

# Herne Hill Baptist Church's Safeguarding Policy

This is the safeguarding document which includes policies and procedures for safeguarding children from 0-18 years of age, and adults at risk from age 18+. Children, young people, and adults at risk are an important part of our church, who have a lot to give and a voice to be heard. This document outlines policies and practices that enable us to create a safe and nurturing environment within which these voices can be heard.

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We have divided up 3. *Safeguarding Policy and Procedures* into thirty-four specific sections.

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## **Herne Hill Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy Statement**

This statement was agreed at the Church Members Meeting held on 25 September 2024. It will be reviewed annually to monitor the Church's progress in carrying it out. The next review is due July 2025.

1. As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection, and safekeeping of all, especially children, young people, and adults at risk.
2. It is the responsibility of us to prevent the physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual abuse, as well as neglect or abuse in an organised or online environment, of children, young people, and adults at risk, and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
3. We recognise that our work with children, young people, and adults at risk is the responsibility of the whole church.
4. We undertake to exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, young people, and adults at risk, whether paid or voluntary.
5. The Church is committed to supporting, resourcing, and training those who work with children, young people, and adults at risk.
6. The Church is committed to following the Home Office Code of Practice *Safe from Harm* and adopts the guidelines and procedures published by both the Baptist Union of Great Britain in its publication and Thirtyone:eight guidelines on *Safeguarding Policy and Procedures*.
7. Each worker with children, young people, and adults at risk must know the recommendations and undertake to observe them. They will be expected to undergo a DBS check with the church, and to take part in relevant safeguarding training. Each leader will be given a pack containing the simplified *Safeguarding Policy* and other relevant documents.
8. The Church has a *Code of Behaviour* for all who join in our groups. This is both for the children who attend and the adults who lead so due respect is shown to both.
9. 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, young people, and adults at risk in the community of the Church is managed appropriately.

**If you have any concerns regarding a child or a helper within this Church please contact:**

**Chris Willis**

**07745 088981** or email [chris@hhbc.org.uk](mailto:chris@hhbc.org.uk)

**or Janene Rose**

**07931 971785** or email [janenerose@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janenerose@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Herne Hill Baptist Church Safeguarding Team**

**The church has appointed: Chris Willis as the **Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)**. He will advise the church leaders on any matters related to the safeguarding of children, young people, and adults at risk. He will take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered, or suspected.**

**The church has appointed: Janene Rose as the **Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)**. She will support the DPS in the overseeing and delivery of safeguarding at the church. She will be knowledgeable of the activities taking place within at the church or meet within the church premises, and able to see through the safeguarding process if needed. She will act as the primary point of contact on safeguarding matters in the absence of the DPS.**

**The church has appointed: Monica Barnes as the **Safeguarding Trustee**. She will represent the church trustees in the safeguarding process, and act as a point of contact outside of the regular youth and children's teams, and other groups. She will be knowledgeable of the activities taking place within at the church or meet within the church premises.**

**The church has appointed: Chris Willis and John Auger as the **DBS Verifiers**. They will be responsible for keeping and updating the record of DBS checks, ensuring every member of staff and all volunteers have been checked, and conducting those checks.**

**The church has appointed: Anne Kemp and Beatrice Stevens as the **Pastoral Support**. They will be responsible for providing pastoral support to the safeguarding team, the staff and volunteers, and other impacted individuals. They will also work with the youth, children, and families worker to ensure pastoral support is provided to any children, young people, and families affected by safeguarding issues.**

### **Policy and Procedures**

A copy of both our Policy Statement and our Safeguarding Team will be displayed permanently on the church notice board, as well as in the office and on the church website.

Each worker with children, young people, and adults at risk will be given a pack containing important policy documents and will be asked to sign the agreement form to show that they are willing to commit to them.

A full copy of the Policy and Procedures will be made available on the website and upon request to any member of, or other person associated with, the church. The Policy and Procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually.

# Herne Hill Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

## 1. Introduction

Herne Hill Baptist Church seeks to make a positive contribution to its local community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.

Herne Hill Baptist Church comes into contact with children and young people, aged 0-18, and adults at risk, through a variety of Sunday morning and midweek groups, and special events. Some sessions, particularly those with younger children, may have parents present.

In all these areas the contact with children, young people, and adults at risk is regulated, at times with the parents/guardians in the same vicinity and at times with just the leaders present.

This Policy seeks to ensure that Herne Hill Baptist Church undertakes its responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and young people and responds to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.

Herne Hill Baptist Church recognises the importance of the Government's *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* that outlines how every child has the right to **be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being**. As an organisation we aim to work together to keep children and young people from harm and help them to achieve.

This document applies in full to Children, Young People, and Adults at risk

## 2. Legislation

The principal pieces of legislation governing this policy are:

1. Baptist Union of Great Britain Safeguarding Policy
2. Working together to safeguard children 2018
3. The children Act 2004
4. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
5. Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
6. The Disclosure and Barring Service 2012
7. Thirtyone:eight Safeguarding Guidelines 2018

### **3. Definitions**

*Safeguarding* is about embedding practices throughout an organisation to ensure the protection of children, young people, and adults at risk wherever possible, and responding to any disclosures or concerns as they arise.

In contrast, *Child Protection* (an important part of safeguarding) is about working with any child or young person who is currently identified as being at risk of suffering significant harm. This may include a child or young person who has a child protection plan in place.

A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Even if they are a 16-year-old living independently their status and entitlement to services or protection under the Children's Act 2004 does not change. Our safeguarding practices extend to any young adult aged 18-19 who is still attending school.

Abuse is a selfish act of oppression, injustice, exploitation or manipulation of power by those in a position of influence or authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender, or culture.

#### **Definitions of Abuse:**

**Physical Abuse:** Actual or likely physical injury to a child or adult, or failure to prevent physical injury from a person. We understand that children sustain injuries through all sorts of means. Physical abuse is about the deliberate or persistent appearance of these injuries.

Additionally, intentionally induced illness is a form of physical abuse, as is the act of making up or hiding the cause of an illness or injury.

**Emotional Abuse:** The persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child or adult that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the person feelings of being worthless and unloved, inadequate, or undervalued, causing a person to feel afraid or in danger.

Other forms of emotional abuse include instilling an environment of fear or giving a child or young person responsibilities unreasonably beyond their years. Witnessing domestic violence or abuse is also considered to be a form of emotional abuse inflicted upon the child, young person, or adult at risk.

**Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, by anyone aged 16+. This includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual activity between minors, although against the law, is not necessarily an abusive act. Factors to consider are the ages of the children involved and the level of understanding they have, the nature of the acts committed, and whether it is believed manipulation or coercion was involved.

Sexual abuse also consists of acts of rape or other forms of sexual violence, non-consensual involvement in pornography or other sexual acts, sexual harassment, indecent exposure, stalking, revenge porn, sexual exploitation, or any other sexual behaviour that makes a person feel uncomfortable, afraid, or intimidated.

**Neglect:** The ongoing failure to meet a child, young person, or adult at risk's basic needs, or ongoing failure to protect a child, young person, or adult at risk from harm. This is the most common form of abuse and, even if this is not deliberate on the part of the abuser, it is important to report neglect whenever a disclosure or suspicion is made.

**Spiritual Abuse:** The use of scripture, belief, or position of power, within a faith-based context, to control the behaviour of one or more people. This may be closely connected to other forms of abuse, particularly emotional.

**Online Abuse:** Any kind of abuse that takes place online, through social media, messaging, video games, live streams, or any other digital platform. This may be an extension of abuse taking place offline, or it may be exclusive to the digital format. This could include inappropriate forms of contact between an adult and a child or young person, such as sexting or grooming, or it may be cyber-bullying from one peer to another.

**Peer-to-Peer Abuse:** Peer to peer abuse may take place in a number of forms, and may be physical, emotional, or sexual, but takes place between children and young people rather than involving an adult. Persistence and intentionality are the key aspects to something becoming abuse. Children and young people have fall-outs and fights, engage in banter and teasing, and step over the line without intending to be hurtful.

*Bullying:* Causing physical harm, e.g. through hitting, kicking, spitting, etc. Causing emotional distress, e.g. through name-calling, verbal undermining, spreading of rumours or gossip, etc.

*Cyber-Bullying:* Bullying that takes place across social media, through SMS or other messaging apps, within video games, or by other digital means. Unlike offline bullying, cyber-bully can go with a child or young person anywhere and is difficult to switch off from.

*Sexual Abuse:* Although not permitted by law, sexual relationships and sexual exploration takes place between minors. This is not necessarily abuse. Such activity becomes abusive when coercion or manipulation is involved, or when one or more people are engaging in activities beyond their appropriate level of understanding.

**Organised Abuse:** Involving one or more abuser and a number of abused children, young people, or adults at risk. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as part of a network of abusers across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

**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.

**Discrimination:** The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, or disability.

There are two further definitions of abuse that are particularly important to note when working with adults at risk:

**Financial Abuse:** Including theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

**Domestic Abuse:** Domestic violence and abuse is officially classified as "any incident of threatening behaviours, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship together, or between family members, regardless of gender or sexuality". This includes emotional abuse as well as physical, and may be directed toward any adult at risk, regardless of age or gender.

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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 discloses behaviour that is harmful to them.
- Unexplained changes in a child's behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Signs of neglect, such as being under-nourished, having untreated illness or inadequate care.
- Self-harm, self-mutilation, or suicide attempts.

**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 is occurring.**

#### **4. Responsibilities**

**All staff and volunteers** have the responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and other related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedure.

We expect all staff and volunteers to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, to contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practice.

When discussing with a child, young person, or adult at risk there are useful ways of encouraging positive conversations:

- Try to create a safe and quiet environment where the child, young person, or adult at risk feels comfortable talking, and allow them to lead the conversation. They are not being interviewed or interrogated.
- At all times keep calm, and do not show emotional reaction (shock, disbelief, etc.) to what the child, young person, or adult at risk says. Do show the child, young person, or adult at risk you care about what they are saying and that you want to help them.
- At no point promise confidentiality, as if it is a case of abuse there will be further actions to be taken and that includes others being involved. Be honest about the next steps that need to be taken.
- Try to reflect back or echo what is being said to show that you are listening; it also helps to double-check what you have heard. It ensures you are reporting what the child, young person, or adult at risk has said, and not adding your own words or feelings to it.
- Ask open questions. Closed questions can be leading and put words or ideas into the child, young person, or adult at risk's mind.
- As soon as possible after the child, young person, or adult at risk is gone, take notes about the conversation to pass on to the DPS. Notes should be as detailed (date, time, context) and as accurate as possible to the words of the child, young person, or adult at risk.
  - DO NOT take notes while the child, young person, or adult at risk is talking to you.
  - Do not add your own reflections to the notes.
  - Do add any other relevant details or any previous conversations.

**The Designated Person for Safeguarding** is responsible as the first point of contact for all staff or volunteers to go to for advice if they are concerned about a child, young person, or adult at risk. This may also need to be out of hours, so staff and volunteers need to know who to contact if the DPS is away, generally a manager / pastor or elder.

They are responsible for ensuring that their organisation's safeguarding policy is kept up-to-date with a yearly review. They ensure that they comply with safe recruitment procedures for new staff members and their introduction. This includes making sure that all staff are aware of how to raise safeguarding concerns. They are to make sure that the Safeguarding Policy is available publicly, and that parents are aware of the role that Herne Hill Baptist Church will have in responding to safeguarding concerns.

They are responsible for promoting a safe environment for children, young people, and adults at risk and to ensure all concerns are logged and stored securely. It is their position to be both strategic within Herne Hill Baptist Church in regard to the Safeguarding Policy and also with the day-to-day practice of this policy.



The DPS is **not** responsible for determining whether there is actual abuse taking place but is responsible to make sure all cases of suspected abuse follow the correct procedures and the correct authorities are notified.

They are also required to act as a source of support, advice, and expertise to staff and volunteers on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with the relevant agencies.

**The Deputy Person for Safeguarding** acts as a second point of contact for all safeguarding matters in the absence of the DPS. They will meet with the DPS at least once a term, and in the event of a safeguarding concern being raised. They should be aware of what activities are taking place with the children, and feel able ask any questions about them. They have a duty to record and report, following **6. Procedure for Responding** and to notify the appropriate people and/or services in the case of a safeguarding issue arising.

## **5. Child Protection**

*Child Protection* is an important part of safeguarding, but it is important to distinguish the difference between the two. Whereas *Safeguarding* is about the practices embedded throughout Herne Hill Baptist Church for working with all children and young people, *Child Protection* is about working specifically with children or young people who have been identified as being at risk. This may include a child or young person who currently has a child protection plan in place.

A child protection plan sets out what action needs to be taken, by when and by whom (including family members), to keep the child safe from harm and to promote their welfare. The plan will be reviewed at regular child protection conferences until the child is no longer considered at risk of significant harm or until they are taken into care. This will usually be co-ordinated by Child Social Services, but may involve multi-agency work including Herne Hill Baptist Church where relevant.

Where required and possible, the DPS will be appointed to represent Herne Hill Baptist Church in multi-agency work, which involves attending meetings and review panels. It will also be important to share information with the Strategic Lead, or report further information to Child Social Services.

When reporting information it is important to:

- Be clear about what is being shared and the purpose for sharing it (e.g., reporting a concern, sharing information, etc.).
- Follow up any verbal communication with written documentation.
- Use specific language and describe risks or concerns in detail.
- Acknowledge any information that has been shared with Herne Hill Baptist Church.

At times, staff and volunteers may find themselves working with a child or young person who has a child protection plan and is currently going through the care process. It is important that (only) relevant information is shared with those whose practice may be impacted.

For all staff and volunteers, when working with a child or young person in this context, it is important to follow these guidelines:

- Ensure the child or young person is treated with respect and not singled out from other children and young people.
- Remember that the child or young person may be going through a difficult time, and could be separated from their family.
- Do not share information about the child or young person's circumstances with anyone who does not need to know, even if the intention is for prayer.
- Make every effort to help the child or young person to feel comfortable and relaxed in the group.
- Adhere to policies and practices as laid out by the protection plan.

## **6. Working with Adults at Risk**

Working with Adults at Risk is an important part of safeguarding, and the safeguarding of adults at risk should be taken as seriously as the safeguarding of children and young people. An adult at risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support. Where someone is over 18 but still receiving children's services and a safeguarding issue is raised, the matter should be dealt with as a matter of course by the adult safeguarding team.

A safeguarding risk to an adult may not solely come from another person, it may also come from the individual themselves. This is regarded as **Self Neglect**. This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surrounding and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It is important to consider capacity when self-neglect is suspected. Also consider how it may impact on other family members and whether this gives rise to a safeguarding concern.

The following are key area for attention when working with adults at risk:

### **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:

- 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, always obtain receipts 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.
- Any gifts received should be reported to the church trustees, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- 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.

### **Computers**

All church computers will have suitable parental controls and blocks put on. Although this is not failsafe, it will make using the computers for inappropriate behaviour more difficult, whilst also protecting any vulnerable users. We will create a policy specifically for church computer use, including terms and conditions for use as well as what will happen if someone breaches these conditions.

### **Record keeping**

It is good practice to record pastoral visits or meetings, noting the date, time, location, subject, and any actions which are to be taken. The record of these meetings should stick to facts and try to avoid opinion. Any records of safeguarding allegations, concerns or disclosures should be passed on to the DPS and stored in a safe and secure manner for at least 75 years.

### **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 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.

## **7. Grooming of Children, Young People, and Adults at Risk**

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child, young person, or adult at risk so they can manipulate, exploit, and abuse them.

Children, young people, and adults who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited, trafficked, radicalised, or recruited for gangs. An adult who is being groomed is considered an adult at risk, even if they are not considered so by any other criteria.

Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender, or ethnicity. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

### **Types of grooming**

Children, young people, and adults can be groomed online, in person, or both – by a stranger or by someone they know. This could be a family member, a friend or someone who has targeted them – like a teacher, faith group leader or sports coach. When a person is groomed online, groomers may hide who they are by sending photos or videos of other people. Sometimes will be of someone younger than them to gain the trust of a "peer". They might target one person online or contact lots of people very quickly and wait for them to respond.

A groomer can use the same websites, games, and apps as children and young people, spending time learning about a young person's interests and using this to build a relationship with them.

The relationship a groomer builds can take different forms. This could be (but is not exclusive to):

- a romantic relationship
- a friend
- a mentor
- an authority figure
- a dominant and persistent figure
- a 'saviour' figure

### **Tactics Used by Groomers**

A groomer will often seek to earn the trust and affection of a child, young person, or adult. The following list is some of the ways they may do this, but it is not an exhaustive list:

- Pretending to be younger
- Pretending to be trusted by a parent
- Giving advice or showing understanding
- Buying gifts
- Giving attention
- Taking them on trips, outings, or holidays

Groomers may also try and isolate a target from their friends and family, making them feel dependent on the person, and giving the groomer power and control over them. They may use blackmail to make a person feel guilt and shame, or introduce the idea of 'secrets' to control, frighten, and intimidate.

It is important to remember that children, young people, and adults may not understand they've been groomed. They may have complicated feelings, like loyalty, admiration, love, as well as fear, distress, and confusion.

### **Signs of grooming**

It can be difficult to tell if a person is being groomed – the signs are not always obvious and may be hidden. Older children might behave in a way that seems to be "normal" teenage behaviour, masking underlying problems. Some of the signs you might see include:

- Being very secretive about how they are spending their time, including when online
- Having an older boyfriend, girlfriend, or friend
- Having money or new things, such as clothes and mobile phones, that they cannot or will not explain
- Underage drinking or drug taking
- Spending a noticeable amount more or less time online or on devices, particularly when accompanied by a refusal to explain what they are doing
- Being upset, withdrawn, or distressed
- Sexualised behaviour, language, or an understanding of sex that is not appropriate for their age
- Spending more time away from home, or going missing for periods of time
- Defending a particular person even in the face of unusual or abusive behaviour
- Parroting an older child or adult, particularly if it involves using words or phrases they do not understand
- Not being permitted to answer questions or speak for themselves

A child is unlikely to know they've been groomed. They might be worried or confused and less likely to speak to an adult they trust. If you're worried about a child, or are unsure how to speak to them, report it in the same way you would any other safeguarding concern.

### **If Grooming is disclosed, reported, or suspected**

If you suspect grooming might be taking place, or a suspicion or allegation is disclosed to you, it is important this is responded to in the same way as any other safeguarding concern, as laid out in ***Section 6. Procedure for Responding.***

## **8. Procedure for Responding**

### **Stage 1**

A member of staff, volunteer, or a church attendee has a concern about the welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risk, or the behaviour of another child or adult.

The person who has the concern has a duty to

#### **RECORD AND REPORT**

A written record must be made of the concern using the incident report form, and the concern should be reported to the DPS or the Deputy DPS within 24 hours.

The form is to be kept in a secure location.



If the child or adult is in imminent danger of harm a referral should be made to the Police or Social Service without delay. If the child needs immediate medical attention this should be arranged, and the medic then informed that there may be a child protection concern or allegation.



### **Stage 2**

The Designated Person receives the report of concern and then has the duty to

#### **REVIEW AND REFER**

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

If needed, seek advice from the Children and Families Helpdesk.



### **Stage 3**

After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken, the DPS, Trustee/Deacon, and the Minister may have a duty to

#### **SUPPORT AND REPORT**

If required, the DPS will make referral to, or consult with, Children's Social Care or the Police. There will be a record of the actions taken or agreed including who will inform the parents.

These formal referrals will be made into reports and if needed made available to the local Association, the Disclosure & Barring Service and the Charity Commission.

Herne Hill Baptist Church will offer, or seek out, the appropriate support to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns.



Everyone has their part to play in ensuring the safeguarding of children, young people, and adults at risk within the church.

At Herne Hill Baptist Church we will all take note and follow the procedures:

- If the behaviour of a child, young person, or adult at risk gives any reason for concern.
- If an allegation is made in any context about a child being abused or harmed.
- If the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children gives any reason of concern.
- If we notice other signs of any kind of abuse

At no point will anyone;

- Simply ignore their concerns.
- Confront the adult whose behaviour causes safeguarding concerns.
- Take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place.
- Investigate allegations.
- Act alone or only tell friends.
- Take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns they may have.
- Talk openly about safeguarding concerns with anybody other than the appropriate contact

On **Page 15** (above) is a flowchart for Herne Hill Baptist Church's procedure of the stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns ( a copy will be provided to every leader and made accessible from the office). These are the stages to be followed when there is a suspected issue of safeguarding with a child, young person, or adult at risk.

If there is an issue of safeguarding involving a leader or volunteer then the procedure outlined in **14. Abuse of Trust** should be followed alongside this procedure.

### **Stage 1: Record & Report**

The duty of the person who receives the information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child, young person, or adult at risks is to RECORD their concerns in writing and to REPORT their concerns to the Designated Person.

#### **The Duty to Record**

The report to the Designated Person should be made within 24 hours of the concern being raised.

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

#### **The record should:**

- Be handwritten as soon as possible after the event.
- Be legible and state the facts accurately.
- Include the Child's or Young Person's name, address, date of birth (or age if DoB 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 what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported.
- Include any action taken as a result of concerns.
- Be signed and dated.
- Be kept secure and confidential and made available only to the Safeguarding Team and representatives of the professional agencies.

For the purpose of providing pastoral support to a child, young person, or adult at risk, or to their family, limited numbers of the elders and pastors may have access as far as this is consistent to the welfare of the children or young people involved.

If a report is made to emergency services without reference to one of the Safeguarding Team, one of them will be informed as soon as possible after the report has been made.

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

### The Duty to Report

It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and report their concerns to the Designated Person.

If a concern has been 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 also they themselves have a duty to report the concern to the Designated Person.

**If the person is in imminent danger of harm a referral should be made to the Police or Social Services without delay. If the person needs immediate medical attention this should be arranged, and the medic then informed that there may be a child protection concern or safeguarding allegation. Following this, the DPS should be alerted at the earliest opportunity.**

It is important to note that, once a report has been made to the DPS or external agency, a leader is in no way entitled to be kept in the loop. Leaders will be given an appropriate level of information to enable continued support for that child, young person, or adult at risk being part of the group.

### Stage 2 Review and Refer

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

### The Duty to REVIEW

In reviewing the report that has been received the DPS:

- Should take account of their own experience and expertise in assessing risk to children.
- Must take account of other reports that may have been received concerning the same child, young person, or adult at risk.
- May speak with others in the church (including the elders and pastors) for the sole purpose of gathering further relevant information that may be necessary for the case.
- May consult with other agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised. (**27. Helpful Numbers and Websites**)
- Will make sure any conversations will not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.

### The Duty to REFER

The DPS will make a decision about who the report should be referred on to. They may:

- Refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child, young person, or adult at risk is being harmed.
- Refer the concern to others who work with the child/ren or young person asking for continual observation. Any information shared should be relevant, and restricted only to what is necessary to share.
- Refer to the adult about whom the concern has been raised **ONLY** if this enables pastoral or practical support to be given and does not endanger the child, young person, or adult at risk. This may be the parent of the child or it may be one of the children's workers. If there is any question at all of possible sexual abuse or serious physical abuse the Designated Person should never address the adult directly but should refer their concerns to the Police or Social Services. To do so may place the child, young person, or adult at risk at more risk, or could make any statutory response difficult to pursue because the child, young person, or adult at risk may be intimidated.
- Make a formal referral to the local Social Services.

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

### Stage 3 REPORT and SUPPORT

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Safeguarding Team and the elders/pastors.

### The Duty to REPORT

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

- Report the Referral to the Safeguarding Trustees
- Report the Referral to the Pastors
- Report the Referral to the Regional Minister of the London Baptists.

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Trustee acting on behalf of the trustees may also need to make further reports to London Baptists, the Disclosure & Barring Service and the Charity Commission.

If an allegation is made against someone who works with children or young people the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer **27. Helpful Numbers and Websites.**

They 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, young person, or adult at risk.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against children or related to a child, young person, or adult at risk.
- Behaved towards a child, children or young person in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children or young people.

If it is a concern with a worker (unpaid or paid) then **12. Abuse Of Trust** must be followed alongside these procedures.

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of Herne Hill Baptist Church's Safeguarding Policy.

### The Duty to Support

Once concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of abuse have been addressed, Herne Hill Baptist Church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected.

This can include:

- The child, young person, adult at risk.
- Other family members and support workers.
- Church worker (unpaid or paid).
- Safeguarding team.
- Elders and pastors.
- Leadership team.

This support will be given by the appropriate services available, whether through the Church itself or through an outside provider. This support will be provided to both parties where possible.

Sometimes pastoral support may need to be given to a group of people who have been adversely affected by the abuse of a child, young person, or adult at risk, or the procedures taking place. This should be done appropriately and sensitively, and should involve appropriate communication between the pastoral team responsible.

## **9. Responding to Concerns Raised About Adults at Risk**

When a concern is raised about an adult it should be treated in the same way as a concern about a child i.e. the church worker (paid or voluntary) should:

- 1) Recognise that abuse may be taking place.
- 2) Respond to the concern.
- 3) Record all the information they have received.
- 4) Report the concern to the DPS who may, in turn, report it to the statutory authorities.

It is not your role to decide whether someone has mental capacity and is therefore able to make decisions that impact on their safety and well-being. Decisions on mental capacity are best made by professionals with the relevant background information to hand. 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 Care Act 2014 provides helpful guidance on these situations:

“If the adult has the mental capacity to make informed decisions about their safety and they do not want any action to be taken, this does not preclude the sharing of information with relevant professional colleagues. This is to enable professionals to assess the risk of harm and to be confident that the adult is not being unduly influenced, coerced, or intimidated and is aware of all the options. This will also enable professionals to check the safety and validity of decisions made. It is good practice to inform the adult that this action is being taken unless doing so would increase the risk of harm”.

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. If there are any concerns about an adult's mental capacity, the DPS will contact the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Team for advice.

## **10. Allegation Management**

Herne Hill Baptist Church recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff, volunteers, and church members, or a professional from another organisation.

Should a situation arise the procedure lined out in **8. Procedure for Responding** and **14. Abuse of Trust** will be followed while seeking the necessary advice from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and London Safeguarding Board. If needed the local Social Services and Police will be notified within the first 24 hours of any concerns raised.

All incident reports will be kept confidential and in safe storage indefinitely.

If a referral is made to Child Social Services the following is an outline of how they assess a referral.

- Social Services will question if the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- If the answer is no, then services to the family may be considered.
- If the answer is yes a decision is made about whether Social Services and the Police conduct a joint enquiry.
- A Strategy meeting will be held. Other agencies may be invited to attend.
- Referrer interviewed by the social worker to clarify information.
- The social worker meets the parents/carers of the child, and permission is sought to interview the child.
- Interview with the child is planned. Consideration will be given to whether a medical examination is necessary in consultation with the child and parents/careers.
- Alleged perpetrator is interviewed by the Police.
- Either – there is evidence the child has or will suffer harm and therefore the child will need a protection plan. A multi-agency Child Protection Conference will be convened by Social Services.
- Or – The concerns are not substantiated or are insufficient to conclude the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. In such circumstances other family services should be provided for the family.

## **11. Safe Recruiting of Staff**

Herne Hill Baptist Church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support, and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children, young people, and adults at risk.

All staff and project leaders will be DBS checked before starting in the role, and undergo a further DBS check every 3 years. All volunteers will be DBS checked within 6 weeks of starting, and undergo a further DBS check every 5 years. Any leader who has not yet received a clear DBS certificate will not be left unaccompanied with children or young people at any time.

Upon joining a team that involves working with children or young people, all staff and volunteers will be given a *Leaders Pack* containing a selection of important documents, including a simplified version of the Safeguarding Policy and the Volunteer Agreement they will be expected to sign and return to be stored away safely. Herne Hill Baptist Church will provide safeguarding training in some form once a year, with all leaders expected to attend at least every other year.

### **Guidelines for the appointment of Children's Leaders and Helpers**

Herne Hill Baptist Church will ensure that the following selection and working procedures will be followed with every leader.

1. All volunteers (both current and new) will sign the Leaders and Volunteers Agreement form.
2. A member of the leadership team will meet informally with every prospective volunteer before they join the team.
3. Introduction to the relevant procedures and ways of working will be undertaken, including safeguarding training.
4. A DBS will be applied for.
5. The worker will be appointed for a probationary period of 3 months, after which an informal reflection and review will take place.
6. All leaders and volunteers will be offered full training on safeguarding every 3 years and an annual refresher.

Administration of this process will be overseen by the Designated Person (the youth, children, and families worker) but may be carried out by the elders or pastor.

Until this procedure is completed (excluding the refresh training which is on-going) the workers must be supervised at all times.

Anyone may raise concerns or suggestions regarding ministry amongst children, young people, and adults at risk with any of the Safeguarding or Leadership Teams at any time.

Recruiting safely is vital and as such Herne Hill Baptist Church will make sure that each of these areas will be followed and supported by the church as a whole as well as the Leadership Team.

**Ratios:** Recommended ratios for leaders and volunteers to children and young people.

Generally speaking, the younger the children, the higher the ratios. Any special needs or behavioural issues might mean further leaders and/or volunteers are needed.

(Adult: Children)

- 0-2 Years, Indoor and Outdoor: **1:3** with a minimum of 2 Leaders.
- 3 Years, Indoor and Outdoor: **1:3** with a minimum of 2 Leaders.
- 4-7 Years, Indoor **1:8**, Outdoor: **1:6** both with a minimum of 2 Leaders
- 8-12 Years, Indoor **1:10**, Outdoor: **1:8** both with a minimum of 2 Leaders, preferably one of each gender.
- 12+ Years, Indoor and Outdoor: **1:10** with a minimum of 2 Leaders, preferably one of each gender.



## **12. Communications and Support for Staff**

Herne Hill Baptist Church commits resources for induction, training of staff (unpaid and paid), effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to safeguarding.

Induction will include explaining how each of the groups run, times of groups, and signing in/out processes etc. We will include discussions of the Safeguarding Policy and show both the Volunteers Agreement and the Parent Agreement form for them to read through. There will be discussions about the correct behaviour policy and how that might look in a variety of situations. Depending on their role within the team there will be training and/or guidance on how to work with the team.

We will ensure that they are familiar with the reporting process and who the leaders are. Depending on their role the main leaders will formally assess their competence in applying safe practices during the 3-month probation period. All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children, young people, and adults at risk will have access to safeguarding training.

Herne Hill Baptist Church commits to the following communication methods which will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

- Safeguarding will be an annual agenda item in Church Meetings.
- Regular team meetings will take place to encourage open discussion about both work practices and also possible safeguarding issues or behavioural issues.
- One-to-One meetings are made available at any time for all leaders and volunteers with the youth, children, and families worker and either the elders or pastors to discuss anything relating to the children's and young person's sessions.
- Leaders will be encouraged to partake in multi-agency meetings where possible and where required.
- Staff will be reminded of safeguarding policies and procedures and signs/notices will be placed around the Church building.
- A clear and effective reporting procedure, which will encourage the reporting of concerns, will be provided.

Herne Hill Baptist Church will commit to supporting all staff and volunteers with debriefing support in the instance of a safeguarding report, so that they can reflect on the issues they have dealt with. The church will seek further support as appropriate for all staff.

Any staff member or volunteer who has initiated safeguarding concerns will be contacted by their manager or the elders or pastors within a week to speak and arrange support as needed.

### **13. Respecting Children**

Herne Hill Baptist Church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people. This is so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.

#### **Respecting Children**

The following are the Church's guidelines for the code of behaviour.

All leaders and helpers will:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.
- Use age-appropriate language and tone of voice at all times when children and young people are on site.
- Be aware of their own body language and the effect they are having on an individual child or young person.
- Practice *active listening* with the children and young people, being careful not to assume the thoughts or feelings of a child or young person. This means listening carefully to what each child or young person says and how they are saying it, making sure to observe body language, facial expressions, and posture. It also means displaying body language that is open and shows an interest in the child or young person.
- Not partake in any of the following:
  - Invading the privacy of children when they are using the toilet, showering, or while changing
  - Engaging in rough games involving physical contact between a leader or volunteer and a child.
  - Engaging in sexually provocative games.
  - Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in 'fun'.
  - Responding to or encouraging excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.
  - Scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person.
  - Engaging in gossip, or an inappropriate level of banter that results in the above.
- When necessary, control and discipline children or young people. 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). This will be expanded on further in **23. Discipline of Children and Young People**.
- Make sure another adult is present if, for example, a child or young person has soiled their underclothes and needs to be changed or thoroughly washed. If possible, the child's own parent or carer should be called in to carry out such a task.
- Keep doors open between rooms where leaders are present if there are not at least two leaders present in a room with children or young people, and never plan to be alone on premises with a child or young person.
- Ensure appropriate supervision and accountability structures are in place when engaging in one-to-one work with a child or young person. This is expanded on further in **19. Mentoring and other 1-to-1 Activities**.

## 14. Professional Boundaries

Herne Hill Baptist Church recognises that there are professional boundaries when working with children, young people, and adults at risk. These define the limits of a relationship between a leader or volunteer and a child, young person, or adult at risk. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

Herne Hill Baptist Church expects all staff (unpaid or paid) to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the Church. The following are the professional boundaries that must be adhered to.

### Work Policy

Leaders and volunteers should:

- Only invite young people to your home, or on trips, in groups, in an agreed and relevant context, and always make sure at least one other leader or volunteer is present. The leadership should be notified of any trips for the children or young people, which take place as a Herne Hill Baptist Church's trip.
- Never allow attendance of a child or young person on any offsite or overnight trip or activity without receiving permission from a parent or carer. Separate consent forms will be required for any offsite or overnight trips or activities and will be kept on hand by the leader throughout the trip or activity in case of emergency.
- Not give lifts to children, young people, or adults at risk on their own, unless consent has been given or in the case of an emergency. If lifts are being given there should be the relevant insurance cover for passengers and, where possible, at least one leader of the same gender as the child, young person, or adult at risk should be present. The child, young person, or adult at risk should **always** be in the back seat unless otherwise necessary.
- Never share sleeping accommodation with children or young people if there is a group away.
- Be aware of any physical contact they may have with children, young people, and adults at risk and record it when necessary. For instance, if they need to stop a fight, administer First Aid, give a hug to a child who is distressed, remove a person from danger, or protect themselves or others from attack.
- Not use physical punishment when controlling or disciplining children and young people.
- Keep a logbook; if any significant incidents take place a record should be kept in the Church incident book, see **29. Health and Safety**.
- Never enter a child or young person's home unless invited by a parent or carer and there is at least one other adult present. In any circumstances, a leader should never enter a child or young person's. If a leader or volunteer is babysitting a child or young person, the leader or volunteer's position should be considered, and it would be advised to have a written agreement with the parent or carer.
- Make it clear that they cannot accept responsibility for a child, young person, or adult at risk's valuables (especially with the number of tablets, phones, etc. available)
- Never accept money as a gift or borrow money from a child, young person, or adult at risk. There are certain situations that a gift might be acceptable but only if the parent or carer is aware of the gift. Likewise, they should never give a gift to a child, young person, or adult at risk unless part of a planned activity (e.g. a Baptism gift).
- Never sell to or buy from a child, young person, or adult at risk.

## **15. Abuse of Trust**

All staff and volunteers at Herne Hill Baptist Church are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people is unacceptable and that their conduct towards all children and young people must be beyond reproach. In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the Church and a child under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that child is over the age of consent.

[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.

It is good to note that anyone aged 10 or above can be charged with a criminal offence of child abuse. Additionally, charges can be made posthumously, and the age of prosecution may be subject to change in the future.

A staff member or volunteer who cares for, supports, or otherwise has a level of responsibility with an adult at risk is in a position of trust. Just as when working with a child or young person, behaviour in this context must be beyond reproach. In many cases, it is inappropriate for a staff member or volunteer to form a romantic or sexual relationship with an adult at risk with whom they have a relationship of trust. If this situation should arise, it should be raised with a pastor or elder before pursuing.

It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power and influence this gives them over those they care for, and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence. This is why Herne Hill Baptist Church expects all leaders and volunteers to act above and beyond when it comes to working with children and young people.

If any allegation or concern has been made about a worker who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, young person, or adult at risk or may have harmed a child, young person, or adult at risk,
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, young person, or adult at risk
- Behaved towards a child or young person in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, young people, or adults at risk

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the different categories of abuse. These include concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between workers and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18.
- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with the intent to commit a relevant offence.
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature e.g. inappropriate text/email messages or images, gifts or socialising etc.
- Possession of indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of children.

If a leader or volunteer has an allegation made against them which fits these areas then the following procedure must be followed alongside the details in **8. Procedure for Responding**.

1. Herne Hill Baptist Church recognises that an allegation may be made against a member of staff for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegations may or may not be true. It is imperative that when dealing with an allegation we will maintain an open mind, but the referral will be made without delay.
2. As soon as the allegation is made the worker will be told to step down from ALL church duties until the incident has been fully investigated and resolved. The individual in question will be given pastoral support, starting as soon as possible, as long as it is safe and appropriate to do so.
3. If the allegation is because of a risk of harm that they pose to children or young people then the local LADO will be contacted to be both notified of the concern and also for advice on the next step. If needed, Social Services and the Police will be contacted.
4. It is important that the DPS does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of information received and a joint decision made whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation.

If it is advised that further action is needed this will be a compulsory agenda at the next leaders meeting and will remain on the action points until the relevant action and the incident has been fully resolved.

If an allegation has been made, or a concern has been raised, regarding inappropriate behaviour or attitude that **does not** amount to abuse, then the immediate superior and an elder or pastor will meet with the worker to discuss the concern with the aim of working out a positive solution to improving the situation. This should involve a peaceful and respectful discussion, where the concerns are raised, and action points are put into place in order to work toward change. If these action points are not followed, or the worker in question chooses to dispute the concern about their behaviour, they may be asked to step down from the ministry until such a time when the issue can be addressed again.

If a false allegation is made against a staff or volunteer, then the immediate superior and an elder or pastor will meet with the worker once the case has been confirmed, to discuss ongoing pastoral support, and whether the worker wishes to re-join the ministry team. This may be in a different context from which the false allegation was made.

## **16. Abuse Committed in Peer-to-Peer Relationships**

It is possible for abuse to come in a peer-to-peer relationship. This raises two considerations. The first is if a child or young person makes an allegation of abuse against another child or young person. The second is if a child or young person feels they have behaved abusively toward another person. In both cases, it is important to consider the needs of every person involved.

### **If an allegation of abuse is made against a child or young person**

It is important to remember that a child or young person behaving inappropriately is not always a case of abuse. From time to time, children and young people have fall-outs, engage in banter, and overstep the mark. This is usually not intentional, and the child or young person may not be aware of what they did wrong. In this case, take the child or young person to the side and have a calm conversation with them as recommended in the *Discipline Policy*.

The key to recognising if behaviour is abuse is to do with persistence and intentionality. If a child or young person's behaviour does not change after it has been addressed a number of times, or the child or young person is intending to cause physical or emotional harm, then it becomes abuse. If abuse is suspected, always seek advice from the DPS **before** confronting the child or young person whose behaviour has raised a cause for concern.

An allegation of abuse or safeguarding concern regarding peer-to-peer relationships is to be taken seriously, and to be reported in the same way as an allegation made against an adult. It is important to be aware that a child who displays challenging behaviour may be doing so because they have experienced abuse or neglect. If it is suspected that this may be the case, it is important to follow the standard safeguarding procedures.

### **If a child or young person believes they have behaved abusively**

Sometimes a child or young person may report directly that they have behaved abusively towards someone else. If this happens:

- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing by mentioning it.
- Listen carefully to the child or young person, and let them tell their whole story. Do not try to investigate or interrogate the child or young person, but ensure a clear understanding of what they are saying has been attained.
- Use non-judgmental language at all times; use language that is supportive.
- Remember that a child or young in this situation is in need of support themselves.
- Inform the child or young person of the next steps to be taken in order to ensure that they and the other children or young people in question are safe.
- Reassure the child or young person that behaviour can change.

### **If a child or young person has been placed in danger by a peer**

If a child or young person is in danger, it is important to remove that danger as soon as possible. This may mean restraining one or more children or young people, disarming a child or young person, or removing them from the room. **It is important for all staff and volunteers to do this while maintaining their own safety.** If this is the case, ensure another leader is present where possible, and de-escalate the situation in a way that ensures everybody is safe. Do not put another person in harm's way.

Once the situation has been de-escalated, a report must be made to the DPS. It is important to remember that all children and young people involved may need continued support, regardless of who is responsible for the situation.

If a situation cannot be de-escalated and one or more people remain in danger of harm, it is important to report to the Police immediately. When speaking to the Police, mention the context and ages of the children and young people involved.

### **If a child or young person is sexually abusing another child or young person**

Although sexual relations between minors is not permitted by law, it is not necessarily an abusive relationship. Sexual relationships and exploration takes place between minors. The relationship becomes abusive when coercion or manipulation is involved, or when one or more people are engaging in activities beyond their appropriate level of understanding.

Important factors to consider are:

- The ages of each child or young person involved.
- The nature of the activities taking place.
- The perceived intentions of each child or young person involved.

If it is believed that a sexual relationship between minors, regardless of whether intercourse is involved or not, is abusive, it is important to respond immediately. A report should be made to the DPS as soon as possible. The DPS will pass the report on to Social Services, and will seek advice about the next steps.

If a child or young person is physically or emotionally harming another child or young person through a sexual relationship, it may be important to separate them. This may include if the children and young people involved are siblings. This should be done calmly and immediately, and a conversation about why it has happened should be had with each child and young person involved. A parent or carer should be informed of these conversations, and should be allowed to be present during the conversation.

It is important to remember that, if a child or young person is sexually abusing another child or young person, it may be because they themselves have been sexually abused. It is not the responsibility of the staff or volunteer to investigate this, but any concerns should be reported to the DPS as soon as possible.

## **17. Allegations Made Against Adults at Risk**

It is possible for abuse to be committed by an adult at risk. If this happens, or an allegation against an adult at risk is raised, it is important to take the situation as seriously as if it were any other adult, as the effects on the victim are not less impactful. The adult at risk, however, may require additional support during this process. It is important to consider the needs of every person involved.

Allegations against an adult at risk should be reported by the DPS at the first opportunity, within 24 hours of it being reported to them. Any allegation against an adult at risk will be investigated by the statutory authorities. If the alleged perpetrator is unable to understand the significance of questions put to them or their replies, they can access support from an 'appropriate' adult whilst they are being questioned. This role can be filled by a range of people, such as a family member, carer, social worker, etc. In court, adults at risk may be allowed to be assisted by an intermediary or give evidence through a live link.

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 carers / support workers
- 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 carer. The DPS will also seek advice about what steps need to be taken to ensure the needs of both the victim and alleged perpetrator are met; this may include placing the adult at risk on a Safeguarding Contract or equivalent
- 4) Make sure there is pastoral support in place for the adult at risk throughout the process involved.



## **18. Conflict Resolution and Complaints**

Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children. Concern or disagreement may arise over another professional's decisions, actions or lack of actions in relation to a referral, an assessment or an enquiry.

It is important to:

- Avoid professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus of the child.
- Resolve difficulties quickly and openly.

The safety of children, young people, and adults at risk is paramount and any professional disagreement or unresolved issues should be thought of in light of the safety of any children or young people.

For disputes within Herne Hill Baptist Church the following procedures should be followed:

### **Stage 1**

- The aim is to resolve the difficulties within the group who are at disagreement, before escalating to Stage 2.
- Both of those who disagree should talk calmly and openly with each other about the conflict and try and understand each other's opinion. A third mutual person should be involved at this stage.
- If a mutual resolution cannot be achieved then move onto Stage 2.

### **Stage 2**

- If unresolved, the problem should be referred to the leader, elder or pastor above them.
- There will be a discussion with the leader, elder or pastor and the aim will be to resolve the issue without having to escalate it to Stage 3.
- This might take the form of an action plan or a re-working of guidelines to clarify the situation better.

The aim should be to resolve difficulties within a maximum of 5 working days for Stages 1 and 2, or earlier if the children, young people, or adults are at risk.

### **Stage 3**

- If the agreement cannot be reached within a maximum of 2 weeks then the issue will be addressed by a group of leaders, elders and pastors meeting with each person on their own.
- All information and conversations should be recorded and dated.
- Further action plans and solutions should be clearly signed by both parties and kept on record for 5 years.
- If the problem still remains unresolved the matter will go onto Stage 4

### **Stage 4**

If the disagreement can still not be resolved then advice will be sought from any of the appropriate agencies in **27. *Helpful and Useful Numbers***. If necessary, both parties will be asked to step down from their positions and will be given all the support that is available in order to clarify and resolve the conflict.

## **19. Involving Parents in Safeguarding Procedure**

Most sections in this policy document outline at what point parents should be involved in safeguarding procedure. This section, however, outlines two key points to be recommended. These points revolve around the child/young person being at risk, and the question of confidentiality.

### **Confidentiality with Children/Young People**

It is **not** a parent/guardian's right to know everything that happens in the life of their child/young person. If a child/young person approaches a leader, they may do so expecting a level of confidentiality. It is important to build trustworthy relationships with the children/young people that this is adhered to **where possible**.

**Note:** A leader should never promise confidentiality to a child or young person. If it is believed the child/young person is at risk, it is of utmost importance that this is reported following the correct procedure.

Examples of conversations that do not warrant the immediate involvement of a parent/guardian may include a young person engaging in a relationship with another young person, sexual or otherwise, or a young person questioning their gender or sexuality, unless any child/young person involved are at risk. A child/young person may be encouraged to involve a parent/guardian in the conversation, but this should be done with the permission of the child/young person, and under no circumstances forced upon them.

If a leader is unsure about whether or not a conversation with a child/young person should warrant the involvement of a parent/guardian, they should take the concern to the youth and children's worker at the earliest opportunity.

### **A Child/Young Person who is at Risk**

If a child/young person is considered to be at risk, and a safeguarding concern has been raised, then the parent/guardian should be informed at the appropriate stage. Sometimes it may not be helpful to inform the parent/guardian until further information has been gathered, as involvement of a parent/guardian may complicate the safeguarding process.

If a safeguarding concern is referred to Social Services, the Police, or the Baptist DPS, then the parent/guardian of the child/young person must be informed at the earliest opportunity. However, the priority in this case is the referral and to ensure the safety of the child/young person.

If it is suspected or believed the safeguarding concern relates to the parent/guardian, then they should not be informed of the disclosure, as the safety of the child/young person may be further put at risk by doing so.

## **20. Working with Special Needs and Disabilities**

Working with children and young people at Herne Hill Baptist Church may, at times, bring us into contact with children, young people, or volunteers, with additional special needs, or with physical or mental disabilities. We want to be inclusive, and create an environment that feels safe and welcoming to all people. This requires us to pay some extra attention to working with people with disabilities or special needs.

### **Children and Young People**

When working with somebody with disability or special needs, it is important they are treated with the same level of dignity and respect as any other child or young person. They may, however, require additional support to enable their full engagement with a session.

It is important to assess the needs of each person on an individual basis, and this should be done between the youth, children, and families worker, the pastor, and the parents/carers of the child or young person in question. A support plan should be drawn up and kept safely in the safeguarding folder, agreed by the three parties.

Support provided should not exceed what is required for the child or young person to be able to participate and enjoy the session. For example, if a child or young person does not require assistance using the toilet, leaders should not provide it.

### **Adults at Risk**

An adult with any special need or disability is regarded as an adult at risk, regardless of whether the adult is high functioning or not. It is important an adult with disability or special needs is treated with the same level of respect and dignity as any other adult. They may, however, require additional support to enable their full engagement and participation.

It is important each person is treated on an individual basis, and the needs will need to be assessed in this manner. A needs assessment should be done between a person responsible for the relevant area of engagement, the pastor, and the carers/support workers for the adult in question. A support plan should be drawn up and kept safely in the safeguarding folder, agreed by the three parties.

Support provided should not exceed what is required for the adult at risk to be able to participate and enjoy the activity. For example, if an adult at risk does not require assistance using the toilet, leaders should not provide it. Any support or assistance given to an adult with disability or special needs should uphold the respect and dignity and should not demean or patronise the adult at risk.

### **Volunteers**

An adult with a disability or with special needs should not be automatically barred from helping with the children and young people, but their appointment should be done in such a way that supports and encourages the helper, and protects both the helper and the children/young people.

There is no one rule that can apply to every person. A risk assessment and action plan should be drawn up between the volunteer in question, the youth, children, and family worker, and the pastor.

The following is some good advice to consider:

- Is this the right ministry for them to participate in?
- What level or responsibility is right for the individual volunteer? What training can be provided to assist them?
- What support can be put into place to enable the volunteer's participation?
- Considering providing observation and review on a monthly basis in the early months.
- The safety of the children and young people is paramount.

## **21. Taking Children to the Toilet**

An important rule for every staff and volunteer is - do not invade the privacy of children or young people when they are using the toilet or showering.

During midweek activities, where possible, leaders will be asked to use the toilets at the front of the building, so there is no risk of them being in the toilets at the same time as a child or young person. In the event of an outing or overnight trip away, an individual risk assessment will be drawn up for the premises in question. During Sunday Morning activities, this is not practical. Therefore, leaders should ensure there are no unaccompanied children or young people in the toilets before entering.

Depending on the age or ability of the child or young person, it may be necessary to accompany them to the toilet or provide a level of assistance. The level of assistance provided should not surpass what is appropriate and required for the age and ability of the child.

### **Assisting a Child/Young Person**

Where possible, a parent should be called upon to assist the child/young person in the toilet, or to change a nappy. If this is not possible, the leader assisting the child should follow these guidelines:

- The leader in question **must** be DBS verified. Nobody without an accepted DBS certificate should be accompanying a child or young person to the toilet.
- Ensure another leader is aware that you are assisting the child, and this is not being done in secret.
- Where possible, ensure the leader is of the same gender as the child/young person being assisted.
- Ensure the door to the toilets is kept open, but the dignity of the child/young person is preserved as much as possible.
- Ensure there is no touching of the genitals unless it is necessary for cleaning purposes, in which case a cloth should be used.
- At the end of the session inform the parent/carer of the level of assistance that was provided to the child/young person when using the toilet or changing a nappy.

### **Accompanying a Child**

Due to the age or ability of the child/young person, or the circumstances in which the activity is taking place, it may be necessary to accompany a child to the toilets without providing any form of assistance. The leader accompanying a child should follow these guidelines:

- The leader in question **must** be DBS verified. Nobody without an accepted DBS certificate should be accompanying a child or young person to the toilet.
- Ensure another leader is aware that you are accompanying the child, and this is not being done in secret.
- Where possible, ensure the leader is of the same gender as the child/young person being accompanied.
- **Do not** enter the toilets. Stand outside the toilets while the child goes in alone, with the main door open. Be aware of any mirrors that might compromise the dignity of the child. Continue talking to the child so they know the leader is still there.
- If taking a group of children to the toilets, wait for the whole group to gather again before returning with them to the activity.

A young person aged 11+ should not be accompanied to the toilets unless mentioned in an individual or an activity risk assessment.

## **22. Accompanying Adults at Risk to the Toilet**

An important an important rule for every staff and volunteer is – do not invade the privacy of adults at risk when they are using the toilet or showering. Depending on the mental and physical needs of the adult in question, they may require additional support using the toilet. The level of assistance provided should not surpass what is appropriate and required for the mental and physical ability of the adult.

### **Assisting an Adult at Risk**

Where possible, a carer or support worker should be called upon to assist the adult at risk in the toilet. If this is not possible, the leader assisting the adult at risk should follow these guidelines:

- The leader in question **must** be DBS verified. Nobody without an accepted DBS certificate should be accompanying an adult at risk to the toilet.
- Ensure another leader is aware that you are assisting the adult, and this is not being done in secret.
- Where possible, ensure the leader is of the same gender as the child/young person being assisted.
- Use of the disabled toilet may be required or recommended. Ensure the dignity of the adult at risk is preserved as much as possible.
- Ensure there is no touching of the genitals unless it is necessary for cleaning purposes, in which case a cloth should be used.
- At the end of the session inform the carer / support worker of the level of assistance that was provided to the adult at risk when using the toilet.

### **Accompanying an Adult at Risk**

Due to the age or ability of the adult at risk, or the circumstances in which the activity is taking place, it may be necessary to accompany an adult to the toilets without providing any form of assistance.

The leader accompanying an adult at risk should follow these guidelines:

- The leader in question **must** be DBS verified. Nobody without an accepted DBS certificate should be accompanying an adult at risk to the toilet.
- Ensure another leader is aware that you are accompanying the adult at risk, and this is not being done in secret.
- Where possible, ensure the leader is of the same gender as the child/young person being accompanied.

**Do not** enter the toilets. Stand outside the toilets while the adult at risk goes in alone, with the main door open. Be aware of any mirrors that might compromise the dignity of the adult. Continue talking to them so they know the leader is still there.

## **23. Offsite and Overnight Activities Involving Children and Young People**

There are some specific considerations which need to be made for offsite and overnight activities involving children and young people:

- A risk assessment must be carried out beforehand.
- Parents will be informed in writing of all the arrangements.
- Consent forms will be obtained for the specific activities involved.
- There will be workers with first aid and other relevant certificates with the group.
- There will be both male and female leaders involved with any overnight activity

### **Sleeping Arrangements**

Sleeping arrangements for overnight activities will be carefully considered. It is not acceptable for workers to share close sleeping quarters with young people. Instead, workers should be situated in close proximity and ensure that the young people 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 young person is questioning their gender identity or considering, progressing, or has completed gender reassignment, the activity organiser should consult with them and their parents/carers about arrangements for residential trips and sleepovers. If needed the DPS will seek advice from the Regional Safeguarding Lead. This may mean having a shared sleeping space for all young people or providing a separate sleeping space for the young person in question.

If a shared sleeping space is provided for all young people, appropriate measures will be taken to ensure each young person feels safe and comfortable, and sleeping arrangements are not encouraging activities or a sexual or abusive nature. Parents and carers must be informed of decisions made and measures taken.

### **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**

It is important to recognise there are additional safeguarding considerations around swimming activities with children and young people. Children and young people are likely to be dispersed around the swimming area and, if taking place within a public pool, other children, young people, and adults may be present. Additional oversight should be provided, particularly during changing or visits to the toilets.

The following guidelines should be followed at all times:

- Consent forms must be acquired for each participating child and young person, and swimming ability of each of the children and young people should be discerned
- All children and young people should be expected to wear swimming attire appropriate to their age and build, and of a non-sexualised nature
- If any child or young person leaving the primary swimming area should inform a leader before doing so and, if appropriate or necessary, should be accompanied by a leader
- If dividing into groups, if possible to do so, a leader should remain with each group at all times
- If not dividing into groups, leaders should check in with each child and young person on a regular basis
- All children and young people should be informed of an appropriate place where they can find a leader if they need to or wish to do so
- Leader should never change in front of children and young people. If this is impossible to avoid, appropriate measures should be taken to avoid inappropriate occurrences

An increased ration or leaders to children/young people may be required to ensure all safeguarding requirements are met and concerns are addressed.

## **Named Person for Safeguarding**

There will be a named person for safeguarding on all offsite and overnight activities. This person need not necessarily be the Church DPS, but they must 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.

## **24. Working Safely Online**

At Herne Hill Baptist Church, as well as the face-to-face ministry with children, young people, and adults at risk our ministry takes place also in the online environment. Therefore, it is important to have policies that ensure we are continuing to create a safe environment for all young people engaging online.

Online ministry is delivered in four main forms:

- Social Media
- Discord Server
- Live Streams
- Digital Communication

### **Social Media**

Staff and volunteers should not engage with children below the age of 11 on social media under any circumstances. When engaging with young people through social media, staff and volunteers should:

- Keep all communication on public forums, and never initiate direct or private messages with a young person. If direct communication is required, this should be done through other means, not over social media.
- Not continue communications with a young person outside of reasonable hours. Reasonable hours are 08:00 until 21:30.
- Keep a record of any and all communication with a young person on social media.
- Never accept a young person's friend request unless it is with an official Herne Hill Baptist Church account. If asked, explain to the young person that they can connect with leaders through the official account, or relevant groups.
- Ensure language and content posted for young people to see is appropriate at all times, and take care to ensure communications cannot be misconstrued by a young person or by another leader. Keep communication clear and unambiguous.
- Never, under any circumstances, search for a young person on social media.
- Ensure communications over social media never become a substitute for face-to-face communications with a young person.
- Never save pictures of young people on personal devices, including phones, tablets, and computers.
- Raise any concerns with the DPS at the earliest opportunity, but remember that social media does not create grounds for trust and confidence between a leader and young person.

A leader or volunteer should **never** engage with a child or young person via Snapchat or Instagram Stories due to their temporary nature. A youth group Instagram account may share an Instagram story if the story is saved to the camera roll and story archive.

### **Discord Server**

The Discord Server is only available to young people aged 11-18. In order to ensure a safe environment, policies have been put into place for approving a young person:

- When a young person joins, they will only be able to see the *Welcome Page* and the *Server Rules*
- A parent or carer must email [chris@hhbc.org.uk](mailto:chris@hhbc.org.uk), stating the young person's username exactly as written in Discord, including the unique number that is preceded by #.
- The young person will be assigned a role, either *younger youth* or *older youth*, once a match has been confirmed, which will grant them access to the full server.



When engaging with young people through the Discord Server, staff and volunteers should:

- Keep all communication in the public server, and never initiate direct or private messages with a young person. If direct communication is required, this should be done through other means, not through Discord.
- Not continue communications with a young person outside of reasonable hours. Reasonable hours are 08:00 until 21:30.
- Never accept a young person's friend request unless it is with the official Herne Hill Baptist Church account. If asked, explain to the young person that they can connect with leaders through the official account, or in the server.
- Ensure language and content posted for young people to see is appropriate at all times, and take care to ensure communications cannot be misconstrued by a young person or by another leader. Keep communication clear and unambiguous.
- Ensure communications over the Discord Server never become a substitute for face-to-face communications with a young person.
- Never save pictures of young people on personal devices, including phones, tablets, and computers.
- Raise any concerns with the DPS at the earliest opportunity.
- Not enter a voice chat with young people until there is a second leader present to do so. While waiting for a second leader, use the leader's voice chat of the server.

### Livestreams

When providing a livestream for young people, it is not required to have a second leader present as long as the following guidelines are followed:

- Ensure the livestream is available for review by the DPS or a member of the Leadership Team upon request.
- Ensure any livestream is conducted during reasonable hours. Reasonable hours are 08:00 until 21:30.
- Ensure a recording of the livestream is made and kept. This may involve downloading a copy of the livestream if necessary.
- Ensure language and content posted for young people to see is appropriate at all times, and take care to ensure communications cannot be misconstrued by a young person or by another leader. Keep communication clear and unambiguous.
- Engage with and respond to the live chat function as young people respond, and ensure all young people are treated with care and respect.
- Ensure communications over social media never become a substitute for face-to-face communications with a young person.
- Raise any concerns with the DPS at the earliest opportunity, but remember that a live chat function does not create grounds for trust and confidence between a leader and young person.
- The consent form will have a section about Digital Communication, and will ask permission to include a young person's voice within public livestreams.
- If, under any circumstances, the visual of a child or young person is to appear in a livestream, ensure written permission has been given by a parent or carer **before** the livestream is due to take place.

### **Digital Communication**

Direct communication, whether through email, WhatsApp, SMS, or by any other means, should not take place with any child or young person under the age of 16. If communication is required, it should go through a parent or carer.

When communicating with young people aged 16+, staff and volunteers should:

- Restrict communications to email, WhatsApp, or SMS, unless otherwise agreed with the leadership team.
- Not continue communications with a young person outside of reasonable hours. Reasonable hours are 08:00 until 21:30.
- Keep a record of any and all communication with a young person.
- Ensure language and content is appropriate and take care to ensure communications cannot be misconstrued by a young person or by another leader. Keep communication clear and unambiguous.
- Raise any concerns with the DPS at the earliest opportunity but remember that digital communication does not create grounds for trust and confidence between a leader and young person.
- Inform the youth, children, and families worker of any digital communication taking place, and any personal contact information belonging to young people that is being stored on a personal device.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached with regards to online work with children and young people, this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation procedures outlined in **14. Abuse of Trust**.

## **25. Mentoring and other 1-to-1 Activities**

When meeting 1-to-1 with a child, young person, or adult at risk, it is important to ensure appropriate boundaries are set, and accountability is taking place. For that reason, any staff or volunteer meeting 1-to-1 should keep to the following guidelines.

Always aim to have 1-to-1 meetings with a child, young person, or adult at risk in a public place, such as a busy park, café, or coffee shop. This ensures that other people will be around and makes it easier to remain accountable. Be sure, however, that this does limit the ability for more personal conversations in the context of mentoring, and it is important to respect a child, young person, or adult at risk's wishes to not share openly. If either the staff/volunteer or the young person feels the location is too uncomfortable for any reason (e.g., the feeling of another person listening in), be prepared to move the meeting to another public location.

If, for any reason, the 1-to-1 meeting with a child or young person cannot happen in a public location, this must first be agreed with both the parent or carer and the DPS, and may take place at the Church (ensure at least one other adult is in the building and within close proximity; they should check in on the meeting at regular intervals) or at the young person's home (ensure a parent or carer is present in the home; they should check in on the meeting at regular intervals).

All 1-to-1 meetings with a child or young person should first be agreed with both a parent or carer and with the youth, children, and families worker. A record should be kept of the dates, times, and locations of all 1-to-1 meetings between staff or volunteers and a child or young person.

In many instances, it is appropriate to keep the content of conversations within a mentoring context between just the staff/volunteer and the child, young person, or adult at risk. This will not, however, be the case if:

- A safeguarding concern has arisen, or a disclosure or allegation has been made.
- If the child, young person, or adult at risk is in need of pastoral support or practical support.

In the context of a safeguarding concern or allegation, the appropriate reporting process must be undertaken. For this reason, the staff/volunteer cannot **promise** confidentiality under any circumstances. They should inform the child, young person, or adult at risk of the next steps in the case of safeguarding at the earliest possible point, so the child, young person, or adult at risk is aware of what will happen before they begin to share.

In the context of pastoral support, the staff/volunteer should ask the child, young person, or adult at risk's permission to share the nature of the conversation with the children, youth, and families worker, or with a pastor. They should be open about the purpose of this, and give the child, young person, or adult at risk the option to refuse. If a safeguarding issue arises, it is important to be clear that the safety of the child, young person, or adult at risk overrides the need to ask permission, but it is still important to be open and honest about what will happen.

If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached with regards to online work with children, young people, and adults at risk, this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation procedures outlined in **14. Abuse of Trust**.

## **26. Working with 18 to 19-Year-Olds**

Sometimes youth work at Herne Hill Baptist Church may involve working with 18- or 19-year-olds who are still in full-time further education. This person is no longer considered a child by law. However, this person is entitled to be considered a young person if they so choose, or they may be considered a leader and be given a position of responsibility within the youth work. They may choose to be both, a young person in some contexts and a leader in others. It is important that they, and all other children/young people are kept safe at all times.

### **18- to 19-year-old young person**

If somebody, at the age of 18 or 19, chooses to be recognised as a young person, even if this is not in every context, they should be seen as a young person for the purpose of safeguarding. However, there are a few points that will be different in circumstances surrounding this young person:

- A consent form is still required for activities, but they may legally sign this form themselves
- By law, they are considered an adult, and therefore should not be left in one-to-one situations with any child/young person
- Inappropriate behaviour between this young person and any other child/young person is to be treated as if between an adult and a child/young person

The young person in question should be made aware of these points when they turn 18. It is not necessary to have this young person DBS checked unless they are also considered a leader in some contexts.

### **18- to 19-year-olds as a leader**

If somebody, at the age of 18 or 19, chooses to be recognised as a leader, they should be given appropriate support and training alongside every other leader working with children/young people. If they are given any position of responsibility within the childrens/youth work, they should be considered a part of this category. This young person should be DBS checked at the earliest opportunity.

It is recommended practice to not have this young person leading within any group where the majority of young people present are less than two years younger than them.

## **27. Young Leaders**

A young person may wish to be a young leader within either the children's or youth work. A separate document should exist to lay out guidelines for how to appropriately support this young person. It is recommended that the young person not be a young leader in any group where the majority of children/young people present are less than two years younger than them. Being considered a young leader is not the same as leading a game or activity.

A young leader should be given responsibility appropriate for their age and level of ability, and to give them increased responsibility without appropriate support may be considered a form of abuse, whether intended to cause distress or not. It is **never** appropriate for a young leader to be given responsibility over a safeguarding concern.

If the young person is below the age of 18, they are still considered a child for the purpose of safeguarding. They should also be given appropriate support for leading with children/young people, and instruction of appropriate behaviour. They are not required to complete a DBS check.

If the young person is 18+, they are to be considered an adult for the purpose of safeguarding. They should be given appropriate support for leading with children/young people, and instruction of appropriate behaviour. It is recommended to have them complete a DBS check.

## **28. Missing Children**

A child or young person's safety is paramount, both on and off premises. In order to maintain this, during sessions where the parent/guardian/carer is not present, it is important that leaders know the whereabouts of children and young people.

At the end of a session, young people should only be permitted to make their own way home if a parent/guardian has consented to them doing so, and only from the age of 12+. If a child/young person is being collected by anybody other than a parent/guardian, this should only be done by somebody for whom the parent/guardian has given prior permission.

For a session on Sunday mornings, the parent/guardian of any child below the age of 11 must sign the child in and out so it is clear when the child is the responsibility of those running the session.

At any point when no leader is aware of the whereabouts of a child/young person, that child/young person is considered missing. In this instance, the following steps should be followed.

### **A Child/young person missing on premises**

If a child/young person is considered missing during activities or sessions taking place on the premises of Herne Hill Baptist Church, the following steps should be followed as soon as it is noticed:

- The session leader is to be informed immediately, in a way that does not panic other children/young people.
- The session leader conducts a thorough search of the building, including the toilets (following usual safeguarding procedure), as well as the garden and car park.
- All external doors are to be checked to see if they have been opened.
- If the child/young person is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child/young person is reported to the Police.
- The session leader talks with each of the staff and volunteers to identify when and where the child/young person was last seen. A record of this is kept in the safeguarding file.
- The incident is reported to the DPS or, if they cannot be reached, to the pastor or safeguarding trustee.

The session leader may be required to stay at the building, or help conduct a search, until the child/young person is found.

### **A Child/young person missing off premises**

If a child/young person is considered missing during activities or sessions taking place off the premises of Herne Hill Baptist Church, the following steps should be followed as soon as it is noticed:

- All other children/young people are gathered in one designated meeting place, and the missing child/young person is reported to the session leader immediately.
- If the child/young person has a mobile phone, it should be contacted before taking further steps. This may locate the child/young person, and prompt them to return to the group.
- If the whereabouts of the child/young person cannot be identified, the session leader contacts the police and reports the child/young person as missing.
- The parent/guardian is contacted and requested to come to the setting of the offsite activity.
- The incident is reported to the DPS or, if they cannot be reached, to the pastor or safeguarding trustee.

The session leader may be required to stay at the location, or help conduct a search, until the child/young person is found.

**A Child/young person with an unauthorised pickup**

If it is believed a child/young person has been collected by, left with, or otherwise taken by an unauthorised adult or unknown older young person, it is important this is treated both seriously and urgently:

- If still possible, the child/young person should be stopped from leaving without first contacting a parent/guardian, and the unauthorised adult or unknown older young person instructed to wait at the premises until this has been done.
- If the child/young person has already left, a parent/guardian is to be contacted immediately.
- In either case, if the unauthorised adult or older young person, is not recognised by the parent/guardian, the Police will be contacted immediately.
- A full and accurate description of the adult/young person may be required by the Police.
- The session leader makes an incident report to be kept in the safeguarding file.
- The incident is reported to the DPS or, if they cannot be reached, to the pastor or safeguarding trustee.

## **29. Discipline of Children and Young People**

A separate *Code of Behaviour* policy and *Discipline Policy*, based upon the following guidelines, should be agreed upon that will be relevant for each different area of youth and children's work taking place at the church, and a copy should be kept in the back of the Safeguarding File.

The following guidelines are simply designed to ensure good safeguarding practice when disciplining a child, and to encourage appropriate behaviour when managing difficult circumstances.

- Children and young people should be respected at all times, even when undergoing a process of discipline.
- Children and young people should be disciplined without the use of physical punishment or force, without belittling the child or young person through the use of raised voices, name calling, etc., and without the use of aggressive language.
- Sometimes a raised voice might be necessary to ensure the safety of the child or young person, or of a third person. In this instance, the reasons for a raised voice should be explained clearly at first opportunity.
- In the instance of a discipline procedure needing to be escalated (see *Discipline Policy*) it should be referred to the session leader, or another designated person.

Herne Hill Baptist Church encourages an atmosphere of mutual support and care, and in the case of any concerns regarding discipline of children or young people, all staff and volunteers should feel comfortable raising the concern with an elder or pastor.



### **30. When a Known Offender is Present**

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

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused a child or young person, or has disclosed former offences, an elder or pastor should meet with them at the earliest opportunity. This meeting should be conducted in a way that extends friendship and a welcome to the individual.

The elder or pastor should talk through the policy of the church and should seek to work with the individual to draw up helpful safeguards to protect them and to reduce any temptation that might exist. This is not to accuse, judge, or further prosecute the individual, but to assist them with settling within the church community.

An appropriate policy document should be drawn up and discussed by the leadership team and evaluated annually alongside the *Safeguarding Policy* document. It is known, however, that this policy document will not be failproof, and will not cover every possible scenario. An individual course of action should be drawn up with regards to the individual in question. In all cases, guidance will be sought from the appropriate agencies (including the Regional Safeguarding Lead).

It is not appropriate or necessary for every member of the congregation to be informed if a former abuser joins the congregation. The leadership team will decide whom it is appropriate to tell.

#### **If an Alleged or Known Offender is also a Young Person or Adult at Risk**

A risk assessment and formal contract may be quite a daunting process for someone with learning difficulties or a young person, 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 should 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 Association Safeguarding Contact throughout this process.

**At all times, the priority is the safety of the children and young people above anything else.** This should be the top consideration when dealing with a known offender within the congregation.

### **31. Health and Safety**

All leaders and helpers are responsible for being observant of any health and safety issues which may affect their group, and creating an environment that is safe for all of our children, young people, and adults at risk.

Risk assessments will be carried out at the beginning of the year by the youth, children, and families worker, or by an appointed adult, following the standardised form used at Herne Hill Baptist Church. This will cover general week-to-week activities and will be kept in the church office for a maximum of 1 year when they must be updated and re-written. They will be made available to the Leadership Team and will be updated if at any point the rooms / building is modified or changed.

Specific risk assessments will be carried out by the leader of any one-off activities which may take place any time throughout the year.

### **32. Communicating & Reviewing the Policy**

Herne Hill Baptist Church will make those who use the church aware of the safeguarding policy by the use of displaying The Safeguarding Policy Statement and Safeguarding Team posters.

The whole policy will be made available online and also to anyone who requests a copy.

All leaders and volunteers will be expected to have a working understanding of safeguarding procedure and best practice when working with children, young people, and adults at risk.

The policy will be reviewed by The DPS every year and be presented to the AGM with any updates.

There will also be a regular check to make sure that any changes in legislation have been included.

The safeguarding team, as listed on page 3 of this document, will regularly monitor each aspect of The Safeguarding Policy and practice throughout the church. This which will include:

- Checking that safe recruitment practice is being followed.
- Ensuring DBS checks are kept up to date (every 3 years for leaders and volunteers).
- Providing training sessions and keeping a record of who has attended.
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned.
- Checking the policy is up-to-date.
- Keeping records of any incidents and complaints, and ensuring follow-up conversations have taken place.

### **33. Helpful Numbers and Websites**

#### **Baptist Union of Great Britain (Baptists Together)**

[http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220884/Safe\\_to\\_Grow.aspx](http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220884/Safe_to_Grow.aspx)

020 7692 5592

#### **First Response Team for a LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) referral. Contact:**

**Eva Simcock**

Email: [Eva.Simcock@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:Eva.Simcock@southwark.gov.uk)

Tel: 020 7926 4679 or 07943 076608

#### **Government Policy**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

#### **Government Legislation**

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

#### **Sexual Offences Act 2003 (updated 2012)**

[http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s\\_to\\_u/sentencing\\_manual/s16\\_abuse\\_of\\_a\\_position\\_of\\_trust\\_sexual\\_activity\\_with\\_a\\_child/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/sentencing_manual/s16_abuse_of_a_position_of_trust_sexual_activity_with_a_child/)

#### **Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable? Guidance for Preventing Abuse of Trust.**

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Caring%20for%20Young%20People%20and%20the%20Vulnerable.pdf>

#### **Diocese of London Safeguarding**

<http://www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding/>

#### **London Safeguarding Board**

<http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/> phone number??

or

<http://www.lambethscb.org.uk/>

020 7926 4759 (Lambeth)

[www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren)

0207 525 3306 (Southwark)

#### **Every Child Matters – Change for Children**

<https://infed.org/mobi/every-child-matters-change-for-children/>

#### **The NSPCC**

They help children who have been abused to rebuild their lives, working with families in every community in the UK.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/fighting-for-childhood>

0808 800 5000

#### **Childline**

Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people giving advice and counselling about anything.

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

0800 1111

**Action For Children**

Action for Children aim to improve the lives of vulnerable children. They intervene early to help to fix problems before children are overwhelmed and have over 650 services in local communities aimed at helping children and parents.

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

01923 361 500

**Stop It Now**

(Helpline for adults who are feeling tempted or have a child or young person who is showing inappropriate behaviour)

<http://www.stopitnow.org.uk/>

[help@stopitnow.org.uk](mailto:help@stopitnow.org.uk)

0808 1000 900

### **34. Amendments**

The following amendments will be added to the document at the next annual safeguarding policy review due in **July 2024**:

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If further amendments need to be made to the safeguarding document, they should be added to the end of the relevant subsection in **Section 34. Amendments**, and a note made at the start of the subsection.

All amendments should be presented to the safeguarding team and the church trustees by the DPS, to be reviewed ahead of the annual safeguarding review presented at a church meeting.