend (wherever held); and
- ✿ Attendance at services, meetings and activities held at Hope Baptist Church, Bridgend (whether organised by the church or others).

## **Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect.**

### **Abuse and Neglect**

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. There are four types of abuse as officially defined in government guidance: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

### **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 or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.

Physical abuse shapes and influences the child's behaviour, and their emotional and educational development. It may vary in degree of injury, whether directly or indirectly, from physical injuries, neurological damage, disability or even death.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse significantly harms a child's mental health, behaviour and self esteem. It can be particularly damaging in infancy.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Children who have been or who are currently being sexually abused may display a wide range of behaviours, including inappropriate sexual behaviour and sexual knowledge inappropriate to age.

A child's ability to cope with the aftermath of a discovery or disclosure of sexual abuse is strengthened by the support of a non-abusing adult who believes the child. The reactions of other adults who interact with a child during this time can also have an impact on the child's ability to cope with what is happening.

### **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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Long term neglect is likely to cause far more developmental delay and impairment than any other form of abuse. In extreme cases severe neglect can lead to the death of a child.

A distinction must be made between neglect caused by financial poverty which can be alleviated by financial help and that caused by emotional poverty. These may co-exist, but relief of the former does not lead to relief the latter.

### **Additional Definitions relevant to Church**

#### **Spiritual abuse**

The term 'spiritual abuse' is not one of the official definitions of abuse but is sometimes used to describe some of the particular features of abuse arising within religious organisations. 'Spiritual abuse' is increasingly being used to describe those situations where an abuse of power takes place in the context of a faith community. The following is a widely used definition of spiritual abuse:

Spiritual abuse occurs when someone uses their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice to satisfy their own needs at the expense of others.

There are a number of ways in which practice in churches can lead to the abuse or neglect of children:

- ✿ a belief in demon possession resulting in the labelling and naming of a child as 'evil' or 'a witch'
- ✿ placing pressure on children to make decisions that are not appropriate to their age or developmental stage
- ✿ creating an environment in which children are not encouraged to ask questions or hold alternative views.

### **Abuse of Trust**

A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. The individual in the position of trust could use that position to put a child or young person in a position of advantage or disadvantage.

## 1. Prevention and reporting abuse

It is the duty of each church member to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

### ***Introduction***

We all share the responsibility for promoting the welfare of children and The Church has the following procedures in place to show how they are going to achieve this.

### ***What do we do if abuse is suspected or disclosed?***

Everyone has his or her part to play in ensuring the safeguarding of children and young people within the church.

If the behaviour of a child or young person gives any cause for concern; if an allegation is made in any context about a child or young person being harmed; if the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children or young people causes you concern:

- ✿ Do not dismiss your concerns, in particular do not ignore or dismiss concerns about a professional or a colleague
- ✿ Do not normally confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns
- ✿ Do not take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place
- ✿ Do not investigate allegations
- ✿ Do not act alone
- ✿ Do not take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have.

### **You must;**

- ✿ Follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns.

### **Unless;**

- ✿ You think that the child/young person is in imminent danger of harm then the police (999) should be contacted. A report is then given to the designated person as detailed below.

### *When a child expresses a concern ...*

When a child or young person talks about harm or abuse that they are suffering:

- ✿ **DO NOT PROMISE OR LEAD A CHILD TO BELIEVE THAT ANY CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN WHICH AFFECTS THEM OR OTHER CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.**
- ✿ Create a safe environment in which the child or young person can share their concerns;
- ✿ React calmly so as not to further distress the child or young person;
- ✿ Listen carefully to what the child or young person has to say;
- ✿ Allow them time to say what they want;
- ✿ Don't rush or interrupt them or ask more questions than you need to in order to establish whether there is cause for concern or to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said;
- ✿ Accept what the child or young person says and take seriously what you are hearing;
- ✿ Reassure the child or young person, and tell them that you know how difficult it must be to confide in you;
- ✿ Tell the child or young person that s/he is not to blame and that they have done the right thing in speaking to you;
- ✿ Help the child or young person to understand what is going to happen next. The child should be informed that other people will need to be told about the concerns which have been shared and who those people may be.
- ✿ Be aware that a child or young person may be frightened and that s/he may have been threatened if they tell of what has been happening to them;
- ✿ Also remember that most children feel loyalty to their parents and other significant people in their lives and often find it difficult to say things to their detriment.

## Procedures for responding to concerns

### STAGE 1

*A worker has a concern about the welfare of a child/young person or the Behaviour of an adult*

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*The person who has the concern has a duty to*

#### RECORD AND REPORT

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*A written record must be made of the concern using a standard incident report form and the concern should be reported to the Designated Person within 24 hours.*



### STAGE 2

*The Designated Person receives the report of concern*

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*The Designated Person has a duty to*

#### REVIEW AND REFER

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*The report will be reviewed by the Designated Person with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken (often in liaison with others) as to what action should follow. Any formal referral to Social Services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report.*



### STAGE 3

*After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken*

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*The Designated Person, the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Minister may have a duty to*

#### SUPPORT AND REPORT

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*Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns and where formal referrals are made reports may need to be made to the local Association, the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Charity Commission.*

## STAGE 1 - RECORD AND REPORT

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child or young person is to RECORD their concerns in writing and to REPORT their concerns to the Designated Person. The report to the Designated Person should be made within 24 hours of the concern being raised.

### The duty to RECORD

As soon as possible after a child or young person tells you about harmful behaviour, or an incident takes place that gives cause for concern, a written record should be made.

The record should:

- ✿ Be hand-written as soon as possible after the event;
- ✿ Be legible and state the facts accurately;
- ✿ When hand-written notes are typed up later the original hand-written notes should be retained.
- ✿ Include the child's name, address, date of birth (or age if the date of birth is not known)
- ✿ Include the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure
- ✿ Include a description of any visible bruising or other injuries;
- ✿ Include an exact record of what the child has said using the child's words.
- ✿ Include what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported.
- ✿ Include any action taken as a result of the concerns.
- ✿ Be signed and dated
- ✿ Be kept secure and confidential and made available only to:
  - the Designated Person
  - The church minister as far as this is consistent with the welfare of the child/young person concerned and possible pastoral responsibilities to any others involved.
  - Representatives of the professional agencies.

## **The duty to REPORT**

If anyone has a concern about the welfare of a child, that concern should be reported to the Designated Person without delay. The report can be made in the first instance either in a face to face conversation or by telephone, but should always be followed up by submitting a written incident report.

If concerns arise in the context of a children's or young people's group, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk through their concern with other workers in the group and/or with their group leader. However, such conversations should not delay a report being made to the Designated Person.

The duty remains with the worker to record and report their concerns to the Designated Person.

If a concern is brought to the attention of a leader by one of the workers the leader should remind the worker of their duty to record and report, and will also themselves have a duty to report the concern to the Designated Person.

## **STAGE 2 - REVIEW AND REFER**

The duty of the Designated Person on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that has been reported and to REFER the concern on to the appropriate people.

### **The duty to REVIEW**

In reviewing the report that is received the Designated Person:

- ✿ Should take account of their own experience and expertise in assessing risk to children.
- ✿ Must take account of other reports that may have been received concerning the same child, family or adult
- ✿ May speak with others in the church (including the Minister) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision that will be made. Such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.
- ✿ May consult with their Regional Minister in order to seek guidance from their Association
- ✿ May seek advice from the local Children's Services department in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

## **The duty to REFER**

In reviewing the reported concern the Designated Person must make a decision about who the report should be referred on to.

The Designated Person may:

- ✿ Refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation
- ✿ Refer the concern to others who work with the child/children in question asking for continued observation
- ✿ In certain circumstances you can refer to the adult about whom the concern has been raised. This may be the parent/carer of the child or it may be one of the children's workers. If there is any question at all of possible sexual abuse or serious physical abuse the Designated Person should never address the adult directly but should refer their concerns to the police or Social Services. To approach the adult may place the child at more risk, or could make any statutory investigation difficult to pursue because the child may be intimidated
- ✿ Make a formal referral to the local Social Services Department

All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the Designated Person and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

## **STAGE 3 - REPORT AND SUPPORT**

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Designated Person, the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Minister.

### **The duty to REPORT**

Whenever a formal referral is made to Social Services the Designated Person should

- ✿ report the referral to the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon
- ✿ report the referral to the Minister
- ✿ report the referral to the Regional Minister of the local Association

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon acting on behalf of the trustees may also need to make further reports.

If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post because of the risk of harm that they pose to children and young people there is a duty to report the incident to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

If a worker in the church has been accused of causing harm to children or young people this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission in the annual return.

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding

### **The duty to SUPPORT**

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected. Even when formal referrals to the statutory authorities are not made, those who make reports will feel uncertain and vulnerable and support will need to be offered to them.

#### **Child/Young Person**

For the child/young person concerned, Social Services and other agencies may provide support and services. However, the church will have a role to play in complementing this support. The Designated Person should seek to work in partnership with other agencies, clarifying with them how best the church may be able to support the child/young person and to ensure that consistent help and support is being offered.

#### **Other Family Members**

The church may similarly be in a position to offer pastoral and practical support to family members who may find they are trying to cope with a variety of feelings.

#### **Church worker/Volunteer**

Support and counselling may also be offered to those within the church who are involved in the incident. This could be the person who the child shared their concerns with and the Designated Person.

#### **Ministers/ Deacons**

Ministers and deacons should ensure that whenever a referral is made to Social Services that a Regional Minister is informed.

## *Responding to concerns about the behaviour of fellow workers*

The basic three stage process outlined above should form the basis for responding to all concerns within the church regarding the welfare of children and young people. If anyone in the church believes that the behaviour of one of the workers is placing children or young people at risk of harm (whether that worker is paid or unpaid, is a relatively new volunteer or is a senior and experienced youth worker) there is a fundamental duty to RECORD and REPORT.

However, there will be many times when workers quite innocently and inadvertently place themselves in situations where they act in an inappropriate way and where they make themselves vulnerable or open to suspicion. Occasionally workers may 'let their guard drop' and may say or do something that falls outside what would normally be considered as acceptable behaviour with children and young people.

It is probably not appropriate or necessary to report all of these incidents to the Designated Person - particularly if they are one-off events - but the church will develop a culture where there will be a proper and proportionate response to situations like this.

Workers need to be willing to point out to one another when their actions are inappropriate.

What should trigger a report being made to the Designated Person?

- ✿ All workers should feel able to make a report if they feel uncomfortable about the behaviour of any fellow worker.
- ✿ All occasions where a worker causes harm to a child or young person, or where the actions and behaviour of a worker poses a risk of harm to children and young people should be reported.
- ✿ When a worker repeatedly breaches the code of conduct, whether or not it is thought to be wilful, a report should be made to the Designated Person.

When the Designated Person receives any report expressing concern about the behaviour of a worker Stage 2 of the procedures for responding to concerns will be followed.

All those working with children and young people should be aware that if an allegation is made against them that this will be referred to the statutory authorities, they will normally be advised or required to withdraw from their responsibilities while an investigation is carried out. They may even be asked not to attend church during this period.

If an allegation is made that a worker has caused harm to a child or young person the procedures outlined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* require that the allegation is reported to the Local Authority Children's Services who should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- ✿ behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- ✿ possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- ✿ behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If a person who is working with children or young people is removed from their position (or would have been removed had they not resigned) because they have caused harm to a child or because they pose the risk of causing harm to a child, it is a legal duty of the Safeguarding Coordinator to make a report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Further guidance together with a standard report form can be found on the Independent Safeguarding Authority website: [www.isa-gov.org](http://www.isa-gov.org).

The Church is registered with the Charity Commission so it will also be the Safeguarding Coordinators statutory duty to report to the Charity Commission in the annual return any significant safeguarding incident that has occurred during the course of the year that has affected the work of the church.

#### ***When the concern involves the Designated Person***

- ✿ Reports should be made to the Minister, who will follow procedures as above

#### ***When concerns are expressed about the Minister***

Whenever any concerns are expressed about the Minister the concerns must be taken as seriously as if they were being expressed about any other person connected to the life of the church. Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Regional Minister of your local Baptist Association in addition to following the church's normal procedures.

## 2. Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or volunteer. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children.

The following elements will always be part of any recruitment process for volunteers who work with children/young people within the Church:

- ✿ Write a role description
- ✿ Ask the candidate to complete an application form
- ✿ Conduct a face to face interview
- ✿ Take up 2 references
- ✿ Check the candidate's criminal record
- ✿ Appoint for a probationary period
- ✿ Candidate to sign an undertaking to work within the agreed safeguarding policy and procedures
- ✿ Provide an induction programme and initial training

These elements are outlined in greater detail in 'Safe to Grow'

### **Recruiting new staff**

When recruiting new staff to any organization within the church the leader of the group will generally determine the need for a new member of staff. The need may arise from the loss of an existing staff member or the enlarging of the group. Once the need is identified a call for new staff can be made within the church following the agreement of the deacons. This call can be made in a number of ways, such as in the monthly magazine, during the notices in a service or by posting a request on the notice boards.

If one does not already exist the group leader should draw up a role description for the post and ensure that there are application forms available. Application forms for the church can be obtained from the deaconate.

The role description and application form, which will explain DBS, and have a self declaration section for any relevant convictions, should be passed to the prospective volunteers, the completed application forms being returned to the group leader.

If any applicant has not been a church member for at least one year authorisation to proceed with the application should be given by the deaconate.

Once the forms have been scrutinized those applicants deemed suitable should be interviewed by the group leader plus one other (the interviewers must not be related to the interviewee). The interviews do not have to be formal arrangements but should be in sufficient depth to determine the suitability of the candidate. The same questions should be asked of each candidate and they should also be given scope to ask questions. It is good practice to keep a list of the questions asked at any interviews.

Once the leader has determined who he/she feels is the most suitable candidate(s) the selection of the new member(s) of staff must be agreed with the deaconate. The group leader must then write to those specified by the applicant for their references, the references must be received by the group leader before any appointment is made, once this is known the DBS verifier will enter the applicants details into the DBS software for the applicant to complete the online application form. The DBS verifier will then check the relevant details, complete the application and submit the form for checking.

All DBS responses will be returned to the DBS verifier who will inform the group leader of the suitability, or unsuitability (but not the reasons), of each applicant. Any appointment to the post(s) can now be made.

The group leader will be responsible for the induction of successful candidates, during the induction the new staff member will be issued with a safeguarding children or a vulnerable adult's policy when appropriate. The group leader will also be responsible for undertaking the review of the new staff member at the end of the probation period, for assessment of the staff member through the period of working with the group and ensuring that all staff are trained appropriately. Updates on safeguarding procedures and legislation should be provided by the Designated Person or the DBS verifier.

All DBS checks will be renewed every 3 years.

### **The Election of Deacons/Trustee**

Deacons/Trustees are also volunteers within the church and their appointment still needs to be as thorough as with other volunteers, however, their election process means that a different procedure is required.

When deacons have completed their term of office and are standing for re-election or when new deacons are being sought the candidates require 3 promoters. These promoters can be seen as referees and will complete the form obtained from the church secretary.

The form outlines the role and responsibilities of a deacon, which the prospective deacon must complete and sign. The nomination forms will have a self declaration section for any relevant convictions.

The election of deacons is held at a church meeting and they are elected if they receive the appropriate number of votes. Their appointment is therefore made by the church membership. Only deacons who have responsibility for children or adults at risk and /or work with children and adults at risk will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS, the remaining deacons will have a standard DBS check. DBS checks will be renewed every 3 years.

The deacon/trustee will be given copies of the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policies at this point by the Designated Person.

Appropriate training of deacons will be held when it is necessary.

### ***Appointing and supporting young leaders***

The young leaders of today are the adult leaders of tomorrow. They can be valuable members of any youth or children's team in our church, providing valuable time, energy and ideas for the group.

If we are going to encourage young leaders we need to ensure they are kept safe, that the children and young people in their care are safe and that they are well supervised and cared for. Often young leaders are from a similar peer group to those with whom they are working, so boundaries become blurred.

### **Young leaders under 18 years of age**

In law young leaders under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. However neither should they be managed in the same way as the children or young people with whom they are working.

Each leader will have to make a judgement about how involved the young leader will be in planning, running and evaluating the various aspects of the programme. This will depend on how much (or little) they want to do, what they are capable of, and how many other adult helpers you have. It may be best to adopt a step by step approach to their involvement, perhaps beginning with some closely supervised activities, and then progressively increasing the amount of involvement and responsibility they are given.

Training and mentoring should be encouraged, to ensure that the young leader is helped to develop and hone skills, attitudes and experience. We have a duty to make their time as young leaders both enjoyable and rewarding - they must never be "just another pair of hands".

Some practical issues we will consider when working with young leaders are:

- ✿ A young leader must be closely supervised by an adult leader at all times, and never given sole responsibility for a group of young people or children.
- ✿ When considering ratios of staff to children or young people, the young leader needs to be counted as a child, not a leader.
- ✿ The Safeguarding Children Policy applies to a young leader just as it does to any other person.
- ✿ The permission of parents or carers needs to be sought for the young leader just as you would for any other person under 18 years of age
- ✿ If the young leader accompanies you on a residential activity ideally they should have separate sleeping accommodation to both the adult leadership team and the children or young people they are working with.

Careful judgements will need to be made regarding the appointment of young leaders who are under the age of 18. Some may need to be appointed under the full procedures of the church's Safeguarding Children Policy, including applying for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure. For others this will not be appropriate.

Young leaders under the age of 18 will not need to be appointed under these procedures and therefore will not require to apply for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure if

- ✿ they are asked to take increasing leadership responsibility in a group in which they are a member; and
- ✿ they are always exercising leadership by assisting the adult workers and leaders of that group.

Young leaders under the age of 18 will not need to be appointed under these procedures and therefore will not require to apply for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure if

- ✿ they are part of a peer led group and emerge within that group as one of the leaders.

Young leaders under the age of 18 will need to be appointed under these procedures and therefore will need to apply for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure if:

- ✿ they are appointed to work in a regulated activity with children and young people in a group to which they do not belong.

## **Young adult leaders 18 years and over**

Leaders aged 18 years and over are adults. They will therefore need to go through the full appointment procedures agreed by the church. Care will need to be taken when a young leader turns 18 that their new status is recognised and that the appropriate procedures are followed, including a, DBS Disclosure, references and training in the church's safeguarding policy and procedures.

However young adults should still be treated with special care as they develop their leadership skills and learn new responsibilities.

If they are part of a peer group within the church, the boundaries can become blurred if sometimes they are leaders and sometimes they are a member of that peer group. Ideally young adult leaders should not be given supervisory responsibility for the age group directly below them.

## **Appointing paid workers**

The appointment process for paid workers should contain all of the elements of the process described for volunteers, but will inevitably be more formal and will contain some additional elements:

- ✿ a full job description and person specification should be drawn up
- ✿ the post will be advertised appropriately
- ✿ there will be a need to shortlist the applicants
- ✿ the interview will be more formal and will often be a 'competitive interview', with a number of candidates being interviewed for a single post
- ✿ it is important to ensure that there is an exploration of the candidate's understanding of and commitment to safeguarding procedures within the interview
- ✿ check the candidate's right to work in the UK. This is a statutory requirement for all paid employment situations in the UK.
- ✿ issue a contract of employment (or 'terms of appointment' if it is a ministerial appointment)

Advice and guidance on employment matters can be found in the BUC Guideline document (C.12) on Employment, which includes a model contract of employment (can be downloaded from the Baptist Union website [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)).

## Supervision of workers

One of the marks of an organisation that is able to respond well to concerns about the welfare of children and young people is that there is a well-defined structure of supervision of those working with children and young people.

Please note that the word 'supervision' is used here in the general sense of defining a working relationship in which one person is accountable to another rather than literally being present while the person is undertaking their task.

An essential element of any job description will define

- ✿ who the post holder will be accountable to; and
- ✿ who and what the post holder will be responsible for.

All new workers will need to be supervised more closely until you are sure that they are working safely and within the code of behaviour that you have adopted.

Safeguarding issues should be regularly on the agenda of meetings of children's and young people's leaders in the church so that all workers are constantly reminded of the need for vigilance. It is good practice that regular meetings of all workers take place to share thoughts about the children and the activities that you are running. This helps to give encouragement and to exchange concerns about individuals.

A well-defined structure of accountability will help to ensure that if one of the workers is behaving inappropriately that behaviour will be identified and reported promptly to the Designated Person for Safeguarding. All workers will know who they should speak to in the first instance when they see someone behaving inappropriately.

### 3. Respecting children and young people

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

#### *Writing a code of behaviour for the local church*

One would hope that within the Christian community among people who profess to be followers of Jesus, it would go without saying that all children and young people, whatever their age, gender, racial background, culture, or disability, should always be treated with respect and dignity and that their safety and welfare should be a priority.

Experience tells us that what this means in terms of the behaviour, attitude and actions of those who work with children and young people needs to be carefully thought through and clearly defined.

- ✿ What one person sees as a 'harmless joke', another person understands as a form of ridicule that belittles and demeans.
- ✿ What one person offers as a gesture of affection and friendship can be experienced by another as intrusive and threatening.

Behaviour that is perfectly innocent for most people may to others be part of a progressive pattern of behaviour that is about developing an abusive relationship with a child (what is often termed 'grooming').

While the code of behaviour is first and foremost about protecting children and young people it will also help to protect workers from false accusation or unnecessary and unwarranted suspicion.

#### **Respecting children and young people**

The following code of behaviour is expected from all volunteers and/or paid staff within the Church

- ✿ Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- ✿ Use age appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your own body language and the effect you are having on the individual child or young person.
- ✿ Listen well to children and young people. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or young person is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the body language to better understand what is being said.

- ✿ Do not engage in any of the following:
  - invading the privacy of children or young people when they are using the toilet or showering
  - rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child or young person
  - sexually provocative games
  - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person, even in 'fun '
  - Scape-goating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person.
- ✿ When it is necessary to control and discipline children and young people, this should be done without using physical punishment. (A situation may, however, arise where a child or young person needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.)
- ✿ Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed. If possible, the child's own parent or carer should be called in to carry out such a task.
- ✿ Do not respond to or encourage excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
- ✿ Must comply with the boundaries and behaviour recommendations around Electronic communication. (See pages 32-34)

**Workers should normally not plan to be alone with children and young people**

All workers should plan their work with children and young people in such a way that they will not normally be alone with children or young people where their activity cannot be seen by others.

This will mean:

- ✿ A worker should never plan to be alone on church premises with children or young people.
- ✿ Doors should be left open, or two groups should work in the same room when there are not sufficient leaders to have two for each group.
- ✿ At least two people should be present before the doors are open as children arrive for a group and at least two people should remain present together before the last child has left the building or room at the end of a meeting.

- ✿ A worker should never invite a child or young person to their home alone. It is acceptable to invite a group if another adult is in the house. Establish that each parent/carer knows where their child is and at what time they should return home.

### **Unplanned occasions when a worker is alone with children or young people**

There may be occasions when, despite careful planning, a worker finds themselves in a situation when they are in sole charge of children or a child in the context of a church activity. In these situations the worker should:

Assess the risks involved in sending the child or children home against the risks and vulnerability of being alone with children.

Wherever possible immediately phone the Safeguarding Coordinator or the Designated Person to report the situation.

Make a written report of the situation immediately afterwards and give a copy to the Designated Person for Safeguarding and the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon. (The report serves two functions. It helps to ensure appropriate accountability for situations where there is increased vulnerability and risk. It also allows for the monitoring of situations where workers are on their own with children and young people.

If the same situation keeps recurring, working practices will be reviewed.

### **Planned occasions of being alone with children or young people**

There will be a very few situations when it is appropriate for workers to be alone with a child or young person. The most common situation is when a youth worker is offering support or pastoral guidance to a young person where privacy and confidentiality are important.

The following guidelines will apply:

- ✿ If it is possible for the conversation to be held in a quiet corner of the room where others are present, but where sufficient privacy can be assured, this option should be taken.
- ✿ The conversation is best held in a room where there is glass in the door so that others can see inside the room.
- ✿ Wherever possible another adult should be in the vicinity and the young person should know that they are there.
- ✿ Another adult must know that the interview is taking place and with whom.

- ✿ A worker should set an agreed time limit prior to the session and stick to it! It is the responsibility of the worker as the adult involved to set this ground rule and to end the session at the designated time. Make another appointed time to continue if necessary.
- ✿ A worker should not invite a young person to their home nor go to the young persons home when they are alone.

### **Working One to One**

Most church children's/youth work takes place within a group setting (youth club, small groups etc), however there are times when one to one work with a young person is a necessary part of a good work programme.

Working one to one with a young person can come out of a number of different situations;

- ✿ Taking time to listen as a young person shares an issue they are facing
- ✿ Offering ongoing support and advice
- ✿ A formal agreement involving a mentoring relationship between an adult and young person
- ✿ The need to meet a young person who is facing a crisis in their life
- ✿ Discipleship of a young person, including accountability, prayer, Bible study

We need to find appropriate and safe ways of coming alongside young people in this way and ensure guidelines are in place to safeguard both the young person and adult.

### **Accountability**

A simple log sheet should be kept regarding who, where and when workers and young people have met. This gives opportunities for other workers to raise a concern about a particular workers' allegiance to a young person

Written notes should be made following the meeting, recording the essence of the conversation, advice given or recommendations made and what was agreed.

Notes should be securely stored and young people should be aware that they have a right to see any records kept about them.

## **Supervision**

Supervision of workers should be used to monitor the frequency of appointments as well as the content of meetings, ensuring a worker isn't getting in over their head, and a young person is not becoming too dependant.

Phrases such as 'you're the only one who understands me' may be flattering but should ring alarm bells. Is there a possibility of drawing someone else in to work alongside you or having a cooling off period of a few weeks whilst they reflect upon advice given to them?

Workers need to maintain a professional distance, and not be at the beck and call of the individual young person. Workers need to have adequate knowledge of where to refer a young person to, if necessary. It is the worker's responsibility to know what to do with the information given to them and when to involve other agencies.

## **Confidentiality**

Appropriate confidentiality is necessary. However workers must understand that if they believe the young person they are talking to, or other young people are at risk then they have a duty to pass that information on. Often, in church situations workers meet with sons and daughters of their friends. Clarity regarding confidentiality is paramount in these situations and needs to be clearly communicated.

## **Venue**

Any contact with young people should be in a public place, at an appropriate time and in view of another adult (ie early morning, late night or whilst they should be at school is not appropriate).

For example you could meet with a young person in a one to one situation

- ✿ At the end of a youth group event whilst others are clearing up
- ✿ During a youth group session, in a side room
- ✿ At a coffee shop after school

One to one work can be an essential part of youth work, but there are risks involved with this type of working for both the young person and the youth worker. One to one work must be practised safely, appropriately and within agreed guidelines by the church.

## **When offering transport to children and young people**

Vulnerable situations can be created when workers offer lifts to children and young people, either to take them to and from church activities or to take them on planned outings.

These practices are adopted to mitigate the risks involved:

- ✿ Although it is often impractical, wherever it is possible two adults should be present in a car with children and young people
- ✿ Parents should give permission for children to be given transport and should be informed at what time to expect their children home
- ✿ Where possible workers should avoid giving regular lifts to children or young people on their own to and from church activities
- ✿ If the same group of children are regularly given lifts, consideration should be given to picking them up in a different order each week so that the same child is not always the first or the last to be picked up or dropped off
- ✿ If a child is travelling alone in the car with a worker, the child or young person should be asked to sit in the back seat of the car.
- ✿ Workers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a vehicle with a child. Long conversations in the car outside of church premises or home, or unnecessary diversions should be avoided.
- ✿ Workers should avoid being alone in a car with a child or young person who is particularly vulnerable; for example, a child with a crush on a leader, or a child whose behaviour is difficult to manage.

## ***Guidelines for physical contact with children***

It is hard to conceive how you can be a nurturing, caring worker with children and young people without some physical contact happening at least occasionally! For example, if a child is distressed it is natural to want to put an arm round their shoulder. It could even be thought of as abusive not to respond by touching a child in such circumstances. However, we must be conscious that what to most is an innocent touch may have another, more sinister meaning for children who have experienced abuse.

The following guidelines are helpful when considering whether or not touch is appropriate in any given situation.

- ✿ For whose benefit is this taking place? Is it for the sake of the child or young person or is it for your own benefit?
- ✿ If no-one else is present it is always advisable to avoid physical contact
- ✿ If you find that the child or young person is cringing or responding in a negative way to being touched, then stop immediately and find an alternative, non-tactile way to convey your concern
- ✿ Use physical contact in a way that conveys appropriate concern but in a way that is least likely to be misconstrued. For example, an arm around the shoulder standing by the side of a young person may be more appropriate than a full 'hug'.
- ✿ Remember that not all express friendship or affection in the same way and some people (children included) find excessive touching an infringement of their personal space.
- ✿ Workers should be prepared to be accountable to fellow workers for their use of touch and physical contact and should listen to the concerns of others if it is felt that boundaries are being crossed.

### **Abuse of trust**

Relationships between children or young people and their leaders take many different forms, but all of them can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in whom the child or young person has placed a degree of trust. The trust may be because the leader has an educational role, is a provider of leisure activities, or even is a significant adult friend. In every case, however, that relationship is not one of equal partners and there is the potential for the trust to be abused by the leader, who is in a position of power over the child or young person. It is important for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and thus the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

It is always wrong for a leader to enter into a sexual relationship with a young person. Whilst young people aged 16 or 17 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity, they may still be emotionally immature. Their vulnerability could be exploited either deliberately or unwittingly. In these circumstances it does not make any difference whether or not the sexual relationship is consensual. The imbalance of power makes it an abuse of trust. It is not acceptable for a leader to form a romantic relationship with a child or young person with whom they have a

relationship of trust. Such a romantic relationship (even if consensual) would not be a relationship of equal partners - the leader is always in a position of power over the young person and exploitation is almost inevitable, even if unintentional.

These principles apply irrespective of sexual orientation. In addition, it is important to recognise that women as well as men may abuse a position of trust.

### ***Electronic communication***

Electronic communication has become enormously important and popular over the past ten years. It is an easy way to communicate with young people in particular.

It is important for the Church to have guidelines regarding the safe use of electronic communication to maintain healthy and safe relationships between adults and children.

Electronic communication must never become a substitute for face to face contact with young people.

With the world of electronic communication changing so rapidly, it is not possible to issue guidance that covers all eventualities. However, there are general principles that the church is adopting for the well-being of the children and young people.

- ✿ Parents or carers and children and young people themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have the children's or young persons email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.
- ✿ Workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children and young people from whom appropriate consent has been given.
- ✿ Workers should not put any pressure on children or young people to reveal their email address, mobile phone number etc.
- ✿ Direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided.
- ✿ Only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children or young people on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations.
- ✿ Contact with children and young people by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter

Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:

- ✿ significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
- ✿ a log kept of who and when they communicated.
- ✿ Workers should not share any personal information with children and young people, and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child or young person other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role.
- ✿ Workers should be careful in their communications with children and young people so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives. To reduce the risk of misinterpretation clear, unambiguous language should be used and the use of unnecessary abbreviations should be avoided.
- ✿ Electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 8.00 am and 10.00 pm.
- ✿ E-mails should be sent out with a church header and footer showing the young people this is an official communication from a member of the youth team.

### **Mobile phones**

- ✿ Mobile phone usage should be primarily about information giving. '
- ✿ Text language' should be avoided so that there is no misunderstanding of what is being communicated.
- ✿ 'Text conversations' should usually be avoided; (that is a series of text messages/emails being sent to and fro between mobile phones).
- ✿ The use of the camera should comply with the church's policy on photo's/videos. Workers should not retain images of children and young people on their mobile phone.

## **Instant Messaging Services (IMS)**

- ✿ The use of instant messenger services should be kept to a minimum.

Where a young person in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:

- ✿ significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
- ✿ a log kept of who and when they communicated.

## **Social Networking sites**

- ✿ If youth leaders are going to communicate via social networking sites they should ensure that all of the content on their site is appropriate for young people to see.
- ✿ Consideration should be given to creating a separate profile for the church group
- ✿ Alternatively youth leaders should consider having a site that is used solely for youth work communications and that is totally separate from their own personal site.
- ✿ Lower age limits of social networking sites should be adhered to (this varies for each site).
- ✿ Be aware of the content of photos that may be uploaded on to your site.
- ✿ All communication with young people should be kept within public domains.
- ✿ Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. Copies of communications should be retained and where possible other workers should be copied in on communication.

## **Church Computer**

- ✿ The church laptop is to be used for church based work only.
- ✿ It will password protected and available to be used by the person responsible for the projection of the hymns etc on to the screen during services.
- ✿ No personal information about will be kept on the computer.

## 4 Safe Working Practices

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.

### *Children, young people and the church's Health and Safety policy*

The Church has adopted a Health and Safety policy.

Every worker should know;

- ✿ it is their individual responsibility to uphold the church's Health and Safety Policy.
- ✿ how to report incidents and concerns under the church's Health and Safety Policy
- ✿ To know where the First Aid equipment is kept and how accidents should be reported
- ✿ what procedures should be followed in the event of a fire

### **Risk assessments**

As well as assessing the premises for the risks that they may pose for children, all leaders of children's and young people's groups should assess the risks involved in the programme that they are planning.

#### **Step 1** Identify the hazards

Walk around the venue, think through your programme, think about the individual children you are working with (taking into account special needs, whether physical, emotional or behavioural etc).

- ✿ What/who could reasonably be expected to cause harm?
- ✿ Look back at accident records/incidents.
- ✿ What has been a hazard in the past?

#### **Step 2** - Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard think through who might be harmed:

- ✿ either groups of people (e.g children, leaders, parents) or
- ✿ Individuals. (e.g. a child with special needs)

How might they be harmed?

- ✿ what type of injury

**Step 3** - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

What can you do about the hazards?

- ✿ Can I get rid of the hazards altogether?
- ✿ If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

**Step 4** - Record your findings and implement them

Writing down your risk assessment and sharing them with your colleagues helps to ensure everyone understands the risks and subsequent controls.

Risk Assessments can then be reviewed and re-used at a later date.

**Step 5** Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

When working with children and young people, the level of risk will vary depending upon the particular individuals you are working with, and the gifts and abilities of your staff. Thus risk assessments should be reviewed when necessary.

A general risk assessment should be done at the beginning of each term, considering the programme and the venue.

Specific risk assessments should be done for activities which are out of the ordinary, for example a trip out, or an activity with particular risk factors (cooking, woodwork etc.)

Forms are available from 'Safe to Grow'

### **Risk assessment - ratios**

An important aspect of any risk assessment is ensuring that you have a suitable ratio of staff to children and young people. A number of factors will come into play in assessing the ratio for any particular activity or group:

- ✿ The age of the children and young people. Generally speaking the younger the children the higher the ratio should be of adults to children.
- ✿ Special needs. Do any of the children have special needs that will require additional support?
- ✿ Behavioural issues. Do any of the children or does the group as a whole present challenging behaviour that can be difficult to control?

✿ The venue.

### Gender balance

If you have a mixed group of children and young people you should endeavour to have both male and female workers present. This becomes increasingly important for older age groups.

### Recommended minimum ratios

The following table represents recommended minimum ratios of adults to children. This should be your starting point in calculating appropriate ratios for your groups and activities. If any special factors emerge within your risk assessment you should increase the recommended ratio in order to ensure the safety of the children and young people.

Remember that in calculating the ratios of workers to children you should not include young leaders who are under the age of 18 among your number of adult workers. (see pages 21-22).

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 - 2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	1:4 (minimum 2)
4 - 7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
8 - 12 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

## What happens when ratios fall below the required level?

The ratio of adults to children can fall below the optimum level in two different types of situation.

- ✿ In a one-off situation where a member of the leadership team is unavailable for one session and it is not possible to arrange alternative cover.
- ✿ On a more permanent basis, where it is not possible to find sufficient volunteers to staff a group at the desired level.

### The one off situation:

When the first of these scenarios arises the remaining leaders should:

- ✿ Determine whether it is safe to continue with the planned programme
- ✿ Are there ways of working that would reduce the risks?
- ✿ If this is a week when additional staff were required because of the nature of the planned activities should the activities be changed?
- ✿ If children's and young people's safety is being put at unacceptable risk then the event should be cancelled
- ✿ Write a report detailing:
  - the circumstances that led to the reduced staffing levels
  - the actions that were taken to reduce the risk to the children and young people.
  - Give a copy of the report to the Designated Person for Safeguarding and the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon

If the reduced staffing will lead to one adult being alone with a child or a group of children or young people then (if there is time) the event should be cancelled. If there is an emergency that leads to this situation, then the worker who is left alone should follow the practice outlined previously.

### Permanent Basis

Any decision to run a group with staff ratios that are below the recommended level should be taken by the Deacons of the church.

The decision should be recorded in their minutes together with

- ✿ the reasons why they believe that this decision is justified and

- ✿ any measures that have been taken to minimise the risks to children and young people

In no circumstances should the trustees plan to continue running a group where only one adult will be present with children and young people.

### **Risk assessment – procedures for transporting children and young people**

When children are transported in cars

- ✿ Written permission from the parent/carer should be obtained. (A model parental consent form can be found on the *Safe to Grow* website, [www.safetogrow.org.uk](http://www.safetogrow.org.uk).)
- ✿ The driver should understand and agree to the church's code of behaviour when transporting children or young people.
- ✿ The driver should have fully comprehensive insurance which covers voluntary work (or in the case of a paid youth worker or children's worker insurance that covers them for transporting others in the course of their employment).
- ✿ Seat belts should always be worn and the proper child seats and child restraints complying with current law should be used for young children.
- ✿ If a volunteer driver who has not been appointed as a children's or young people's worker is used to transport children and young people on church activities, the driver should be appointed following the procedures outlined under the church's Safeguarding Children Policy.

The Church will not use people as drivers for children and young people when their criminal record shows a record of driving offences that suggests that the person may not be a safe driver.

When a mini-bus or coach is used to transport children or young people:

- ✿ Many hiring organisations now ask for the driver to have a MIDAS certificate. Further information can be found on the *Safe to Grow* website, [www.safetogrow.org.uk](http://www.safetogrow.org.uk).
- ✿ Ensure that the mini-bus or coach is fitted with seat-belts on all of the seats and that seat-belts are always worn.
- ✿ Ensure that the number of children and adults does not exceed the capacity of the coach or mini-bus so that all can have an allocated seat with a seat-belt.

## Outings and overnight events

For all events when children and young people are taken off the church premises:

- ✿ A special risk assessment should be carried out, including an assessment of the appropriate ratio of adults to children.
- ✿ Parents should be informed in writing of the arrangements.
- ✿ Each adult should be allocated a written list of those children or young people for whom they have responsibility, even if the whole group is to remain together.
- ✿ If travelling in several small groups, it is good practice to insist that the same group of children travel with the same adult on both the outgoing and return journeys. This minimizes the possibility of children going astray because of false assumptions that someone else has taken them.

## Overnight events

For overnight events particular care needs to be taken, not least when it comes to making arrangements for sleeping accommodation. It is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all situations. However, sensible precautions will minimize the risks for both workers and children or young people.

All of the above bullet-points should apply. In addition the following best practice should be followed:

- ✿ Risk assessment should be undertaken.
- ✿ Particular note should be taken regarding the proposed venue and its suitability for providing sufficient rooms for children and adults to sleep together with arrangements for toilets and washing etc
- ✿ Are there sufficient fire exits from the sleeping accommodation in the event of a fire?
- ✿ Are all of the workers conversant with the procedures in the event of a fire?
- ✿ Ascertain prior to the event the local telephone numbers and other information that would be needed in the event of an emergency (caretaker or other contact for property if not on site, local doctor, the location of the nearest Accident and Emergency Hospital etc)

## Parental consent:

- ✿ Separate parental consent should be obtained for each event where the child or young person will be cared for overnight.
- ✿ A contact phone number overnight for the parent/carer should be obtained for the particular night(s) of the event
- ✿ Parents/carers should be given the address of the overnight venue together with a contact phone number for making contact in the event of an emergency. If giving a mobile phone number as the main point of contact please ensure beforehand that the signal strength at the venue is sufficient to make and receive calls.
- ✿ Ensure that parents / guardians have returned a health form stating any special dietary requirements and current medication, and also giving the name and telephone number of the child's doctor.
- ✿ Consideration should be given to having a meeting with parents/carers prior to the event

## Sleeping arrangements

- ✿ Males and females should sleep separately
- ✿ If it is a mixed group of both boys and girls, there must be a mix of male and female adult workers
- ✿ Come to a measured judgement based on the circumstances of the group you are taking away as to whether it is wise for adults to share sleeping accommodation with children or young people. This will depend on the ages of the children, their need of support, the likelihood of older children bullying younger children, and the nature of the venue. If adults share sleeping accommodation with children and young people, children and young people should always be able to dress and undress separately from adults.

## DBS registration of workers

- ✿ All workers who stay overnight with children and young people **MUST** have a DBS check, even if it is for only one night.

## Residential events

The following checklist will help to identify a number of important issues that should be considered for the safety and well-being of the children and young people when planning residential events:

- ✿ At least one of the workers/leaders should be responsible for First Aid and should hold an appropriate, valid certificate.
- ✿ The person responsible for catering should hold a Basic Food Hygiene Certificate
- ✿ Check the insurance cover of any building in which you will be sleeping. There may be a limit on numbers it accommodates. If you exceed these, insurance can be invalid.
- ✿ Check the building and know where water, electricity and gas can be turned off.

## Fire safety

- ✿ Know the fire drill for the building, and make sure you have a fire drill as soon as possible after entering the premises.
- ✿ Know where the fire extinguishers are.
- ✿ A Location Specific Plan should be displayed alongside the Fire Notice in each room.
- ✿ Church halls and rooms used for sleeping larger numbers of people **MUST** have TWO means of exit.
- ✿ Know where the nearest hospital and doctor are. It is good practice to make contact with a local doctor prior to the event.
- ✿ It is also a good idea to notify local police. This applies if you are sleeping in any building, even if only for one night, and even if it is your own church. Also it is helpful to inform the fire brigade.
- ✿ Ensure that parents / guardians have returned a health form stating any special dietary requirements and current medication, and also giving the name and telephone number of the child's doctor.
- ✿ Residential activities must have safety rules:
  - letting adults know where you are,
  - not entering the kitchen without asking the cook, etc ..

- ✿ Make sure the children have correct clothing for whatever activity they are taking part in. It is useful to issue a 'kit list' for residential activities.
- ✿ Where outdoor activities are concerned, either leaders should have the appropriate qualification, or if the activity is being provided by an outside organisation, then the leaders should check that this organisation is registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and have appropriate insurance. Current guidelines suggest that for any camping or hill walking activity, the basic qualification which should be held is the Basic Expedition Leader Award (BELA) or an equivalent, for example a scout or guiding qualification.

### ***Parental consent***

All children and young people should be registered and parents/carers should be asked for the following details of their child:

- ✿ Full name
- ✿ Address
- ✿ Home telephone number and alternative contact number(s) in case of an emergency
- ✿ Date of birth
- ✿ Details of any medical conditions the church should be aware of, or of any food allergies etc.
- ✿ Consent should be explicitly obtained for the following:
  - Consent for emergency medical treatment
  - Consent for travel arrangements when transport is being organised.
  - Consent for taking the child or young person off the church premises for occasional activities (where appropriate)
  - Special consent for any overnight event or activity
  - Consent for the use of the child's photograph in church publicity material or on the church website
  - Consent for electronic communication
  - For children up to the age of 11, consent regarding who is entitled to collect the child from a group.

A model parental consent form can be downloaded from the *Safe to Grow* website, [www.safetogrow.org.uk](http://www.safetogrow.org.uk).

**Parents/carers should be given the following information:**

- ✿ Name and contact telephone number for the leader of the group/activity attended by the child or young person
- ✿ Name and number of the Designated Person for Safeguarding
- ✿ Outline details of the group/activity the child or young person is attending, including the starting time and the time the event ends.
- ✿ That the church has a Safeguarding Children Policy and that in the event of the parent/carer having any concerns about the welfare of their child in relation to the church, they should contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

The details on the consent form should be available to the leader of the group or activity each time the group or activity meets so that the contact information and medical information etc is readily available in the event of an emergency.

The church's written procedures should make it clear who is responsible in each group for obtaining the parental consent forms and how these should be stored.

**Welcoming children into an all-age community**

There will be a number of occasions when children and young people will be present on church premises as part of the all-age community of the church where attention will need to be given to the implication for their safeguarding:

- ✿ before and after church services
- ✿ family or all age services
- ✿ social events that are open to the whole church family
- ✿ rehearsals for productions that might include children, young people and adults

The greatest difficulty is in defining who is responsible for the children and young people in these situations, and to what extent responsibility falls to the church to be proactive in taking precautionary measures.

## Before and after church services

Sunday services are a time for fellowship. Before the service, members of the congregation greet one another and catch up on the week's news and after the evening service and some morning services people are encouraged to linger over refreshments. During these times children are often mingling with the rest of the congregation or taking themselves off to play with friends. It is important that due consideration is given to ensure the safety and well-being of children during these times.

Workers in Sundays'cool take responsibility for children from when they arrive in the school room and hand responsibility back to the parent(s) at the end of the service.

For children up to the age of 7 it is not good practice to allow children to leave their group or class unaccompanied. Once the children have been collected from their group or returned to their parents the responsibility for each child reverts from the group leaders to the parents or adult who is in charge of collecting them.

If children attend unaccompanied by any adults either

- ✿ their parents should be informed of the level of care that the church is able to take for their welfare (i.e. when they will be in the formal care of workers); or
- ✿ the workers in their groups should take responsibility for them from the time they arrive at church to the time they leave. A meeting point and time should be agreed before the service. After the group finishes the worker will be responsible for the child until the child leaves the church premises

The church should be aware of any particular hazards to children during these periods:

- ✿ Are children congregating in rooms in the church with no adult supervision?
- ✿ Are there any hazards associated with the serving or preparing of hot drinks?
- ✿ Is it possible for young children to wander from the church premises unsupervised onto a main road?
- ✿ Are there any areas of the church building that should be out of bounds for children or where children should be closely supervised?
- ✿ The kitchen should normally be out of bounds to children

- ✿ The church has an open baptistery, which may present a hazard to some children
- ✿ If there are any adults in the congregation who pose a risk to children their behaviour should be closely monitored during these times.
- ✿ If the church has a known offender attending it is important that the conditions of the offender's contract are fully enforced and adhered to.
- ✿ Two people should carefully check that the church building is empty and that all children and young people have left the church premises before the building is locked.

### **Family or all-age services**

The particular challenge of family or all age services is that no one may understand themselves to be responsible for the formal care of the children and young people who attend

It is imperative that the parents or carers of children and young people understand the basis on which their children are attending the service.

- ✿ Any parents who are present should know that they are not entrusting their children into the care of others but remain responsible themselves for the welfare of their children.
- ✿ Any parents who send their children unaccompanied should understand the level of care and supervision that their children will be given.

Even if it is clear that children and young people are in the care of their parents for a family service, the church will continue to have a duty of care with regard to the wider welfare issues for the members of the congregation including children and young people as highlighted in the previous section.

### **Photography**

It is not illegal to take photographs of children, however when taking photographs or video footage we must comply with the latest GDPR legislation. Fear of breaching this Act should not be wrongly used to stop people taking photographs or videos of all activities involving children and young people. It is possible to be responsible without being over-restrictive.

The following guidelines are advisable:

- ✿ Permission should be obtained from parents for photographs to be taken at church activities. The permission form should clarify where those photographs are likely to be used (display board, website, press etc).
- ✿ Photographing children should be conducted with sensitivity and courtesy. Children generally like having their picture taken, but there may be moments when they would rather not. Consent of the child is just as important as parental permission.
- ✿ When photographs are displayed children should not be identified by name, and nor should it be possible to infer the identity of individual children from the photograph.
- ✿ Photographic material should be stored safely in a place that has been agreed and minuted by the trustees/deacons.
- ✿ Leaders should not store images of children and young people on their mobile phones.
- ✿ Any photographs sent to the press must not identify individual children by name, nor should the names of individual children be able to be inferred from an accompanying caption or story.
- ✿ Copies must not be distributed to other individuals without parental permission

### **Other user groups**

Not all of the groups using the church may be organised and run by church members and buildings are often hired by others (Scouts, Guides, nurseries, dance classes etc).

If outside hirers use the building and work with children or young people, they must have a safeguarding children policy and procedures in place, based on the Home Office recommendations 'Safe from Harm'. A clause to cover this must be included in the official hiring agreement. As evidence of this you a copy of the policy and procedures document must be requested. It is not our responsibility to ensure that the policy is being properly implemented. This responsibility lies with the group themselves and their trustees. However if it came to light that a group using our premises were not following appropriate safeguarding procedures and that children were being placed at risk, consideration should be given to terminating the rental agreement.

Some groups using church premises may need to be registered with OFSTED. If this is the case their OFSTED registration certificate should be checked.

## 5. A Safe Community

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

### Prevention of bullying

The Government defines bullying as:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."

Bullying can take many forms including:

- ✿ name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking
- ✿ kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating
- ✿ unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature or sexually abusive comments
- ✿ taking belongings
- ✿ inappropriate text-messaging and emailing
- ✿ sending offensive or degrading images by phone or over the internet
- ✿ gossiping, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- ✿ excluding people from groups
- ✿ 'unofficial' activities such as initiation ceremonies or practical jokes which may cause physical or emotional harm

Bullies will often pick on a particular feature of a person's appearance or character as a supposed 'reason' for bullying:

- ✿ racial difference
- ✿ disability
- ✿ sexuality
- ✿ hair colour
- ✿ gender

Bullies can be:

- ✿ children or young people bullying others in their peer group, or other children and young people either older or younger;
- ✿ adults bullying children and young people;
- ✿ children and young people bullying adults.

Bullying will always cause a great deal of pain and harm for those on the receiving end. Many children and young people affected by bullying believe they have nowhere to turn; they are scared to speak out and often blame themselves. They can become fearful and reclusive.

Some signs that can indicate that a child or young person is being bullied are as follows:

- ✿ Withdrawal
- ✿ Lack of desire to join activities with certain individuals
- ✿ Drop in school marks
- ✿ Torn clothing
- ✿ Loss of friends
- ✿ Avoidance of church groups and other activities
- ✿ Bruises
- ✿ Need for extra money or supplies

In order to prevent bullying the following procedures should be adopted:

- ✿ the children and young people themselves should be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour which makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable
- ✿ children and young people should know how they can report any incidents of bullying
- ✿ all allegations of bullying will be treated seriously
- ✿ details will be checked carefully before action is taken
- ✿ the bullying behaviour will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible
- ✿ the parents of the bully and of the bullied will be informed

- ✿ an attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour
- ✿ all allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with actions that are taken.

### **When a known offender is present**

The church is a community that is welcoming and open to all. It is a place for people who have failed and for people in need. Those who have abused children and young people in the past are to be included in this welcome. However, the gospel imperative to welcome the sinner needs to be set alongside the gospel imperative that the protection of children and young people must be paramount.

There is a very particular challenge when it comes to those who sexually abuse children. Present research suggests that sexual offending can be a kind of addiction whereby patterns of behaviour are deeply ingrained in the character of the person. However old the offence; ex-offenders continue to pose a very real threat to children and young people which should be borne in mind when welcoming them into the church. Experience has also shown that those who abuse children can be very persuasive in expressing remorse and in presenting themselves as people who are now living a different way of life. Abusers are often people who are able to get on well with children and who children are ready to trust. The Christian community has too often misunderstood what it means to practice forgiveness and has often entrusted such people with the care of children and young people.

When it is known that a person wants to attend church who has been convicted of a criminal offence of sexually abusing children or young people it is important that their behaviour within the church is properly managed and that a contract is put in place. There are also times when it will be appropriate to take such measures with a person who has faced a series of allegations about the sexual abuse of children and young people but has never been convicted (such allegations may be revealed on an Enhanced DBS Disclosure under relevant non-conviction information)...

In determining the details of the contract:

- ✿ there should be a discussion about who should be informed of the nature of the offence and the details of the contract
- ✿ the rights of the offender to re-build their lives without everyone knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against the need to protect children and young people
- ✿ the Safeguarding Trustee/Deacon and the Designated Person for Safeguarding should always be informed
- ✿ The church should find out if the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register

- ✿ If so, contact should be made with the offender's specialist probation officer (SPO) to ensure that you are aware of any specific information or restrictions that are relevant
- ✿ The church should inform and take advice from the Regional Minister responsible for Safeguarding matters in your Association.

An open discussion must be held with the person concerned in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract should be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour and which the person is asked to sign. The contract:

- ✿ will identify the meetings the person will attend
- ✿ will specify that they will always sit apart from children
- ✿ may ask that they are always accompanied by a befriender on church premises
- ✿ will require the person not to attend small group meetings where children are present
- ✿ will require that the person declines hospitality where there are children
- ✿ will state that the person will never be alone with children while attending church functions
- ✿ will require the person to stay away from areas of the building where children meet

The contract should be monitored and enforced. Those who offend against children can often be manipulative. If the contract is broken certain sanctions should be considered.

- ✿ If the initial contract allows the person to attend the morning service where children are present, a new contract might require them only to attend an evening service.
- ✿ If only a few people know of the person's conviction, more people might be told in order to protect children. In doing this a balance has to be made between protecting the civil liberties of the past offender, the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the protection of children and young people. Any disclosure of the person's criminal background would need to be the minimum necessary to achieve the aim of safeguarding the children and young people in our care.

- ✿ Ultimately, it might be necessary to ban the person from attending the church. If there are concerns that the person might join another church, other local church leaders must not be forewarned by giving details of the person concerned. Other local church leaders should be asked to inform you if any new person joins their church. If the person joins another fellowship it would be appropriate to indicate our concerns to this specific church leader.

A template for a model contract is available on the *Safe to Grow* website ([www.safetogrow.org.uk](http://www.safetogrow.org.uk)) but the church is strongly encouraged to take advice and guidance before implementing any contract.