



# **Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures**

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## **A. Introduction**

Parts that are in the OBC Safeguarding Children Procedures booklet are highlighted in yellow.

Parts that are in the OBC Safeguarding Adults at Risk Procedures booklet are highlighted in grey.

Parts that are in the training powerpoint presentation are in dark red.

Parts that are particularly relevant to organisation leaders are in green.

Parts that are particularly relevant to trustees are in blue.

Parts that are particularly relevant to the Designated Persons are in purple.

Parts that are relevant to everyone are in black.

## **Valuing children**

As a church, we believe in the God given value of every child with whom we work or have contact. We welcome children into the life of our community.

## **Definition of term ‘children’**

The term ‘child’ or ‘children’ is used to refer to anyone under the age of 18 (unless otherwise stated).

## **Safeguarding Responsibilities**

The Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures must be adopted and owned by the whole church. The policy statement has been formally adopted by the Church Meeting. This is important because safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility in the life of the church. However, for the policy to be effective, particular responsibilities have been assigned to named people.

## **a) Trustees**

The trustees of the church are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and resourced in the church. It is the trustees who have a duty of care to the children who are involved in the life of the church. Should there be an incident that gives rise to an investigation in the life of the church, it will be the trustees who will be deemed to be responsible for the outworking of the church's policy and procedures. It will also be the trustees who will be held responsible for any legal obligations that arise under the revised Disclosure and Barring Service.

Therefore, all trustees should be fully conversant with the church's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures. The trustees should:

- › have a mechanism for monitoring or reviewing the policy
- › give support to those who are working with children
- › ensure that the training needs of workers are met
- › make appropriate budget provisions for children's work, including budget provision for the training of workers
- › find ways of communicating the policy to all within the church.

Much of the work involved in implementing the policy is delegated to others within the church. However, trustees are not in a position to delegate their responsibility. The ultimate responsibility for the church's safeguarding policy will always remain with the trustees.

In order to help the trustees meet their responsibilities and keep safeguarding on their agenda we will appoint one of the trustees to take a lead on safeguarding matters. It is not necessary for this person to have expertise in the area of safeguarding, only an understanding of the church's policy and procedures and a readiness to oversee this area of the church's life on behalf of the trustees.

Every Trustee will be trained to Level 3 in Safeguarding. This training will be renewed every 4 years.

Every Trustee will have a DBS check on appointment, which will be checked every 4 years

## **b) Safeguarding Trustee**

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Trustee are:

- to ensure on behalf of the trustees that there is a proper process in place to write and update the safeguarding policy and procedures
- to monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the trustees
- to ensure that the policy and procedures are reviewed annually and to present the report of the annual review to the trustees
- to receive reports from the Designated Persons for Safeguarding regarding any safeguarding incidents in the life of the church and to be responsible for keeping the trustees informed as appropriate.

In the event that there is no trustee named to take on this responsibility it should be assumed that this role will be taken by the Church Secretary.

This appointment will be made by the trustees and reported to the church meeting.

## **c) Designated Person for Safeguarding**

The church meeting will appoint a Designated Person for Safeguarding. This is the person who will take a key role in helping the church to respond appropriately to any concerns that are raised about the safety or well-being of children. This should, as far as possible, be someone with relevant knowledge and skills for the role, or someone who is willing to develop such skills. The role does not need to be filled by someone with professional experience in safeguarding, but the person who takes it on does need to give time to understanding the principles of safeguarding.

The Designated Person may be the same as the Safeguarding Trustee, although very often will not be. The Designated Person does not need to be a trustee of the church. Indeed, it would be possible for the Designated Person to be a member of another church.

It is possible for the Designated Person to have other responsibilities in the church's work with children, although when this is the case procedures will need to be agreed in the event that there is any suspicion or allegation concerning the conduct of the Designated Person. The Designated Person can work as part of a team, but one person should take the lead in the team and be the named person for the role.

The Designated Person's role is to:

- receive and record information from anyone who has safeguarding concerns
- assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to
- consult with outside bodies where appropriate to discuss concerns, for example a Regional Minister, the Local Authority Designated Officer, Social Services or the police child abuse investigation team
- make a formal referral to Social Services or the police if appropriate or as advised
- inform the Safeguarding Team of any referral
- make referrals as appropriate to the Disclosure and Barring Service. If OBC removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the Designated Person must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- be the link between the church and the local Baptist Association for safeguarding matters

The Designated Person will be trained to Level 3 in Safeguarding and have a DBS check on appointment. This training will be renewed every 4 years, and the DBS should be re-checked every 4 years.

#### **d) Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Verifier**

Responsible for all aspects of processing DBS checks for church staff and volunteers (with the exception of the Accredited Minister(s) who is/are checked by the regional association)

#### **e) Minister(s)**

As a member of the trustee body of the church, the Minister(s) shares with all of the trustees the general responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the church's safeguarding policy. The Minister(s) will often need to be proactive in ensuring that the church takes seriously its responsibilities in this regard and in helping the church to see this as part of the church's gospel responsibilities.

In addition to the responsibilities that the Minister(s) shares with all of the trustees, the Minister(s) will have particular pastoral responsibilities. Because of these responsibilities the Minister(s) should:

- › be made aware of any safeguarding and child protection issues within the church
- › take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate pastoral support is provided in the context of any safeguarding investigation. In these circumstances the Minister(s)'s responsibility is to offer pastoral leadership to the whole church community. It may not be appropriate for the Minister(s) to offer pastoral care directly to those involved, but to ensure that the pastoral needs of all are being met. It is important for the Minister(s) to recognise that:
  - it is not possible or appropriate for one person to offer pastoral care to both an alleged victim and an alleged perpetrator of abuse
  - church communities can too easily become polarised in these situations and it is important for the Minister(s) to be able to take a role that seeks to hold the church together

Wherever possible the Minister(s) should not be the Designated Person. If the Minister(s) is the person in the church responsible for making referrals to the statutory authorities when

safeguarding concerns arise, the Minister(s)'s capacity to offer pastoral leadership that holds the church community together may be compromised.

While it would be possible (and on occasions may be necessary) for the Minister(s) to take on the role of Safeguarding Trustee, wherever possible it is preferable that the church identifies another member of the trustee body to take on this responsibility.

In addition to Level 3 training in Safeguarding, the Minister(s) will have a DBS check on appointment, which will be re-checked every 4 years.

#### **f) Workers with children**

All of those who work with children (without exception) should take personal responsibility for implementing the policy. They should each:

- › know and implement the guidelines for good practice
- › follow the agreed code of behaviour when working with children
- › be aware of ways in which children are harmed and possible signs of abuse
- › know what to do if a child discloses abuse
- › know what to do if an allegation is made about a fellow worker
- › know who to speak to if they have any suspicions or concerns.

Each person working with children will be given a copy of the church's Safeguarding Children Procedures, will be asked to sign that they've read this and will abide by them, and will be required to attend training on child protection issues.

Each worker will be trained to Level 2 in Safeguarding and have a DBS check on appointment. This training should be renewed every 4 years, and the DBS should be re-checked every 4 years.

If anyone working with children does not renew their training and update their DBS check within 5 years of their last training and DBS check, they will not be allowed to work with children until their training is updated and/or their DBS is re-checked.

### **g) Leaders of children's groups**

All leaders of groups will need to know all of the above. They will also need to know:

- › how to go about appointing new staff/volunteers, including DBS checks
- › the principles of good supervision
- › what to do if one of their workers shares with them a concern about a child
- › how to contact the Designated Person
- › how to access pastoral support for workers.

All leaders of the groups will be trained to Level 2 in Safeguarding and have a DBS check on appointment. This training should be renewed every 4 years, and the DBS should be re-checked every 4 years.

### **h) All attendees (church members or non-church members)**

All church attendees have a part to play. It is the responsibility of all within the church community to ensure there is a welcome for children and an intolerance of all that brings them harm. All attendees should be alert to situations where children may be vulnerable. All should know who to speak to if they suspect that a child is being harmed.

This policy is relevant to **every** area of Orchard Baptist Church (OBC) church life where children are present.

## **B. Policy statement**

### **Policy Statement on Safeguarding Children in Orchard Baptist Church**

(Referred to as “the church” or “OBC” in the Policy Statement)

The vision statement of the church is “*growing a community of people who love God and love others by cultivating deep roots and wide branches and bearing much fruit*”.

In fulfilling this vision, the church

- welcomes children into the life of our community
- has a programme of events for children

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability or any other irrelevant factor) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, and the current statutory guidance located in [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard).

As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all children associated with the church and will pray for them regularly. In pursuit of this, as members of OBC, we commit ourselves to the following policies and to the development of procedures to ensure their implementation. We commit to:

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

- Recognise it is the responsibility of each church member to help to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or spiritual abuse of children, and the duty of **all** to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected.

- Fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

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

- Exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, whether paid or volunteer.
- Provide appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children.

## **3. Respecting children**

- Adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children that all children are treated with respect and dignity.

## **4. Safe working practices**

- Provide a safe environment for activities with children and adopt ways of working with them that promote their safety and well-being.

## **5. A safe community**

- To prevent the bullying of children.
- To seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

## **OBC Safeguarding Team**

When possible, the Safeguarding Team will work together if and when issues arise. The church has appointed:

**Matt Mitchell-Farmer, Designated Person for Safeguarding**

07842 375290; [safeguarding@orchardbaptistchurch.org](mailto:safeguarding@orchardbaptistchurch.org)

He is the person to contact when abuse of children or adults at risk is disclosed, discovered or suspected. He will liaise with the OBC Safeguarding Team, the Association Safeguarding Contact and external agencies where necessary.

**Gill Goodliff, Safeguarding Trustee**

07498 296661; [gill.goodliff@orchardbaptistchurch.org](mailto:gill.goodliff@orchardbaptistchurch.org)

She will oversee and monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the church's charity trustees.

**Sarah Stapleton, Minister**

07966 828607; [sarah.stapleton@orchardbaptistchurch.org](mailto:sarah.stapleton@orchardbaptistchurch.org)

She can be contacted about issues surrounding safeguarding.

**Steve Barber, Minister**

07577 124852; [steve.barber@orchardbaptistchurch.org](mailto:steve.barber@orchardbaptistchurch.org)

He can be contacted about issues surrounding safeguarding.

**Gill Goodliff, Safeguarding Trainer**

07498 296661; [gill@goodliff.com](mailto:gill@goodliff.com)

Gill offers Level 2 'in house' training for people who need to renew Level 2 training.

## **Communication of the policy and procedures**

A copy of this policy statement will be available on our website.

A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of, or other person associated with the church.

A full copy of the policy and procedures will be given to all Trustees, every member of the Safeguarding Team and every organisation leader upon appointment.

A copy of the safeguarding procedures will be given to every person working with children upon appointment.

## **Review of the policy and procedures**

The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually. The policy statement will be read annually at the Annual General Meeting in May together with a report on the outcome of the annual review.

## **C. Policies and procedures**

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

*It is the duty of each church member to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children, and the duty of all 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.*

#### **1.1 Types of abuse**

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 main types of abuse as officially defined in government guidance: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. It is also recognised that 'spiritual abuse' can occur when an abuse of power takes place within a faith community.

#### **1.2 Who causes harm to children?**

It is important to recognise that children can be subject to harm in any and every setting. It is important for those working with children to be aware that harm may be perpetrated by adults of any age and by both men and women, by peers or by other children.

#### **1.3 Signs of abuse**

All those who have contact with children should be alert to the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and know how to respond to concerns they may have. All workers should also know to whom those concerns should be reported.

## 1.4 Ways that harm might be discovered

On occasions an incident or an injury will give cause for concern but often it is a series of incidents or an accumulation of concerns which indicate that a child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering harm.

## 1.5 What to do when a child expresses a concern

If abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered the concerns should be passed on to the Designated Person for Safeguarding within 24 hours. If the Designated Person is not available or is implicated in the concern, another member of the Safeguarding Team (if applicable) should be contacted, or the Southern Counties Baptist Association Safeguarding Contact. If a child is in imminent danger of harm, the police or emergency services should be contacted on 999 without delay.

A worker should never go and talk to the alleged abuser or try to investigate the allegations yourself.

### Do's

- Listen and clarify
- Give support
- Explain what happens next
- Take action

### Don'ts

- Trivialise
- Show shock, alarm or disapproval
- Question or push for information
- Offer false re-assurance
- Promise confidentiality

## 1.6 What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed?

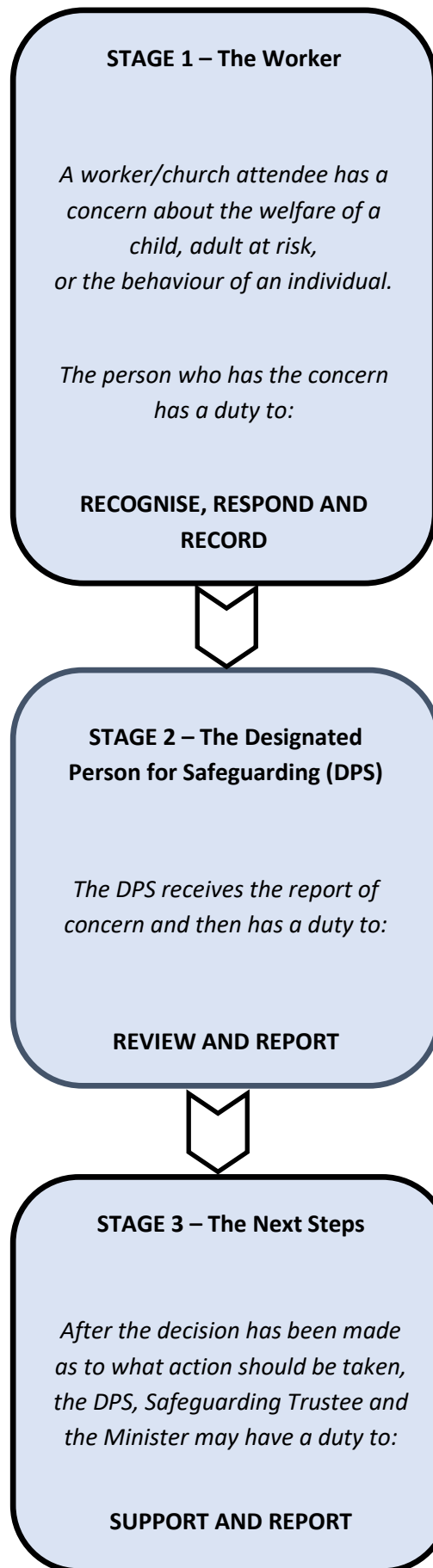
### Don'ts

- dismiss your concerns
- in particular do not ignore or dismiss concerns about a professional or a colleague
- confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns
- take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place
- investigate allegations
- act alone
- take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have  
(always work through the church's procedures)

### Do's

- follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns

**There is a three-stage process for responding to concerns:**



## STAGE 1 – THE WORKER

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child is to RECOGNISE the concerns, make a RECORD in writing and RESPOND by passing on their concerns to the DPS. If he/she is not contactable, or they are implicated in the situation, another member of the church Safeguarding Team should be contacted instead.

Concerns should be passed on to the DPS within 24 hours of it being raised. If anyone is considered to be in imminent danger of harm, a report should be made immediately to the police by calling 999. If such a report is made without reference to the DPS, they should be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

A written record using the standard incident report form should be made as soon as possible after a child or adult at risk tells you about harmful behaviour, or an incident takes place that gives cause for concern.

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 or adult at risk'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 bruising or other injuries that you may have noticed
- include an exact record of what the child or adult at risk has said, using their own words where possible
- 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 church Safeguarding Team (including the Minister(s)), representatives of any statutory authorities involved and the local Baptist association.

If concerns arise in the context of children's work, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk it through with their group leader, where appropriate. However, such conversations should not delay concerns being passed on to the DPS. It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and pass on their concerns to the DPS.

If a concern is brought to the attention of a group 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 pass on the concern to the DPS.

## **STAGE 2 – THE DESIGNATED PERSON FOR SAFEGUARDING (DPS)**

The duty of the DPS on receiving a report is to REVIEW the concern that they have received and REPORT the concern on to the appropriate people, where necessary.

### **The duty to REVIEW**

In reviewing the report that is received, the DPS:

- should take into account their level of experience and expertise in assessing risk to children or adults at risk.
- must take into account any other reports that have been received concerning the same individual or family.
- may speak with others in the church where appropriate (including the Minister(s) and church Safeguarding Team, unless allegations involve them) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision being made. Such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.

- may consult with other agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

### **The duty to REPORT**

The DPS will decide who the report should be referred on to, working in conjunction with the church Safeguarding Team where appropriate. They 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 in question, asking for continued observation where appropriate.
- inform parents / carers under certain circumstances, where doing so would not present any further risk of harm.
- make a formal referral to the police or local Social Services team.
- treat the matter with confidentiality to the relevant parties. This means not telling or hinting to others what has been disclosed, not even for prayer ministry purposes.

If a serious allegation is made against someone who works with children\* the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or equivalent. The LADO is located within Children's Services and 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.

In such cases the worker should step down from all church duties until the incident has been investigated by the statutory authorities. It may also be appropriate to put a Safeguarding Contract in place; this should be discussed with the local Regional Safeguarding Lead.

Whenever a formal referral is made to the police, Social Services or LADO, the DPS should report the referral to:

- the Safeguarding Trustee
- the Minister(s)
- the Regional Safeguarding Lead

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy. All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the DPS and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

### **STAGE 3 – THE NEXT STEPS**

Responsibilities to REPORT and SUPPORT in stage 3 of the process are shared by the church Safeguarding Team and the Minister(s).

#### **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, including:

Victims; Alleged perpetrators; Children; Adults at risk; Other family members; Church workers; Church Safeguarding Team; Minister(s); Leadership Team.

A model of good practice can be found in BUGB's *Supporting Those who have Experienced Abuse* (section 2.1.7).

#### **The duty to REPORT**

If a church worker has been accused of causing harm to children this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission by those churches that are registered with the Charity Commission.

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 there is also a statutory duty to report the incident to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

## 1.7 Allegations against Workers

If you see another worker acting in ways which concerns you or might be misconstrued, speak to the DPS about your concerns as soon as you can. This includes the actions or behaviours of those in leadership positions in the church.

Church workers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual accountability, holding each other to the highest standards of safeguarding practice. The following procedure should be followed:

- 1) When an allegation of abuse has been made do not approach the alleged perpetrator about it.
- 2) Follow the usual safeguarding procedure: Recognise, Respond, Record, Report.
- 3) Once the allegation has been reported to the DPS they can liaise with the relevant statutory authority and with the regional association Safeguarding Lead if they need further advice.
- 4) Whilst waiting for an outcome from the statutory authorities, the worker about whom concerns have been raised will be supervised as closely as possible, without raising suspicion.
- 5) Once the statutory authorities are involved, the church will follow their advice with regard to the next steps to take (for example suspension of worker, putting a contract in place).
- 6) A written record of all discussions with statutory authorities or other parties should be maintained by the DPS and stored securely and confidentially, where only those directly involved in safeguarding (DPS, Safeguarding Trustee, Minister(s)) can access them.

- 7) No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding; not even for prayer purposes.

The suspension of a worker following an allegation is, by definition, a neutral act. Our priority as a church is to protect children from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator. If the church is considering suspending a paid worker pending an investigation then it is best to seek support from the Regional Safeguarding Lead in the first instance.

It may be necessary, for the sake of the child to satisfy the needs of an investigation, for the alleged perpetrator to worship elsewhere. In such cases the DPS at the new church will be informed of the reasons for this happening.

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

The procedures above should be followed.

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Regional Safeguarding Lead in addition to following the church's usual procedures. Do not tell the Minister that a concern has been raised about them.

#### **When concerns are expressed about the church DPS / Safeguarding Trustee**

Any safeguarding concerns involving the DPS or Safeguarding Trustee should be raised with the Minister(s), they in turn should consult the Regional Safeguarding Lead. Do not tell the DPS / Safeguarding Trustee that a concern has been raised about them.

### **1.8 Abuse of Trust**

Relationships between children and their church workers can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The worker is someone in whom the child has placed a degree of trust. This may be because the worker has an educational role, is a provider of activities, or is even a significant

adult friend. It is not acceptable for a church worker to form a romantic relationship with a child with whom they have a relationship of trust.

While by no means restricted to young leaders/helpers, those who are in their early adult years will need to be particularly aware of the need not to abuse their position of trust in their relationships with other children who are not much younger than themselves.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 expanded the list of roles which are legally considered to be positions of trust to include anyone who is in a teaching, coaching, instructing, training or supervising role within sport or religion. This means that since May 2022 if an adult of any age is in a role where they are working directly with children aged 16 and 17 and forms a romantic or sexual relationship with them, they could be charged with criminal offences. If you have concerns about a relationship forming between an adult helper and a young person then you should notify the DPS.

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

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

### 2.1 Appointing workers

Some people may ask about helping out in the children's or youth work at OBC, others may be invited to help. For all appointments, the procedure below will be used. The only exception to this is for those workers who have been previously appointed to work in a different area of children's work within OBC and have been working recently within that group ('recently' shall be considered to be within the last 3 years) and for whom a personal recommendation from the leader is received. In such instances, the usual requirements for updating of DBS checks every 4 years and updating safeguarding training every 4 years shall be followed.

The appointment procedure is as follows:

- Step 1: Informal chat with organisation leader. The person may wish to visit the organisation. If so, the visit must be supervised throughout and it is recommended that no more than two visits are made until Step 7 is reached in the process.
- Step 2: If the organisation leader and candidate wish to proceed, the organisation leader will inform the Safeguarding Trustee (this could be done via e-mail)
- Step 3: The Safeguarding Trustee ensures the candidate is issued with a job profile, an information for volunteers sheet and asked to complete an application form.

Step 4: On receipt of the application form, the Safeguarding Trustee is responsible for arranging:

- for two references (non family) to be taken up (n.b three references will be taken for a paid post)
- a DBS check (section 2.8 details whether this is with Barred list)
- for the candidate to be given the powerpoint training presentation and the Safeguarding Children Procedures booklet
- a volunteer agreement

Step 5: On receipt of the references and a signed volunteer agreement the Safeguarding Trustee will arrange to interview the candidate. If necessary, the Safeguarding Trustee may arrange for other suitable people to conduct the interview (e.g. if the candidate is a close family member). It is recommended that the person interviewing is a trustee.

Step 6: Make the appointment decision. The Safeguarding Trustee will inform the candidate.

Step 7: The Safeguarding Trustee will countersign the volunteer agreement and give a copy to the candidate. The person may begin their work under supervision until they have completed the training outlined in step 8.

Step 8: New worker will be asked to attend the next OBC training event for Safeguarding Children (although if they have never been through full Level 2 training, they will be asked to attend an SCBA (or equivalent) course).

## 2.2 Appointing organisation leaders

Leaders of organisations will always be appointed by the OBC Leadership Team. If someone is appointed as organisation leader of a children's group but has not previously been appointed in a role within the children's work at OBC, they will need to be appointed according to the procedure outlined in 2.1 above.

Every organisation leader will be given a copy of this booklet and expected to read the booklet and follow its guidelines.

## 2.3 Appointing young leaders/helpers

In law, young leaders/helpers under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team.

- › for staffing ratios, the young leader/helper needs to be counted as a child and not as a leader
- › a young leader/helper must be closely supervised by an adult leader at all times
- › a young leader/helper must be adequately supported/mentored by an adult leader at all times
- › the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures apply to a young leader/helper under the age of 18 just as it does to any other child
- › the permission of parents or carers needs to be sought for the young leader/helper just as you would for any other person under 18
- › if a young leader/helper goes on a residential trip ideally they should have separate sleeping accommodation to both the adult leadership team and the children they are working with

Young leaders/helpers over the age of 16 and under the age of 18 will need to be appointed under the procedures outlined in 2.1 if they are appointed to work in a regulated activity with children in a group to which they do not belong.

Leaders over the age of 18 are considered as adults and will need to be appointed under the procedures outlined in 2.1.

It is recommended that young leaders/helpers should be appointed to lead a peer group not immediately below their own, but always to leave a gap of at least one peer group. If this principle were to be followed a sixteen year old being given leadership experience would not be placed in a leadership role with the 13 – 15 year olds, but at least one age group below.

If an Organisation Leader feels there is an occasion where it is appropriate to appoint a leader within their peer group or a peer group immediately below their own, they should discuss this with the Safeguarding Team and seek their approval prior to the appointment.

## **2.4 Appointing workers from overseas**

If the church is going to receive help from volunteers from overseas, for example as part of a mission activity, we will try and apply the same principles as we would in appointing a worker locally. The church will follow the following procedures whenever using volunteers from overseas.

Before the volunteer arrives in the UK:

- Each volunteer should complete and return a form similar to the church's normal application form for volunteer workers
- The sending church or organisation should be asked to obtain declarations from their local police force that there is no known reason why the volunteer cannot work with children. However, not all countries work to the same standards for their criminal records and so the information you see may not match with the UK standard
- Each volunteer shall be requested to supply two relevant and appropriate references regarding their suitability for work with children.

- Once the volunteer or team has arrived in the UK and before they start work with children, as part of the orientation and induction programme, the volunteers should be introduced to the church's Safeguarding Children Procedures.

Please note that these procedures apply only when those from overseas will be working with children from the UK. If adults from overseas only have responsibility for children that they bring with them in their own party these procedures will not need to be followed.

## **2.5 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 normally 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
- the candidate's right to work in the UK will be checked (this is a statutory requirement for all paid employment situations in the UK)
- a contract of employment will be issued (or 'terms of appointment' if it is a ministerial appointment)
- three references will be taken

## **2.6 Supervising workers**

The volunteer agreement defines

- who the worker will be accountable to
- who the worker will be responsible for

All new workers will need to be supervised more closely until the person responsible for them is sure that they are working safely and within the code of behaviour that has been adopted. We would also encourage a habit of helping one another out in developing best practice. Workers are encouraged to help one another maintain the culture of good practice that is the key to safeguarding children.

Safeguarding issues will be regularly on the agenda of meetings of children's leaders in the church so that all workers are constantly reminded of the need for vigilance. Regular meetings of all workers (usually once a term) will take place to share thoughts about the children and the activities of the organisation.

If it is felt that any worker is behaving inappropriately the procedures in section 1.7 should be followed (please note section 1.8 may also apply).

## **2.7 Workers seconded or on placement at OBC**

If a worker is seconded or offered a placement at OBC from programmes such as the Reign Internship programme, the church shall require the volunteer to have completed equivalent steps to those laid out in OBC's recruitment process. It is adequate to use information that the sponsoring organisation has gathered in recruiting the applicant, but this information may need supplementing to meet OBC's recruitment requirements.

## **2.8 DBS Checks – level of checking**

With reference to the BU document [Baptist.org.uk/dbschecksguide](http://Baptist.org.uk/dbschecksguide), we have agreed to conduct DBS checks at the following levels (this list includes roles involving children and roles involving adults – it is duplicated in the Safeguarding Adults Policy):

Area	Check	Rationale
Trustees (including safeguarding trustee)	Enhanced without barred list	BU advice
Designated Person for Safeguarding	Enhanced without barred list	BU advice
Ministers	Enhanced with barred list	BU advice (this test is done by SCBA for accredited ministers)
Graven Hill Family & Children's Worker	Enhanced with barred list	Consistency with ministry
Care Team – emergency child care	Enhanced with barred list	Treated in same way as one-to-one working, which carries increased risks
Youth Workers – not involved in one-to-ones	Enhanced without barred list	Does not meet the frequency criteria for checking with barred list
Youth workers – approved for one-to-one	Enhanced with barred list	Although not meeting the frequency criteria, the safeguarding feel the level of risk involved in this work warrants an Enhanced DBS check with barred list
Youth workers – overnight trips	Enhanced with barred list	BU advice
Promiseland Leaders	Enhanced with barred list	Could involve regulated activity (personal care of a child)
Promiseland Helpers	Enhanced without barred list	Does not involve regulated activity criteria (helpers should not be involved with personal care of child)
Awe Group Leaders	Enhanced without barred list	Does not qualified for check on barred list as this does not qualify as regulated activity.
Approved adult for music group, media team, tech team or similar teams	Enhanced without barred list	Does not qualified for check on barred list as this does not qualify as regulated activity.

### 3. Respecting children

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

#### 3.1 Respecting children

The following bullet points set out the code of behaviour for all children's workers.

- treat all children 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
- listen well to children. Be careful not to assume you know what a child 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 when they are using the toilet or showering
  - rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child
  - sexually provocative games
  - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in 'fun'
  - scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting a child.
- when it is necessary to control and discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment. (A situation may, however, arise where a child 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.
- workers should not normally plan to be alone with children (see section 3.2).

## **3.2 Guidelines for being alone with children (including one to ones)**

All workers should plan their work with children in such a way that they will not normally be alone with children where their activity cannot be seen by others. This will mean:

- a worker should never plan to be alone on church premises with children
- when there are insufficient leaders and workers to have two for each group, doors should be left open, or two groups should work in the same room (wherever possible all doors should be fitted with glass panels).
- at least two people should be present before the doors are opened as children arrive for a group and at least two adults should remain until the last child has left the building or room at the end of a meeting.
- a worker should never invite a child to their home alone. It may be 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**

There may be occasions when, despite careful planning, a worker finds themselves in a situation when they are in sole charge of children 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 them
- wherever possible immediately phone a member of the Safeguarding Team to inform them of the situation.
- make a written report of the situation immediately afterwards and give a copy to the Designated Person. The Designated Person will pass a copy on to the Safeguarding Team. 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. If the same situation keeps recurring, working practices can be reviewed.

There may be other situations when a child asks to speak to a worker on their own. The most common situation is when a youth worker is offering support or pastoral guidance to a child where privacy and confidentiality are important. The following guidelines should apply:

- if the worker believes that to speak to the child on their own would place them in a vulnerable position (for example, because the child has developed an inappropriate attachment to the worker) the worker should insist that another worker should also be present
- 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
- if this is not possible, the conversation is best held in a room with the door left open or where there is glass in the door so that others can see inside the room
- another adult should be in the building and the child should know that they are there
- another adult should know that the interview is taking place and with whom
- a worker should set an agreed time limit prior to the conversation 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 youth worker should not invite a child to their home alone nor go to the child's home if they are alone.

Children will want to speak to the person they most trust when looking for help and support. It is therefore important that all workers are aware of these guidelines so that they are able to respond appropriately when the situation arises. However it should be recognised that these guidelines are specifically designed for workers to respond to requests made by children. If it is felt to be appropriate for workers to be more proactive in working one to one with children, the guidelines in the next section should be followed.

## **Working one to one – youth work**

Most church youth work takes place within a group setting (youth club, small groups etc), however there are times when one to one work with a child is a necessary part of a good youth work programme. It would be rare for one to one work to be part of the normal pattern of work with children under secondary school age.

Working one to one with a child can come out of a number of different situations:

- taking time to listen as a child shares an issue they are facing
- offering ongoing support and advice
- a formal agreement involving a mentoring relationship between an adult and child
- the need to meet a child who is facing a crisis in their life
- discipleship of a child, including accountability, prayer, Bible study.

The following guidelines must be followed for one-to-one working:

### **a. Recognition**

Only those who have been approved by the Safeguarding Team shall engage in one to one working with children.

All workers should be aware that they need the specific permission of the church to work one to one if this is to be a routine part of their interaction with children.

### **b. Accountability**

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

### **c. 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, a child is not

becoming too dependent on the worker, and a child does not feel pressured to meet for a one-to-one.

#### **d. Maintaining distance**

Workers need to maintain a healthy self-awareness when working one to one. 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 child. Workers need to have adequate knowledge of where to refer a child, 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.

#### **e. Confidentiality**

Appropriate confidentiality is necessary. When children share personal information they will need to know that the worker is not going to share that information with others in the church – particularly as the workers can be friends of the child’s parents. However, workers must understand that if they believe the child they are talking to, or other children, are at risk of harm then they have a responsibility to pass that information on. Great care should therefore be taken before promising confidentiality.

What is most important is that the child knows what the boundaries of confidentiality are. There may be times when the worker believes that it would be helpful to talk to others about the matters that have been shared. In this situation, the worker should talk this through with the child.

#### **f. Venue**

Any contact with children should be in a public place, at an appropriate time and in view of another adult (i.e. early morning, late night or whilst they should be at school is not appropriate). For example a one to one session could be arranged:

- at the end of a youth group event whilst others are clearing up
- during a youth group session, in a side room with the door open and others knowing that the meeting is taking place
- 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 child and the youth worker. One to one work must be practised safely, appropriately and within these guidelines. A child should never feel under any obligation to work one to one. Whatever age group we are working with, one to ones must not operate outside of the law.

### **Working one-to-one – emergency child care**

The following guidelines must be followed:

#### **a. Recognition**

Only those who have been approved by the Safeguarding Team shall be on the emergency child care helps list.

#### **b. Accountability**

A simple log sheet should be kept regarding who, where and when emergency child care was provided.

#### **c. Supervision**

The leader of the Care Team must be kept informed of all occasions when emergency child care is provided by a member of the Care Team. They should also be informed of all subsequent support offered to the family even if this support has not been arranged through the Care Team.

### 3.3 Guidelines for offering transport to children

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

Giving lifts to children is one of the areas where boundaries can become blurred in the life of the church community. Is the leader of a group offering a lift to a child to attend a meeting as part of her responsibility as an appointed leader in the church, or because she is a friend of the child's parents, or a relative of the child?

For the sake of clarity it is better to work on the principle that whenever an appointed children's worker gives a lift to children (other than their own children) to a church-run children's activity they should follow the procedures laid down by the church.

It is important that the church and parents are clear about the nature of arrangements for offering lifts to children to and from church based activities. If the arrangements are informal, private arrangements made between parents the following procedures do not need to be applied. However, if the transport arrangements are offered and made by the church or organisation the procedures set out below should always be in place.

The following guidelines need to be followed:

- if it is possible, two adults should be present in a car with children
- parents should give permission for their child to be given transport and should be informed at what time to expect their child home
- where possible workers should avoid giving regular lifts to children 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 or dropping them off 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 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 church premises or home, or unnecessary diversions should be avoided
- workers should avoid being alone in a car with a child who is particularly vulnerable; for example, a child with a crush on a leader, or a child whose behaviour is difficult to manage.

Furthermore, when children are transported in cars

- written permission from the parent/carer should be obtained
- the driver should understand and sign the Safe Driving Policy before transporting children
- the driver should have fully comprehensive insurance which covers voluntary work (or in the case of a paid 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 should be used for young children in accordance with the law
- if a volunteer driver who has not been appointed as a children's worker is used to transport children on church activities, the driver should be appointed following the procedures outlined under the church's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

### **When a mini-bus or coach is used to transport children**

Many hiring organisations now ask for the driver to have a MIDAS certificate. MIDAS is the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme organised by the Community Transport Association.

- 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.

### 3.4 Guidelines for appropriate physical contact with children

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 is it for your own benefit?
- if no-one else is present it is always advisable to avoid physical contact
- 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 child 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
- if you find that the child 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
- 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.

### 3.5 Guidelines for electronic communication

- if a leader communicates with a child via any electronic media (texts, emails, social media etc) the leader MUST ALWAYS copy in another adult to the communication (preferably another Youth Leader or a parent).
- the use of electronic communication should be kept to a minimum
- a leader is NEVER to communicate to a child using Snapchat
- parents or carers and children themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc.
- workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children from whom appropriate consent has been given

- workers should not put any pressure on children to reveal their email address, mobile phone number etc.
- only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed safeguarding procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations
- where a child 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 and who was involved
- workers should not share any personal information with children, and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role
- workers should be careful in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible mis-interpretation of their motives
- clear, unambiguous language should be used, avoiding the use of unnecessary abbreviations
- electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 7.00 am and 10.00 pm
- '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 between tablets and mobile devices)
- the use of a camera on a tablet or mobile phone should comply with the church's policy on photos/videos (see section 4.7)
- if youth leaders are going to use social networking sites (e.g. facebook) they should ensure that all of its content is appropriate for children to see
- if a youth group has its own social networking page, photos and videos should not be posted without consent of group members

- all group pages should be closed groups, no non-member/leader or non-alumni should have access to the group's posts and photos

### **3.6 Guidelines for electronic meetings (e.g. Zoom, Teams etc)**

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- There should always be two adult leaders for the duration of any electronic children's meeting
- The youth leader shall appoint an administrator for the meeting (or they could do this themselves)
- The electronic meeting shall be password protected
- The electronic meeting shall use a waiting room, enabling only those verified to enter
- The electronic meeting shall only allow children and parents (optional) to join, in addition to the approved leaders and the administrator
- The electronic meeting shall not be recorded
- The administrator shall close the meeting once the leaders are ready to leave

## 4. Safe working practices

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

### 4.1 Parental registration and consent form

When a child joins a group for the first time, the parent/carer should be asked to complete a registration form. There are two versions of this form; a shorter one for a situation where a parent /carer always remains on the premises (e.g. a children's group during a church service), and a longer one for a situation where a parent/carer leaves the premises.

If it is not possible for this form to be completed immediately, the parent/carer should be asked to complete the form and return it the next time the child returns to the group. In such cases, emergency contact details should be taken.

The details on the registration 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 leader of the organisation is responsible for obtaining the parental registration forms and ensuring that these are stored securely. In complying with data protection legislation, it is important that the information on the registration form is accurate and is held only while the information is necessary and relevant. This means that the registration forms need to be kept up to date. In order to achieve this:

- parents/carers will be required to complete the registration form annually, ensuring that the contact information is accurate and that any changes in a child's medical condition etc are updated
- the records of any children who have stopped attending should be destroyed

The leader will need to be aware of information contained on these forms and may need to find out further information from the parent/carer. A conversation with the parent/carer may be necessary or the leader may invite the parent/carer to complete a Needs Assessment (these can be obtained from a member of the Safeguarding Team).

The leader will need to make other leaders aware of any relevant information gained.

## **4.2 Information letter to parents/carers**

Parents/carers should also be given a letter as soon as their child joins the group which contains the following information:

- name and contact telephone number for the leader of the group/activity attended by the child
- outline details of the group/activity the child is attending, including the starting time and the time the event ends, together with expectations as to whether children should be collected or whether they make their own arrangements to go home
- that the church has a Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures 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
- name and contact number of the Designated Person

The leader of an organisation is responsible for compiling the information letter to parents/carers and ensuring that every parent/carer is given the information letter as soon as a child joins the group.

## **4.3 Health and safety**

The church has a Health and safety policy and Basic Food Hygiene Guidance. The Safeguarding Trustee will ensure that the policy is implemented with children in mind, and all involved in preparing food comply with the Basic Food Hygiene Guidance.

Because some of our activities take place at different venues, the leader of each children’s activity is responsible to assess health and safety in the building being used. It is helpful to go around our building using the ‘eyes of a child’, from their height and see what you notice! The leader of the organisation is responsible for ensuring that the relevant aspects of the Health and safety policy are being upheld within their organisation.

<b>Furniture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it in a safe condition, child sized etc?</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are potentially hazardous tools, cleaning fluids etc stored in a safe, locked place?</li> </ul>
<b>Electrical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have checks on all electrical equipment and use socket covers when they are not in use?</li> </ul>
<b>Lighting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the building well lit internally and externally especially around entrance points?</li> </ul>
<b>Windows in doors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there are no windows in doors, could windows be added so that activities in rooms can be seen by others in the building?</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How easy would it be for a child to leave the building during an activity without being noticed?</li> <li>• How easy would it be for a stranger to get into the building during a children’s activity without being noticed?</li> </ul>
<b>First Aid</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a first aid box (this may not be necessary in all circumstances) - is it kept full and up to date ?</li> <li>• Are there people who are trained in first aid on site?</li> <li>• Do you have an accident book for record purposes?</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there suitable fire fighting equipment over the whole of the premises?</li> <li>• Has a fire risk assessment been carried out?</li> <li>• Do all of the children’s workers know how to respond to a fire alarm?</li> </ul>

In addition, the leader of each organisation should ensure that every worker:

- is responsible to uphold the church's Health and safety policy as directed by the leader
- should report incidents and concerns about Health and safety matters to the Church Secretary
- should be aware of where the First Aid equipment is kept
- should know what procedures to follow in the event of a fire
- should know how to report accidents and first aid incidents  
keep a register

#### 4.4 Risk assessments

As well as assessing the premises for the risks that they may pose for children, all leaders of children's groups should assess the risks involved in the programme that they are planning. They should produce general and specific risk assessments. General risk assessment should be done for the general activities the group will be involved with. 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.)

Alongside this all workers should be aware of the risk assessments and continually attentive to the risks involved in running any activity.

It is the responsibility of the leaders of children's groups to ensure that risk assessments are completed. This may be delegated to other leaders.

There are a number of ways to carry out risk assessments. The following is a basic, straightforward method recommended by the Health and Safety Executive. This method is dependent on identifying potential 'hazards' and then assessing the 'risk' that those hazards could pose.

- A **hazard** is anything that could cause harm

- The **risk** is the likelihood (whether high or low) that someone will be harmed by the hazard.

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

Walk around the venue, think through your programme and think about the individual children you are working with (taking into account age, 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, youth 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 reused at a later date.

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

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

## **4.5 Ratios**

A couple or immediate family members should be considered to count as only one person when planning events or activities and the distribution of workers through different groups; for example if a couple or immediate family members want to work together then a third person will need to be assigned to that group unless approval from the Safeguarding Team has been given.

A number of factors will come into play in assessing the ratio for any particular activity or group:

### **The age of the children**

- 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 manage?

### **The venue**

- If your buildings are large and sprawling and it is difficult to contain children while on the premises it may be necessary to have additional personnel

- Activities that take place away from the church premises normally require a higher ratio of adults to children than those that take place inside.

### Covering for emergencies

- How will you manage if someone has an accident and needs immediate medical attention?
- If one of your workers is likely to be 'on call' is there sufficient cover in the event that s/he is called away?

### Gender balance

- If you have a mixed group of children it is ideal to try to ensure that you 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 the starting point in calculating appropriate ratios for your groups and activities. If any special factors emerge within your risk assessment the recommended ratio should be increased in order to ensure the safety of the children.

In calculating the ratios of workers to children the young leaders/helpers who are under the age of 18 should not be counted among your number of adult workers.

Indoor	Activities	Outdoor	Activities
0-2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	0-2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)	3 years	1:4 (minimum 2)
4-7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	4-7 years	1:6 (minimum 2)
8-12 years	2:20 (male & female) plus 1 extra adult for every	8-12 years	2:15 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every additional 8 children

	additional 10 children		
13 and over	2:20 (male and female) plus 1 extra adult for every 10 additional children	13 and over	2:20 (male and female) plus 1 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 leader 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 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.
- A copy of the report will be given to the leader of the organisation and the Designated Person.

If the reduced staffing will lead to one adult being alone with a child or a group of children off church premises then (if there is time) the event should be cancelled.

## **The on-going situation**

When insufficient volunteers can be found to staff a particular group at the optimum level a careful assessment of the situation should be made to see if the risks can be reduced or managed in a sustainable way.

- Are there ways of adapting the programme that would reduce the level of risk?
- Could the group meet at the same time as another group so that in the event of an emergency additional staff cover is available on the premises?
- Could a cap be placed on the number of children attending the group to keep the ratio within manageable limits?

Any decision to run a group with staff ratios that are below the recommended level should be taken by the trustees of the church. The decision should be recorded in their minutes together with

- the reasons why they believe that this decision is justified
- any measures that have been taken to minimise the risks to children

## **4.6 Outings and overnight events**

All outings or overnight events should have prior approval from the Safeguarding Team.

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

- A specific 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.
- The children should be divided into groups, each with a responsible adult, even if the whole group is to remain together. Each adult should be given a written list of those children for whom they have responsibility.
- 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.

Parents should be given full information prior to an event and a consent and medical form should be completed. The information given to a parent should include the following:

- name of visit or activity
- date
- venue/destination
- name, address and telephone number of leader responsible for the event
- names of other leaders who will be present
- contact telephone number of the venue (or mobile number of leader)
- a brief description of the activities/programme. If children are not to be supervised all of the time, this should be made clear to parents
- departure place and time
- return place and time
- cost (and to whom cheques should be payable)
- transport arrangements
- items to be brought (e.g. coat, swimming kit, walking boots, packed lunch, money etc.)
- date by which reply is to be made, and to whom it should be sent

Parental consent will be obtained prior to the activity.

The leader should make appropriate arrangements for contacting parents in an emergency e.g. leaving a contact list with someone not on the trip.

If personal cars are being used to transport children, all those giving lifts need to understand and sign the Safe Driving Policy

## **Joint Youth Events**

For any joint youth event, leaders should be clear as to who is taking responsibility for the children from OBC. If responsibility for children is being taken by another church or group, this should be made clear to parents in the information letter. If it is an event where the children remain the responsibility of our leaders, then the leaders should ensure that our policy is being adhered to (e.g. correct ratios of approved adults, health and safety issues, etc.)

## **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 children and workers.

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

- Risk assessment:
  - 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 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/carers 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 and consent for emergency medical treatment.
- 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
  - It is not acceptable for workers to share sleeping accommodation with children. Instead, workers should be situated in close proximity and ensure that the children know where to go if they need help. There should be at least two workers on duty until all young people are asleep
  - Where a child is questioning their gender identity or considering, progressing or has completed gender reassignment we will consult with them and their parents about arrangements for residential trips and sleepovers. If needed the DPS will seek advice from the Regional Safeguarding Lead.

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 when planning residential events:

- At least one of the workers/leaders should be responsible for First Aid and should hold an appropriate, valid certificate, if deemed appropriate by the risk assessment
- The person responsible for catering should follow the Basic Food Hygiene Guidance
- 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 a good idea to notify the 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/carers have returned a health form stating any special dietary requirements and current medication, giving the name and telephone number of the child's doctor and consenting to emergency medical treatment.
- Residential activities must have safety rules e.g. 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 you should check that this organisation is registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and has 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.

- Swimming trips need to adhere to the following. Recognising that children are likely to be dispersed around the swimming area with additional requirements for oversight as they get changed or visit the toilets there will be an increased adult to child ratio for swimming trips. Prior to the trip, workers will establish the swimming ability of the children attending and obtain specific consent. Workers should never change in front of the children.

We have a responsibility in law to act as 'loco parentis'. This means that leaders must act as a reasonably prudent parent would. We must ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to maintain the health and safety of those whose care is entrusted to us. A risk assessment will consider what the hazards are – this assessment should also consider, amongst other things, the age of those participating, known health problems and the level of competency of those in a supervisory role.

## **4.7 Photography (including video)**

The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Signed consent should be obtained from parents/carers for photographs to be taken at church activities.
- 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.
- Photographing children should only take place in the presence other people, and preferably another leader.
- If photographs of children are uploaded by a children's worker to public social media, published or displayed in any other way the Using Images of Children and Adults at Risk Policy must be adhered to.

- Photographs can be shared in a closed social media group (e.g. the OBC Youth WhatsApp group).
- When taking photographs of children, it is preferable to use group pictures.

## 4.8 Children supporting children

Whilst Orchard Baptist Church is happy to facilitate children-supporting-children schemes, it must be recognised by the parents of all the children involved that the Church is unable to supervise such schemes.

Such schemes shall follow these guidelines:

- All parents involved in such schemes are to take responsibility for supervising all contact
- Should contact be deemed to be unsuitable, it is the responsibility of the parents to stop contact. It would also be helpful to let the church know if this situation arises
- Whilst it is up to the parents involved to establish their own parameters for children-supporting-children communication, it is suggested the following steps could be taken:
  - Social media contact is restricted to set times which parents are aware of (i.e. avoid casual contact)
  - All communication should happen in a place in the house where parents are present
  - No communication should happen from any bedroom or inaccessible place
  - No communication via Snapchat
  - Parents to be able to listen to or read any communication at all times

## 5. Safer community

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

### 5.1 Prevention of bullying

Bullying is another form of abuse, and it can be verbal or physical. Bullying doesn't just happen to children; adults can be victims too. There is no legal definition of bullying, but it is usually defined as a repeated pattern of behaviour intended to cause emotional or physical harm to another person or exert power over them. The effect of bullying on the victim can be profound, both emotionally and physically, regardless of their age, ability or status.

It is important to recognise that bullying happens within churches, and it is not isolated to the children. Anyone in the church can be a victim of bullying, just as anyone in the church can be the bully, including those in leadership.

Some examples of bullying that could arise in the church context are:

- Being verbally or physically abusive towards another person
- Isolating or deliberately ignoring someone, or excluding them from group activities
- Spreading rumours and malicious untruths about another person in the church
- Use of email, phone or social media to publicly challenge or undermine someone
- Name calling and personal insults
- Making false accusations
- Sending abusive messages or degrading images via phone, email or social media

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

reclusive. It is important that churches are able to recognise when bullying is occurring and are prepared to take action to resolve the situation.

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

- Withdrawal from group or church activities; appearing anxious, tearful or more reticent than usual, particularly in a certain context; development of mental health difficulties, such as depression or anxiety disorders; drop in performance relating to any church roles; physical injuries.

In order to help prevent bullying, the following procedures will be adopted within the church:

- Where appropriate, the children will be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour for their groups, which makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable. This should then be displayed somewhere visible to the whole church.
- Where appropriate, the church will display signs stating the importance of valuing and respecting each other even in disagreements and this will be practically embedded into the leadership approach to others.
- Everyone in the church, whether children or adults, should know how they can report any incidents of bullying.
- All allegations of bullying will be treated seriously and details will be carefully checked before action is taken.
- The bullying behaviour will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible.
- An attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour.
- All allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with the actions that are taken.
- Where an allegation of bullying is made against a church or group leader, advice will be sought from the Local Regional Safeguarding lead as this should be addressed.

- Incidents of bullying may be reported to the statutory authorities in line with the church safeguarding procedures.

It is important to distinguish bullying from other behaviour, such as respectfully challenging or disagreeing with someone else's beliefs or behaviours, setting reasonable expectations with regard to work deadlines and activities or taking legitimate disciplinary action.

### **Online safety**

Bullying online and on social media is as serious as physical, in person bullying. In contrast to in person bullying there is often no escape from bullying online in a world where people, especially children, are accessing their online world from wherever they are; there is no "safe space" and the emotional impact of online bullying can be significant as a result. With this in mind the same procedures apply to disclosures of online bullying as in person incidents.

## **5.2 When a child is involved in a music group, the media team, the tech team or other similar teams**

When a child is involved in a music group or music practice, the media team or the tech team, or other similar teams, at least one 'approved' adult (i.e. a person who has been appointed according to OBC's Safeguarding Children appointment procedure) needs to be present so long as there are other adults present. There is to be no one-to-one working unless permission is gained beforehand from the Leadership Team and the guidelines about one-to-one working are followed (see section 3.2). The 'approved' adult must be aware that s/he carries the responsibility for supervising a child in this situation.

## **5.3 When help is offered through the Care Team**

In emergency situations the Care Team may be asked to help with child care at short notice. Only 'approved' adults may be assigned to do this from the Care Team. In such emergencies, one-to-one working is permissible, though should be avoided if at all possible. The

Safeguarding Trustee and Care Team Leader should be notified as soon as possible when this happens.

## **5.4 General Church Gatherings**

The church community is unlike many other communities that work with children. The church community is an all-age community seeking to make space for all - all ages, all abilities, all backgrounds. Indeed one of our six core values at OBC is that we believe that we are called to be inclusive communities, with a gospel welcome extended to all.

Where an organisation's sole focus is to work with children, it is possible for that organisation to establish very firm boundaries such that anyone who is thought to be unsuitable to work with children can be excluded from the organisation. While churches are in a position to exclude such people from holding positions of trust with children, churches would want to do everything possible for those people still to find their rightful place within the community of the church.

In this kind of community there will be occasions when boundaries become blurred. For example, there will be times when it will not be at all clear whether the church is taking responsibility for the care of children or whether the children, while on church premises, are still in the care and responsibility of their parents. There will be a number of occasions when children will be present on church premises as part of the all-age community of the church where careful consideration needs to be given as to what it means to provide them with a safe environment:

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

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

In order to minimise risk of harm to children the following guidelines will be adhered to:

- OBC's Safeguarding Children Policy need to be adopted, owned and understood by the whole church membership. The annual review of the policy should address areas of church life where adults and children come together but where no formal children's activities are being organised. The report of the review should also give an occasion for educating the church meeting and helping all church members and members of the congregation to understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.
- Good and clear communication with parents/carers is imperative so that they understand when the church is taking responsibility for their children and when the church understands the children are in the care of their parents/carers.
- Whenever children are on church premises, regardless of whether they are in the care of their parents or of the church, the church will be responsible for health and safety issues regarding the church premises.
- If the church is aware of hazards affecting the welfare and safety of children in the context of church-organised activities or relating to the church premises, it has a duty to take action to minimize the risks posed by those hazards.

### **Before and after church services**

Sunday services are a time for Church. Before the service, members of the congregation greet one another and catch up on the week's news and after the morning service people are encouraged to linger over refreshments. During this time 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. Children aged 8 and below should be collected from their classes by a parent/carer, unless alternative arrangements have been made with the group leader. Once the children have

been collected from their group the responsibility for each child reverts from the group leaders to the parents or adult who is in charge of collecting them.

Children under the age of 8 need to be accompanied by a parent (or another adult identified by the parent) to church.

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 road?
- Are there any areas of the church building that should be out of bounds for children or where children should be closely supervised? E.g. The kitchen should normally be out of bounds to children.
- Does the church supervise the baptistry when used?
- If there are any adults in the congregation who pose a risk to children their behaviour should be closely monitored during these times. If there are known offenders attending it is important that the conditions of the offender's contract are fully enforced and adhered to.
- At the end of the service, the duty leader should carefully check that the church building is empty and that all children have left the church premises before the building is locked.

### **All-age services**

During all-age services:

- Parents/carers who are present have responsibility for their children
- Parents/carers 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.

- Parents/carers who send their children unaccompanied should understand the level of care and supervision that their children will be given.
- Where a group of children is expected to attend (e.g. Holiday Club Service or Gospel Choir) the parents or carers will have a proper expectation that their children are in the care of the leaders of the group.
- Again, it is not wise for children under the age of 8 to be on church premises unless they are in the care of an adult. Either it should be insisted that children under the age of 8 are accompanied by a parent/carer (or another adult identified by a parent/carer), or the church should make arrangements for an adult to supervise such young children.

### **Multi-generational dramatic or musical production**

The experience of putting on a dramatic or musical production that brings the whole church family together can be a powerful way of building relationships across the church family. However, care should be taken that the church's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures are not compromised during the process, thus putting children at risk. However, neither should fears about safeguarding issues make such a project unworkable, because it is thought that everyone who has any kind of contact with children will have to have a DBS Disclosure.

Children will be appropriately protected if the following guidelines are followed:

- named people will be responsible for the care and welfare of children during the rehearsals and production
- these people will be appointed under the procedures laid down under the church's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and will be fully conversant with the church's Safeguarding Children Procedures
- at least two of these named people will be present whenever children are involved in rehearsals and for the production itself

- these named people will be responsible for ensuring the welfare of children and in particular will be vigilant to ensure that all interaction between adults and children is appropriate and does not pose a risk of harm to children.

## **5.5 Hiring out the premises**

This section is written for the future possibility that the church will own buildings which it will hire out to other users.

If any property owned/leased by the church is hired out by others who work with children, it is good practice to require them to have a safeguarding children policy and accompanying procedures in place, based on the latest Home Office recommendations.

A clause should be included in any official hiring agreement. As evidence of this the person arranging the hire agreement should request a copy of the hiring organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures document. It is not our responsibility to ensure that the Safeguarding Children 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 your premises were not following appropriate safeguarding procedures and that children were being placed at risk, the church should seriously consider terminating the rental agreement.

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

'One-off' private hirers (for example, children's parties) would not be expected to have a Child protection policy, but they would still need to show due care and attention. For general information on letting arrangements refer to the Baptist Union Corporation guideline document B05 - Hiring of Church Premises.

## 5.6 Working with alleged or known offenders

When it is known that a person who has been convicted of abusing children is attending our church, it is important that their behaviour within the church community 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 allegations of abuse but hasn't been convicted.

In determining the details of the contract:

- The DPS will inform and take advice from the Regional Safeguarding Lead.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken with the help of the Regional Safeguarding Lead to determine the contents of the Safeguarding Contract using the BUGB safeguarding risk assessment tool.
- There will be a discussion about who should be informed about the nature of the offence and the details of the contract.
- The rights of the offender to re-build their life without people knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against the need to protect children.
- The members of the church Safeguarding Team will always be informed.
- The DPS should determine whether the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register. If so, the DPS should contact the offender's specialist probation officer (SPO) who will inform the church of any relevant information or restrictions that they should be aware of.

An open discussion will be held with the person concerned which will contribute to the risk assessment and in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract will be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour. The person will be required to sign the contract and it will be monitored and enforced. If the contract is broken certain sanctions will be discussed and considered with the Regional Safeguarding Lead.

### **Making provision for those who are children or have learning difficulties**

A risk assessment and formal contract may be quite a daunting process for someone with learning difficulties or someone who is still a child, yet having safeguards in place is still necessary. Therefore, an alternative may be to arrange a meeting with the individual in question where they can be taken through the main elements of a formal contract in a way that is non-threatening and easy to understand. Notes would be taken and the individual would need to verbally agree to the requirements laid out in the meeting.

Rather than signing a formal 'contract', the individual would instead sign to say that they agree with the minutes or meeting notes, and that they will stick to what has been agreed during the meeting. This will result in the same outcome as a contract but is a more informal and appropriate approach for an adult at risk. The agreed requirements will need to be reviewed regularly to make sure that the individual is complying, exactly as a formal contract would be. The church will work with the Regional Safeguarding Lead throughout this process.

## **D. List of Supporting Documents for the Policy**

*All these documents can be obtained from a member of the Safeguarding Team.*

Documents for all children's workers:

- Incident report form
- OBC Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Safeguarding powerpoint

Documents for some children's workers:

- Basic Food Hygiene Guidance
- Safe Driving Policy

Documents for organisation leaders:

- Information letter for parents/carers – example
- OBC Using Images of Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Needs assessment template
- Registration and consent form (longer version)
- Registration and consent form (Sundays only)
- Risk assessment template

Documents for Safeguarding Team and Trustees:

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention Policy
- Data Retention Protocol for Safeguarding Documents
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding contract – risk assessment

Documents for appointing children's worker:

- Application form (for volunteers)

- Application form (for paid workers)
- Children and youth reference form
- Information for volunteers sheet
- Job description - example
- Letter to referees
- Volunteer agreement

Other policies that are referred to (or sit alongside) this policy:

- OBC Adults at Risk Policy, Procedures and Guidelines
- OBC Health and Safety Policy
- OBC Using Images of Children and Adults at Risk Policy

*Revision dates*

March 2013

Reviewed November 2013

Reviewed November 2014

Reviewed November 2015

Reviewed December 2016

Revised February 2017

Reviewed November 2017

Reviewed December 2018

Reviewed November 2019

Updated June 2020

Reviewed February 2021

Updated May 2021

Revised February 2022

Updated April 2023

Reviewed May 2023

Updated March 2024

