

ROMSEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Registered Charity No. 1215047 Charitable Incorporated Organisation



SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2026

Approved Church members 10/06/26

Summary

This policy includes 3 sections.

RBC Trustees, Leaders and Staff team should read all sections and Appendices.

SECTION 1 Policy Statement and overview states the rationale and guiding principles behind the policy, and should be read by everyone involved in RBC in any capacity.

SECTION 2. Safeguarding procedures explains the processes that must be followed in cases of safeguarding concern. **To be read by everyone involved in RBC in any capacity, along with Appendix 1 – Types and indicators of abuse.**

Safer Recruitment guidelines including DBS checks

SECTION 3. Best Practice Guidelines. This section includes detailed guidance regarding working with children, working with adults at risk, including those with mental health needs, pastoral care responsibilities, digital safety, health and safety.

Relevant sections to be read by staff and volunteers including all those who are involved in pastoral support, café team, those giving lifts, AV volunteers.
Included in this section is a policy statement regarding bullying.

In the event of safeguarding incidents responders to the incident should read detailed guidance in Appendix 2

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SECTION 1

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

In developing this policy, Romsey Baptist Church (RBC) confirms that we will work with safeguarding services and statutory agencies and that we are committed to safeguarding everyone who comes into contact with the Church and its activities. RBC's commitment to safeguarding reminds us that God cares about the welfare and wellbeing of all people.

SAFEGUARDING POLICY OVERVIEW

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all members of Romsey Baptist Church to give paramount importance to the nurture and care of children, young people and adults at risk in a safe and secure environment and to pray for them regularly. It is about preventing harm to children and adults wherever possible. We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and each of us may be regarded as at risk at some time in our lives. All children, young people and adults who may be at risk (regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation) have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse which can occur in all families and communities.

Prevention and reporting of abuse

It is the duty of each church member to help prevent the abuse of children and adults at risk, and the duty of each church member to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and adults at risk. Any abuse, disclosed, discovered or suspected will be reported in accordance with our procedures. The church will fully cooperate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church. The church will challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust. If abuse has occurred we will ensure that informed and appropriate pastoral care is offered to any child, young person or adult who has suffered abuse, including support to make a complaint if so desired.

Safer recruitment, support and supervision of workers

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

Respecting children and adults at risk

The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and adults at risk so that they are shown the respect due to them. Everyone should value, listen to and respect children, young people and adults who may be at risk, encouraging them to be active contributors to the church community.

Safer working practices

The church is committed to providing an environment that is as safe as possible and will adopt ways of working that promote the safety and well being of children and adults at risk. We will further develop a culture that enables and encourages concerns to be raised and responded to appropriately and consistently and that protects children, young people and adults who may be at risk from actual or potential harm.

The church is committed to the prevention of bullying.

Putting policy into practice

We will ensure there is clear information available regarding our safeguarding arrangements, including a copy of the RBC Safeguarding Policy and other relevant information such as reporting arrangements on our website and displayed on the church noticeboard. We will also provide a full copy of the policy to all members of staff and those on the Trustee and Leadership teams, and to make available to members and those who attend RBC.

The policy is subject to yearly review by the Trustee team with any amendments being brought to the attention of the church members.

Any concerns about the policy itself should be reported to the Trustees

Trustee@romseybaptist.church

Safeguarding points of contact for RBC

Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)	• Bronwen Clemons ◦ .clemons@romseybaptist.church
Safeguarding Team	• Fiona Blaker, Minister RBC ◦ Fiona.blaker@romseybaptist.church • Hisham Saba, Leader ◦ saba@romseybaptist.church • Hazel Hayter, Trustee ◦ hayter@romseybaptist.church
DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) verifier	• Sara Davis ◦ Sara.davis@romseybaptist.church
Regional Safeguarding Lead	• Southern Counties Baptist Association ◦ scba.org.uk/safeguarding
See Appendix 3 for role specifications	

Who is a child, young person or adult who may be at risk?

Children and young people: As specified by the Working Together to Safeguard Children Act 2018 anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child. Within this policy we will be referring to children (aged 0-10) and young people (aged 11-17) collectively as child/ children. When we are referring specifically to either group we will specify this.

Adults who may be at risk: The Care Act 2014 defines an adult to whom safeguarding duties apply as someone who has needs for care and support—**those experiencing mental health needs**, and those affected by illness, physical, sensory or learning disabilities, or the use of drugs or alcohol—and who, as a result, may be unable to protect themselves from risk.

A person, adult or child, may also have increased vulnerability and so be at risk for differing lengths of time due to circumstances in their life. These circumstances can be temporary or permanent and may be visible or invisible, eg, someone who was recently bereaved will be at risk for a time.

Care Act 2014

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

Mental Health and Safeguarding

The church recognises that mental health is an integral part of overall wellbeing. We are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for those experiencing poor mental health, while ensuring that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place. Further guidance in section 3, Working with adults at risk.

SECTION 2

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

2.1 PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING ABUSE

What to do if abuse is suspected or disclosed

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused in a range of settings, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. There are many ways in which people suffer abuse, see **Appendix 1, Types and Indicators of Abuse**, for further information.

If a child, young person or adult tells you that they have experienced abuse, are experiencing abuse or are concerned that they or someone else may be at risk of abuse, (a disclosure), or if you see or hear something of concern, then you are required to report this to the DPS following these steps below.

- 1) **Recognise** that abuse may be taking place.
- 2) **Respond** to the concern.
- 3) **Record** all the information received.
- 4) **Report** the concern to the Designated Person for Safeguarding who may, in turn, report it to the statutory authorities.

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
❖ Listen to and acknowledge what is being said. ❖ Try to be reassuring & remain calm. ❖ Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next. ❖ Try to give them a timescale for when and how you / the DPS will contact them again. ❖ Take action – don't ignore the situation. ❖ Be supportive. ❖ Tell them that: ➤ They were right to tell you; ➤ You are taking what they have said seriously; ➤ It was not their fault; ➤ That you would like to pass this information onto the appropriate people. ❖ Be open and honest. ❖ Give contact details for them to report any further details or ask any questions that may arise.	❖ Do not promise confidentiality. ❖ Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval. ❖ Do not minimise what is being said. ❖ Do not ask probing or leading questions, or push for more information. ❖ Do not offer false reassurance. ❖ Do not delay in contacting the DPS. ❖ Do not contact the alleged abuser. ❖ Do not investigate the incident any further. ❖ Never leave a child or adult at risk waiting to hear from someone without any idea of when or where that may be. ❖ Do not pass on information to those who don't need to know; not even for prayer ministry.

Responding to Concerns

When there are concerns that children or adults at risk are being abused, the following process must be followed. More detailed information can be found in **Appendix 2 - DETAILED GUIDANCE ON REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

STAGE 1 – The Responder

A worker/church attendee has a concern about the welfare of a child, adult at risk,

or the behaviour of an individual.

The person who has the concern has a duty to:

RECOGNISE, RESPOND AND RECORD

If

A hand-written record must be made of the concern using the guidance listed above, further details can be found in appendix 2. This then needs to be handed to the church DPS within 24 hours of the disclosure.

The written record should: be made as soon as possible after the event; be legible; include the name, date of birth and address of the child or adult at risk; include the nature of any concerns and description of any bruising or injuries that have been noticed; include an exact record of what the child or adult at risk has said, using their own words where possible; include any action taken; be signed and dated; be kept secure and confidential (available only to the DPS and others responsible for safeguarding).

STAGE 2 – The Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)

The DPS receives the report of concern and then has a duty to:

REVIEW AND REPORT

The report will be reviewed by the DPS with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken as to what action should follow. Any formal referral to police or Social Services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report.

The Regional Safeguarding Lead should be informed

Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns (this could be the church as a whole, but more specifically victims; alleged perpetrators; children; adults at risk; other family members; church workers; the DPS; Minister; members of the leadership team).

STAGE 3 – The Next Steps

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

the DPS, Safeguarding Trustee and the Minister may have a duty to:

SUPPORT AND REPORT

Where formal referrals are made, reports may need to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Charity Commission.

If the DPS is not available any reports or concerns should be passed to any member of the church Safeguarding Team.

you think that anyone is in imminent danger of harm, a report should be made immediately to the police by calling 999.

Confidentiality and consent and information sharing

RBC accepts the principle that only those with a need to know should be made aware of safeguarding concerns or other confidential information. All staff, ministers, leadership team, and volunteers are expected to share confidential information appropriately and to ensure that written records and verbal information is shared responsibly and stored securely.

RBC accepts that all people have a right to make their own views and wishes known and that these wishes should be followed wherever possible.

Children Where there is a concern that a child is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect they may ask those that know not to tell anyone. RBC accepts that we cannot do this; these concerns must be reported to the appropriate authorities to enable the child or young person to receive appropriate help and support. The child must be made aware of this before they disclose it.

Adults Adults have the right to make their own decisions about their lives. Consent should be sought from an adult before the information is shared about them. However, if you are concerned for their safety, always share your concerns with the DPS even if you do not have the consent of the adult to do so – in this instance, make sure the DPS knows that the person concerned has not given consent for the information to be passed on. The DPS will consider all the information to hand and decide whether it is appropriate for the information to be reported to the statutory authorities.

Personal information

Personal information will be kept confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis, consent should be sought before sharing information and individuals should be made aware of information held.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there is a risk of harm. Safeguarding concerns must always be shared appropriately. Consent to share is not required if there is a risk of harm.

Personal records and information is to be used sensitively by those who need the information for their role (for example youth leader and children's leader have access to medical records of children and young people) and only for valid church purposes.

Information is stored securely (password protected systems or locked storage).

Information should not be held on personal devices unless authorised and secure. Access is controlled and removed when no longer required.

Individuals may request to see their personal information, although this may be limited where disclosure could cause harm or breach another persons confidentiality.

Records of all safeguarding concerns will be kept by the DPS. A record of the initial concern and all actions taken should be kept. The records will be securely held (password protected systems or locked storage). All those involved with any safeguarding concern must ensure that any records are transferred for secure storage.

Allegations against workers

If you see another worker acting in a way 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 Baptist Association Safeguarding Contact 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 asked to not attend groups where they have a position of authority. They will also be told that a formal allegation has been made.
- 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) 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 and adults at risk from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

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

When concerns are expressed about the Minister

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported to the DPS who will immediately refer it 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, they, in turn, should consult the Regional Safeguarding Lead. Do not tell the DPS / Safeguarding Trustee that a concern has been raised about them.

Allegations made against children and adults at risk

Children and young people are by nature curious about the opposite sex. However, where a child is in a position of power, or has responsibility over another child (as in a babysitting arrangement) and abuses that trust through some sexual activity, then this is abusive. Where one child introduces another child to age-inappropriate sexual activity or forces themselves onto a child, this is abusive. This is sometimes referred to as Peer-on-Peer Abuse or Child on Child Abuse. Such situations will be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great.

When such an instance occurs, they will be investigated by the statutory authorities in the same way as if an adult were involved, although it is likely that the perpetrator may also be regarded as a victim in their own right, as they may have also been abused.

When an allegation is made against a child or adult at risk the following procedure should be followed:

- 1) Do not approach the person about whom the allegation has been made or their parents / carers.
- 2) Follow the church's safeguarding procedure: Recognise, Respond, Record, Report.
- 3) Seek advice from the DPS, who will speak to the police or social services about when to inform a parent.
- 4) Make sure there is pastoral support in place for the child or adult at risk throughout the process involved.

Abuse of trust

Relationships between children and adults at risk and their church workers can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The worker is someone in whom the child or adult at risk has placed a degree of trust. This may be because the worker has an educational role, is a provider of activities, or is a significant adult friend. It would not be appropriate for a church worker to form a romantic relationship with a child or adult at risk with whom they have a relationship of trust.

While by no means restricted to young leaders, 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 young people 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 young people 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.

Pastoral Care in safeguarding incidents

When an allegation/suspicion arises in the church, a period of investigation will follow, which will be stressful for all involved. The church will ensure that one person is responsible for dealing with the authorities, another offers support to the victim/s and their family, and another gives pastoral care to the alleged perpetrator, without compromising the alleged victims or their families. It may be necessary to appoint other people to support the families involved.

Where a statutory investigation is under way, this support will be provided with the knowledge of the statutory authority involved.

Where the perpetrator accepts some responsibility, they will be encouraged to seek specialised interventions/treatment to reduce the risk of re-offending. This may only be appropriate once the investigation and legal processes have been completed.

As a church, we are committed to caring for those who have experienced abuse and refer to the Baptist Union of Great Britain Supporting Those who have Experienced Abuse guide to ensure that we adhere to a model of best practice.

2.2 SAFER RECRUITMENT

As a church, we are committed to safer recruitment practices. When paid church workers, the following process will be applied:

- 1) We will develop a clear role profile, person specification and application form;
- 2) When advertising a role which involves working with children or adults at risk we will make it clear that any appointment is subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check;
- 3) All applicants will be asked to complete an application form and include the names of two referees;
- 4) Shortlisting of applicants will be carried out by at least two people, including the line manager or Trustee directly overseeing the role being recruited for;
- 5) Interviews will be carried out by at least two people, including the line manager or Trustee;
- 6) References (one professional and one personal will be requested) a Self Disclosure Form and an enhanced DBS check must be completed satisfactorily before the appointed person starts in their role.
- 7) An applicant's UK residency status and/ or right to work in the UK will be checked when recruiting for a paid role.

DBS checks

DBS checks (Disclosure and Barring service) checks will be carried out for all staff and volunteers involved in activities that bring them into contact with children or vulnerable adults.

At RBC these groups are,

Leaders and Trustees and Minister

Staff

Volunteers working with children and young people and vulnerable adults who access services ie

- Youth group leaders and helpers
- Crèche, RBC Kids, and young people (Sunday morning) leaders and helpers
- GRACE leaders and helpers
- Renew 22 Team
- Pastoral care Team
- Prayer Team
- Toddler Team
- Volunteers giving lifts to vulnerable adults or families

Applications for DBS checks will be made promptly, volunteers and staff are expected to contribute necessary information in a timely manner.

Whilst waiting for checks to be concluded volunteers / staff may work under supervision but should not support children or vulnerable adults unaccompanied (for example to take a child to the toilet).

If the ID verifier is concerned that someone is causing delay to the process he/she will refer the matter to the DPS to decide whether to withdraw the person from serving until resolved.

Appointment and Supervision

The church's safeguarding policy and procedures will be discussed with the applicant and they will be required to sign their agreement to adhere to them. All workers will have a role description and clear lines of accountability to a line manager and the Trustees. Paid workers will also have an assigned supervisor whom they will meet with regularly to discuss work and address any issues or areas of concern. There will be a probationary period of six months in the role.

There will also be regular team meetings to review procedures, share concerns and identify other matters that may need clarification and guidance.

Training

It is important that all workers understand RBC's agreed safeguarding procedures and attend Baptist Union of Great Britain's Excellence in Safeguarding training at least once every four years. A record of training will be kept by the DPS and workers will be informed of relevant training opportunities after three years. If the DOS is concerned that someone is causing an unnecessary delay in accessing training he/she will decide whether to withdraw this person from serving until resolved.

Where a worker is successfully recruited but has not yet been able to attend the training, they should be given a copy of the Baptist Union of Great Britain's **Gateway to Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding** booklet and asked to complete the relevant sections. Additional specialist training will also be arranged where needed, for example, in First Aid.

Young helpers under 18 years of age

In law, those under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that they are helped to develop and hone their skills, attitudes and experience. Young helpers must always be closely supervised by an adult leader and never given sole responsibility for a group of children. When considering ratios of staff to children, young helpers need to be counted as children, not leaders. The safeguarding procedures apply to a young helper just as they do to any other person. Parent/carer permission needs to be sought for young helpers to attend an event or help with a children's group just as you would for any other person under 18 years of age.

In compliance with government standards, anyone over the age of 16 may be asked to complete a DBS check if it is viewed as relevant for the role they are undertaking.

SECTION 3 BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Everyone working with children, young people and adults at risk should treat them with dignity and respect. Everyone must be carefully listened to without assumptions or preconceptions. Leaders and volunteers should be aware of the language they use and tone of voice, and should take note of the effect they are having on the child, young person or adult at risk. Children, young people and adults at risk should not be belittled, ridiculed or rejected, or commented upon even in 'fun'. Care should be taken when any physical contact is required, for example, to administer first aid, or to comfort someone in distress. See section on physical contact below in this section.

A record should be kept of any significant incidents or concerns. Safeguarding procedures should be followed where required

3.1 WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Ratios

When working with children the following recommended minimum ratios of workers to children apply:

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

13 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children
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This does not take into account special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability and so on, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratios. In calculating the ratios of workers to children, young helpers who are under the age of 18 should be counted as one of the children, not one of the workers

Specific considerations when working with children:

- The level of assistance with personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Do not invade the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or showering.
- Avoid rough games involving physical contact between a worker and a child.
- Avoid sexually provocative games.
- When it is necessary to discipline children, this must never be done using physical punishment. There may, however, on the rare occasion be circumstances where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.
- Notify the DPS of any children's trips which take place in the name of the church. Parental permission must always be sought.
- Do not give lifts to children on your own. Ensure that if transporting children as part of your church role, you have the correct insurance cover in place as well as parental permission. In an emergency, where a child needs transportation they should travel in the rear of the vehicle and have two leaders present, and where possible one of the leaders should be the same sex as the child.
- No person under 18 years of age should be left in sole charge of any children of any age. Nor should children attending a group be left alone at any time.

No one should normally be left working alone with children, young people or adults at risk, but should instead work as part of a team. If there are insufficient leaders for groups:

- Ensure at least two people are present before external doors are opened for an event.
- Consider whether you could combine groups together or rearrange planned activities.
- Reconsider whether you can run the group safely, carrying out a Risk Assessment to record your findings.
- Internal doors should be left open

If a child wants to talk on a one-to-one basis you should make sure that:

- You try to hold the conversation in a corner of a room where other people are present.
- You leave the door open if you are in a room on your own.
- You stay clearly visible to those walking by.
- Another team member knows where you are.

If workers do find themselves on their own with a child they should

- Assess the risk of sending the child home
- Phone a team member to let them know the situation
- Train additional leaders as soon as possible

Consideration should be given to how many workers should be involved with the group and whether they should be male or female workers, or both. See the section above for recommended 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. Wherever possible couples or people who are related to each other should work with separate groups.

The only adults allowed to participate in children's activities are those safely appointed and appropriately trained. The leader of the activity should be aware of any other adults who are in the building whilst the activity is running.

Children with Additional Support Needs

Children who have additional support needs can be at greater risk of abuse. They could require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility, etc. Some children may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age-appropriate way. Please speak with the parents/carers of children with additional

support needs and find out from them how best to assist the child. Older children will have their own views of how they can be best supported.

Visiting Children or Young People at Home

If a situation occurs where workers will need to make pastoral visits to children and their families at home on behalf of the church then it should be done in pairs, and with the prior agreement of the Minister. As discussed previously, a married couple would normally count as one person.

Children with no adult supervision

When children turn up to and want to join in with church activities without the knowledge of their parents/carers, workers will:

- 1) Welcome the child and try to establish their name, age, address and telephone number.
- 2) Record their visit in a register.
- 3) Ask the child if a parent/carer is aware of where they are. Where possible, phone and make contact.
- 4) Without interrogating the child, find out as soon as possible whether they have any specific needs (e.g. medication) so that you can respond appropriately in an emergency.
- 5) Give the child a consent form and explain it needs to be filled in and brought back next time.

Mentoring

If a worker is working with a young person as part of the recognised church mentoring programme:

- The parents of all young people involved in mentoring are required to sign a letter to say they are aware that the mentoring is happening and who it is with.
- Mentoring meetings should only be held in agreed places, and should be in view of other people.
- A mentoring meeting should have an agreed start and end time and someone should be aware that a meeting is taking place and where it is being held.
- A basic record should be kept of dates of significant meetings and any text messages or emails.
- Appropriate boundaries should be put in place in regard to times, ie not phoning or texting late at night.
- A written record should be kept of issues/decisions discussed at meetings.

Peer group activities for young people

All youth activities will be overseen by named adults who have been selected in accordance with safer recruitment procedures. It is accepted that groups aged 16+ may benefit from being led and run by peers. In this situation, adult leaders will contribute to programme planning and reviews and will always be present to oversee any peer-led activities taking place.

Physical Contact

- Keep everything public. A hug within a group context is very different from one behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure their personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances such as when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream, etc), workers should encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- If a team member is unsure about whether the actions of another volunteer or worker constitute a concern, they should raise this with the Designated Person for Safeguarding.

Whilst this section relates to physical contact with children the same consideration should be given to interactions with adults.

Digital communication with young people

- Communication with young people by leaders should be via their parents. A group WhatsApp chat is the primary means of communication with young people and includes adults who have completed safeguarding training and DBS checks.
- Parental permission is sought before a young person is added to the group.

- Should it become necessary to contact a young person individually either a parent must be included in the group, or two adults who have completed safeguarding training and DBS checks
- If an individual makes direct contact with a leader, the Youth Leader or Minister should be made aware and the young person reminded to make contact via the group chat in future.
- Messages are stored on WhatsApp and can be retrieved if necessary. Screenshots may be sent to the DPS in the case of anything causing concern.
- Information is sent to young people via parents and not directly.
- Young people also need to be aware of the protocols that exist for communication.
- It is not appropriate to use these communication methods with children aged 11 years and younger. For more information on online safety, please refer to [Guide to using Social Media to Communicate with Young People](#), which is available on the BUGB website.

Email

Email should be limited to sharing generic information, for example, to remind young people about meetings. If email is being used, workers will ensure that they are accountable by copying each message to a designated email address. It is important that workers use clear and unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation, for example, avoiding inappropriate terms such as 'love' when ending an email.

Mobile Phones

Workers need to be cautious and careful in using mobile phones to communicate with young people:

- Mobile phone use should primarily be for the purposes of information sharing.
- Workers should keep a log of significant conversations/texts.
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be passed on to the worker's supervisor.
- Workers should use clear language and should not use abbreviations like 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love'.
- Workers should not take photos of children, young people or adults at risk unless permission is sought in advance and should not store such photos on personal phones.

Social Media

- Workers should have social media accounts that are used solely for children's / youth work communications and is totally separate from their own personal accounts. This is to ensure that all communication with children and young people is kept within the public domain.
- Workers should not send private messages to children on social media. Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Workers should not accept 'friend' or 'following' requests from children on their personal accounts, nor seek to be 'friends' or a 'follower' of any child known to them in a church context.

Taking Videos and Photographs of Children

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches must be very careful if they use still or moving images of clearly identifiable people. Previous legislation was reinforced through the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018. There are several issues to be aware of:

- Permission must be obtained, via the consent form, of all children who will appear in a photograph or video before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- It must be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this is regarded as a public area and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details, including email, postal address or telephone number.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.

Consideration of safeguarding when live streaming church services and events

When a service or event is being live streamed or recorded to be shared online at a later date ensure people are aware that they are being recorded and appropriate consent has been sought from those who participate in the service, or who may be visible to the camera. Notices on screen and poster in entrance will inform people that services are being live streamed. Information detailing areas of the sanctuary which will not appear on screen will also be shared.

Where children and young people are participating in services or events, ensure that appropriate parent or guardian consent is in place. Consent should be obtained on an annual basis.

Where children and young people are unable to be shown on camera consideration will be given to how else they can participate in the service.

This is in line with the guidance as set out in the Baptist Union of Great Britain guide: Recording and Livestreaming Services: Safeguarding Guidelines for Churches.

More detailed guidance is available for the AV team.

Outings and Overnight stays involving children

When taking groups out from the church the following will be considered:

- A risk assessment must be carried out beforehand.
- Parents of children will be informed in writing of all the arrangements.
- Consent forms will be obtained, from parents of children, for the specific activities involved.
- There will be workers with first aid and food hygiene certificates within the group.
- Leaders and children will sleep in separate rooms. Workers should be situated in close proximity and ensure that children know where they should go for help. There should be two leaders on duty until all young people are asleep.
- Sleeping arrangements will also be separated by biological sex*.
- When at an external organisation we will follow their fire safety and general safety policy, and where applicable will have read their risk assessments beforehand.
- Planning for the trip should consider specific medical, physical and support needs of each group member, bearing in mind that there may be people in the group who have individual care needs that will have to be met (including personal care).
- Consideration should be given to the suitability and accessibility of the venue and accommodation, travel time and mode of transport, and the affordability of the event.
- There should be a minimum of two leaders with each group; the individual needs of those attending may determine the additional number of people required.
- Where necessary, when potential contentious matters need to be decided, the organisers should involve the DPS and Designated Safeguarding Trustee in making a decision.

* Where a young person 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.

Adventurous Activities

No child will participate in adventurous activities without the written consent of the parent /carer. The activity leader will ensure that the staff engaged in such activities are properly trained and qualified and that the correct ratio of staff to children is met. At an activity centre or for an organisation whose own staff undertake such activities, if the activities come within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004, the activity leader needs to ensure that the premises are licensed.

Fire Safety

The event leader will have a fire safety procedure in place, which will include the following:

- Everyone will be warned of the danger of fire. If the overnight event is in a building, then everyone must be made aware of the fire exits. A fire drill will be practised on the first day.
- When using a building as a residential facility, ensure that the fire alarm is audible throughout the accommodation and that all signs and exits are clearly visible. The building will also need to comply with fire regulations.
- In the case of an emergency, ensure measures are in place to alert children and young people with disabilities (e.g. a child who is hard of hearing).

Safety

It is the responsibility of the workers to always know the whereabouts of every child/young person participating in an overnight event, and this may include monitoring access on and off the site.

General safety rules will be applied as appropriate (e.g. no running around tents due to the risk of injury from tripping over guy lines).

Swimming trips

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.

Named person for safeguarding on the trip

There will be a named person for safeguarding on all outings and residential trips. This person will not necessarily be the Church Designated Person for Safeguarding but they will be someone trained to Level 3 Excellence in Safeguarding. A discussion with the DPS will be held to identify who this person is and agree how information will be communicated to the DPS if a concern is raised during the event.

3.2 WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK

Those experiencing poor mental health

We will also have regard to the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, recognising that:

- Capacity to make decisions can vary depending on the specific decision being made and may change over time
- Individuals have the right to make unwise decisions
- Wherever possible, consent should be sought before sharing information

RBC seeks to:

- Provide a welcoming, non-judgemental community
- Offer pastoral and spiritual support
- Encourage belonging, connection, and hope

We do not provide clinical or therapeutic services. All staff and volunteers will work within the limits of their role and competence.

All members of the church community should understand that their role is to notice and report concerns, not to provide specialist support.

We may:

- Encourage individuals to seek appropriate professional support (e.g. GP or mental health services)
- Signpost to relevant organisations and resources
- Work alongside other services where appropriate and with consent

The church operates a Renew Wellbeing space and has a designated support team and trained pastoral leadership. These operate within the church's safeguarding framework and do not replace statutory or clinical services.

All those offering support must maintain appropriate boundaries. In particular:

- No individual should act beyond their level of training or competence
- Ongoing support should not rely on a single individual; responsibility should be appropriately shared
- Meetings should take place in agreed safe environments where possible
- Lone working should be avoided or appropriately risk-assessed
- Communication (including digital contact) should remain appropriate and accountable.

Poor mental health may increase vulnerability to harm, including:

- Exploitation or undue influence
- Self-neglect
- Social isolation or dependency

Risk may be heightened during periods of crisis, significant life change, or deterioration in mental health.

The church will remain alert to patterns of concern and ensure that any emerging risks are appropriately shared and addressed.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Any concern relating to an individual's mental health that indicates risk of harm to themselves or others must be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Those receiving a disclosure or observing a concern should:

- Listen carefully and without judgement
- Take the concern seriously
- Avoid making promises of confidentiality

If there is immediate risk of harm (including suicidal intent), this should be treated as an urgent safeguarding matter and appropriate emergency action taken.

All concerns must:

- Be recorded factually and promptly
- Be reported to the DPS in line with church procedures

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. Consent should be sought where possible; however, information may be shared without consent where there is a risk of serious harm.

Those involved in supporting individuals with poor mental health will be:

- Appropriately supported and supervised
- Encouraged to share concerns and seek guidance
- Able to step back from situations where necessary

This helps ensure safe, sustainable, and accountable support.

Premises

The church building will be made as accessible as possible to all people. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating will be addressed wherever possible, and where necessary, aids and adaptations put in place.

Language

Every effort will be taken to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility. We will be mindful of the language used within worship and the language used to describe people (such as derogatory words focusing on aspects of someone's disability, race or sexuality rather than the person themselves).

Worship

In all worship services, we will consider the varied requirements of our congregation and try to be as inclusive as possible, by:

- Providing some copies of large print type for all printed materials
- Speakers always facing the congregation and not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading
- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly
- Using inclusive language
- Using a variety of liturgy and resources to cater for different levels of understanding
- Using a microphone during times of open prayer so that all can hear
- Considering holding a service which specifically caters for certain groups of adults at risk, such as those with learning disabilities, the deaf or the visually impaired.

Insurance

We will take reasonable steps to safeguard adults at risk and will follow any specific safeguarding requirements as laid out by our insurance company.

Financial integrity

Arrangements are in place for dealing with money, financial transactions and gifts, as outlined below. These relate to both paid staff and volunteers:

- Those who work with adults at risk may become involved in some aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping or banking, etc. If handling money for someone else receipts must be obtained or other evidence of what has been done.
- Workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond any salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Trustees, Leaders and staff and volunteers should not receive gifts from church attenders or young people on a regular basis. If uncertain advice should be sought from the Treasurer
- Any money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated church workers.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- Workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the trustees. Workers should not act as Executors for

someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.

- Expert legal advice should be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and Appointeeship to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.

Photographs

Workers should make sure that they have the person's permission to take a picture, and that the subject is happy with the intended use of the pictures. When taking group pictures, workers should remember to get permission from everyone who will be photographed.

Live Streaming Services

When a service or event is being live streamed or recorded to be shared online at a later date, ensure people are aware that they are being recorded and appropriate consent is sought from those who participate in the service, or who may be visible to the camera.

Notices on screen and poster in entrance will inform people that services are being live streamed. Information detailing areas of the sanctuary which will not appear on screen will also be shared.

This is in line with the guidance as set out in the Baptist Union of Great Britain guide: [Recording and Livestreaming Services: Safeguarding Guidelines for Churches](#).

Outings and overnight events involving adults at risk

As with outings and events for children, there are additional considerations for a group taking adults with additional needs, such as learning difficulties or mental health needs, on outings or overnight events:

- A risk assessment must be carried out beforehand.
- Planning for the trip should consider specific medical, physical and support needs of each group member, bearing in mind that there may be people in the group who have individual care needs that will have to be met (including personal care).
- Adults at risk should be included in the planning of trips and events.
- Consideration should be given to the suitability and accessibility of the venue and accommodation, travel time and mode of transport, and the affordability of the event.
- Adults at risk should be given all the information about the trip beforehand so that they know where they are going, how long it will take to get there and what type of activities they will be taking part in.
- There should be a minimum of two leaders with each group; the individual needs of those attending may determine the additional number of people required.

Sleeping Arrangements

Consideration should be given to the individual needs of those staying overnight. If there is a need for personal care or additional support during the night, it would be better that the person's usual caregiver also attends the event and therefore shares a room with them.

Personal Care

It is not appropriate for church workers to perform personal care for adults at risk unless this is their usual task (i.e. if they have come along to help generally, but also have a caring role for a member of the group, they can provide personal care for that person).

Activities

Leaders should consider the mobility needs of the group when deciding on activities or events. For example, if members of the group have difficulty walking, then including a walking tour around a town may be inaccessible to some who are attending. If you have members of the group who use wheelchairs then consideration needs to be given as to whether you have sufficient workers to support those who may need pushing.

Safety

It is the responsibility of the workers to always know the whereabouts of every person in the group; this may include monitoring access on and off the site.

General safety rules will be applied as appropriate and advice sought from the event organiser / venue about the fire evacuation procedures. A copy of the event / venue risk assessment should be included with the group leader's risk assessment.

Consent and medical information

It is important to recognise that adults at risk are mostly able to give consent for their own involvement in activities, inclusion in photographs and medical treatment. However, in some situations, the question of capacity may arise. The guidelines clearly state that an adult at risk should have a say in their care and any arrangements made for them, however, there may be occasions when you need to involve others in decision-making. In these situations, seek advice from the DPS with regard to who should be involved.

A medical consent form should be completed by each member of the group and held by the leader. This will include any health concerns, emergency contact information and contact details for their GP. This will allow emergency medical personnel to have access to information should the need arise.

Holding and dispensing of medication

Church workers should never agree to hold or dispense medication for those on an event. If someone is unable to manage their own medication then consideration should be given as to whether their usual carer could attend with them or whether they will not be able to attend the event.

Named person for safeguarding on the trip

There will be a named person for safeguarding on all outings and residential trips. This person will not necessarily be the Church Designated Person for Safeguarding but they will be someone trained to Level 3 Excellence in Safeguarding. A discussion with the DPS will be held to identify who this person is and agree how information will be communicated to the DPS if a concern is raised during the event.

Pastoral Relationships

All those involved in pastoral ministry should work in a way that follows clearly defined procedures, which set out the boundaries to protect those carrying out the pastoral ministry as well as those receiving it:

- Workers should be aware of the power imbalance within pastoral relationships and the potential for abuse of trust.
- Behaviour that suggests favouritism or gives the impression of a special relationship, should be avoided.
- Workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency within a pastoral relationship.
- Workers should be mindful of any physical contact or greeting they use within a pastoral relationship, seeking consent if physical contact is offered, for example, in order to offer comfort.
- Workers should never take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with someone with whom they have a pastoral relationship.
- All people receiving pastoral ministry should be treated with respect and should be encouraged to make their own decisions about any actions or outcomes.
- Workers should not pastorally minister to anyone whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Workers need to recognise the limits of their own abilities and competencies and get further help when working with situations outside of their expertise or role.

- Workers should seek advice from the DPS if they believe someone they are pastorally supporting is becoming dependent on them or developing an inappropriate emotional attachment.

Record keeping

Records of those receiving pastoral care should be kept by the Pastoral Care Coordinator. Any records of safeguarding allegations, concerns or disclosures should be passed on to the DPS and stored in a safe and secure manner.

3.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Consent forms

It is essential that we have important information about all children and young people involved in any activities at the church, which is recorded on our consent forms. The first week someone attends workers must record their name, medical emergency information and a contact name and number. Then they must bring their completed form back with them. Similar details will be gathered for adults at risk.

Health and Safety

All activities for children, young people and adults at risk will comply with the church's current health and safety policy with particular attention paid to the sections on Fire Action, First Aid, PAT testing, Health and Safety and Kitchen and Food Hygiene.

Whenever possible, at all events involving food preparation, at least one worker will hold a valid Basic Food Hygiene Certificate.

Buildings being used for children's and adult at risk groups will be properly maintained. Trustees will ensure an annual Health and Safety audit carried out with guidance from the H and S coordinator.

Fire

It is the responsibility of all group leaders/responsible persons within the building to ensure the safety of themselves and those who are in their care. In addition, it is a legal requirement that all group leaders/responsible persons are familiar with the emergency procedures in the event of a fire.

First Aid

RBC has a number of trained First Aiders. All church groups will ensure that they have sufficient trained first aiders on their regular team so that there is always a first aider present at events and activities.

First aid kits are situated around the building as well as an incident reporting book, which must be completed in the event of any accidents, injuries, or incidents. . A nominated individual, (Carmen) will ensure that the contents of the first aid kits are checked on a regular basis. Completed accident forms should be passed on to the nominated individual.

Food Hygiene

The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 state that anyone who handles food or whose actions could affect its safety must comply with the regulations. It therefore follows that those with responsibility for food will need to possess the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and be aware of food safety (preparation, handling and storage, disposal of waste, etc).

Risk Assessment

Before undertaking any activity with children or adults at risk, the leader will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out. It is advisable to appoint someone specifically for this task.

Insurance

Residential activity organisers will check that there is adequate insurance cover for any activities planned. If the trip is at a Centre, it is also important to establish that there is appropriate public liability insurance in place.

Transport

These guidelines apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children, young people and adults at risk on behalf of the church. They do not apply to private arrangements, for example, transport arrangements made between friends.

- Those who offer transport to children, young people and adults at risk will be DBS checked. (This will not apply to giving lifts to adults as a friend). When transporting children and young people two leaders should be present.
- All drivers will have read RBC Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by it.
- Drivers will be aged 21 or over and have held a full driving licence for at least two years.
- Drivers must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and that the vehicle being used is roadworthy.
- All hired minibuses will have a small bus permit, the necessary insurance and a driver with a valid driving licence that entitles them to drive a minibus.

Our practice specifically for transporting children is as follows:

- Parental consent will be given for all journeys.
- All children and young people should be returned to an agreed drop-off point. At the collection or drop-off points, children should never be left on their own; make sure they are collected by an appropriate adult.
- At least two workers should be present when transporting children as part of a church role. Leaders should be of different genders where possible.

Hiring of Church Premises by external groups

External users of the church building should read and sign this safeguarding policy.

External users should also carry out their own risk assessment.

External users should read RBCs Health and Safety policy.

3.4 SAFER COMMUNITY

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 and young people. 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:

- The children and young people will be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour for their groups.
- 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 young people, 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.

Appendix 1 Types And Indicators Of Abuse

APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Understanding, Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or a child or children. There are many different ways in which people suffer abuse. The list below is, sadly, not exhaustive.

Type of abuse	Child	Adult at risk
<i>Physical</i>	Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.	To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering to an adult at risk.
<i>Emotional</i>	The persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.	The use of threats, fear or power gained by another adult's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological distress. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.
<i>Sexual</i>	Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.	Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour. No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.
<i>Neglect</i>	Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.	A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs are not met. Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.

<i>Type of Abuse</i>	<i>Additional Definitions</i>
<i>Financial</i>	The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.
<i>Spiritual</i>	The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context; the abuse of trust by someone in a position of spiritual authority (e.g. minister). The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.
<i>Discrimination</i>	The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.
<i>Institutional</i>	The mistreatment or abuse of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.
<i>Domestic Abuse</i>	Domestic abuse is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between persons aged 16 or above who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody regardless of their age, gender, sexuality or social status. Domestic abuse can be physical, sexual or psychological, and whatever form it takes, it is rarely a one-off incident. Usually there is a pattern of abusive, coercive and controlling behaviour where an abuser seeks to exert power over their family member or partner. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 identifies children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right.
<i>Online abuse</i>	The use of information technology (email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, etc.) to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner. The Online Safety Bill, 2021, introduces new rules for internet search engines and firms who host user-generated content, i.e. those which allow users to post their own content online or interact with each other. Those platforms which fail to comply with the rules could face penalties of up to 10% of their revenue, and in the most serious cases some may even be barred from operating.
<i>Self-harm</i>	Self-Harm is the intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is used as a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. An individual may also be neglecting themselves, which can result in harm to themselves.
<i>Mate crime</i>	'Mate crime' is when people (particularly those with learning disabilities) are befriended by members of the community, who go on to exploit and take advantage of them.
<i>Cuckooing</i>	Cuckooing is the term used to describe occasions where the homes of adults at risk are taken over and used to distribute drugs or as a base for gang or criminal activities. The tenant may believe that the people who are in their home are their friends.

Modern Slavery	Modern slavery is the practice of treating people as property; it includes bonded labour, child labour, sex slavery and trafficking. In the UK we see examples of this through County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation and forced labour.
Human Trafficking	Human trafficking is when people are bought and sold for financial gain and/or abuse. Men, women and children can be trafficked, both within their own countries and over international borders. The traffickers will trick, coerce, lure or force these vulnerable individuals into sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, domestic servitude or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice.
Radicalisation	The radicalisation of individuals is the process by which people come to support any form of extremism and, in some cases, join terrorist groups. Some individuals are more vulnerable to the risk of being groomed into terrorism than others.
Honour / Forced Marriage	An honour marriage / forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. The motivation may include the desire to control unwanted behaviour or sexuality.
Female Genital Mutilation	Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). FGM is a cultural practice common around the world and is largely performed on girls aged between 10 and 18. Performing acts of FGM is illegal in the UK as is arranging for a child to travel abroad for FGM to be carried out.
Peer-on-Peer Abuse	Peer-on-peer abuse is where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development.
Child on Child Abuse	Child on Child abuse is when a child abuses another child of any age or stage of development
Historic Abuse	Historic abuse is the term used to describe disclosures of abuse that were perpetrated in the past. Many people who have experienced abuse don't tell anyone what happened until years later, with around one third of people abused in childhood waiting until adulthood before they share their experience.

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- unexplained injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to such injuries
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- a child or adult at risk discloses behaviour that is harmful to them
- unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness in children
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourished, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more indicators is not in itself proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is also important to remember that there might be other reasons why most of the above are occurring

Appendix 2 Detailed Guidance On Reporting Requirements

STAGE 1 The Responder

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk 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 the concern 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 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 adults at risk 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 church minister), representatives of any statutory authorities involved and the local Baptist association.

If concerns arise in the context of children's or adults at risk 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 an issue concerns an adult at risk who does not give permission to pass on the information to anyone else, the worker should explain that they will need to speak with the DPS, who will have greater expertise in dealing with the issue at hand.

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 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 or adult at risk is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation.
- ❖ refer the concern to others who work with the child or adult at risk 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. With adults at risk, confidentiality means that someone's personal business is not discussed with others, except with their permission. This is not always possible when considering passing relevant information about abuse or concerns to the statutory authorities, however, it is possible to keep the information confidential to the relevant parties. This means not telling or hinting to others what has been disclosed, not even for prayer ministry purposes. For adults at risk, concerns will only be referred to the police or Social Services without consent where:

- ❖ the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice
- ❖ there is a risk of harm to others
- ❖ in order to prevent a crime

If an 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.

If an allegation is made against someone who works with adults at risk*, it should be reported to the police or Adult Social Services.

**If a worker has an allegation made against them, they 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 Baptist Association Safeguarding Contact.*

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
- ❖ 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.

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; Leadership Team.

As part of this, the person under investigation will be asked to step back from engaging with in-person church activities. This is for both their safety and the safety of those around them.

The duty to **REPORT**

If a church worker has been accused of causing harm to children, young people or adults at risk 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, young people or adults at risk, there is also a statutory duty to report the incident to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Appendix 3 Safeguarding Roles And Responsibilities

Each church needs to identify and fill several important posts that underpin effective safeguarding in the church. These notes outline the main responsibilities relating to safeguarding connected with key leadership roles.

Trustees

- Ultimately responsible for safeguarding
- Responsible for the implementation of policy and procedures
- Responsible for supporting the church workers
- Responsible for raising awareness about best practice within the church
- Responsible for ensuring that the relevant people have received the appropriate training

Safeguarding Trustee

Not necessarily the person who heads up safeguarding in the church – could be a trustee / deacon with an interest and willingness to learn.

- Takes a lead on safeguarding matters for the trustees / deacons
- Is the point of contact with trustees / deacons for safeguarding issues
- Ensures church policy and procedures are reviewed annually

Designated Person for Safeguarding

- Receives all reports of concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- Listens, observes and passes on those concerns appropriately, having taken advice from the relevant people
- Acts as a link between the church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding matters

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 who is checked by the regional association)

The Minister

- Shares with the trustees the general responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the church's safeguarding policy
- Takes responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral needs of all are met

Appendix 4 - Safeguarding Incident Form

This form should be completed by the Designated Person for Safeguarding

Name of church/organisation	
Contact details of church/organisation	

Name of Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)	
Contact details of Designated Person for Safeguarding	

Name of the concerned person or to whom disclosure was given	
Contact details of the concerned person or whom disclosure was given	

INDIVIDUAL OF CONCERN - CONTACT DETAILS

Name	
Date of birth	
Address	
Phone number / Email address	

THE INCIDENT

What happened? (Nature of concern / disclosure made - use the person's own words if known)

When did it happen? (date, time)

Where did it happen? (specific location)

Who was allegedly involved and in what way? (includes witnesses)

ANY ACTION THAT HAS BEEN TAKEN

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Have the carers or parents/guardians been informed? (Please tick)

If so, when and by whom?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Have the statutory authorities been informed?

If so, please complete the table:

Example:

Authority	Police				
Name	Bobby				
Position	Child abuse officer				
Email contact	bobby@police.com				

Phone contact	077999				
Contacted by	Minister				
Date & time of contact	1.30pm 1/4/15				

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Has the Local Association been informed?

(Please do so if the statutory authorities are involved)

If so, when and by whom?

Any other action taken:

FUTURE ACTION TO BE TAKEN

What action needs to be taken?

Who is responsible for this?

SIGNATURES

Signature of Designated Safeguarding Person		Signature of the minister, or Church Safeguarding Team member	
Date & time		Date & time	