



## Hook Norton Baptist Church

### Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy & Procedures

*(Agreed at the Church Members Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017.)*

*A set of agreed policies and procedures  
for ensuring a safe environment for  
children and young people  
within the care of our church,  
in response to the Children's Act 1989.*

**FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT THE TERM 'CHILDREN' REFERS TO  
ANYONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS.**

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## Hook Norton Baptist Church

### Policy Statement on Safeguarding Children

- We welcome children into the life of our community
- Have a programme of events for children
- Make our premises available to organisations working with children

The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all young people under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, *Safe from Harm* (HM Government 1994) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2010).

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

#### **Prevention and reporting of abuse**

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

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

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

#### **Respecting children**

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

#### **Safe working practices**

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

#### **A safe community**

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

#### **Hook Norton Baptist Church Safeguarding Team**

The church has appointed:

**Nigel Whitehead - Designated Person for Safeguarding (01608 730602)**

**Rosemary Searle - Safeguarding Trustee (01295 276050 / 07816 450832)**

**Peter Brookes - The Minister (01608 730677 / 07973 140069)**

When possible, the Safeguarding Team will work together if and when issues arise.

## **Safeguarding Procedures**

A copy of the policy statement will be displayed on the noticeboard in the hall, in the chapel, and in the church office.

Each worker with children will be given a full copy of the policy and procedures, and will be asked to agree that they are willing to follow them.

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

The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Members will be referred to the policy statement annually at the church annual general meeting, together with a report on the outcome of the policy review.

### **Definitions of Abuse**

#### **Physical Abuse**

Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes no-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### **Neglect**

Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development. 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 behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper),
- inappropriate sexual awareness,
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourished, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

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

## **Responding to Concerns**

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

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

**If** the behaviour of a child gives any cause for concern –

**If** an allegation is made in any context about a child being harmed –

**If** the behaviour of any adult (including colleagues and members of the public) towards children causes you concern –

**Do not** dismiss your concerns

**Do not** normally confront the adult about whose behaviour you have concerns

**Do not** take responsibility for deciding whether or not child abuse is actually taking place

**Do not** investigate allegations

**Do not** act alone

**Do not** take sole responsibility for what has been shared or any concerns you may have

**Do** follow the church's procedures for responding to concerns.

When talking to the child –

<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Listen and Clarify	Minimise what is said
Give Support	Show shock, alarm or disapproval
Explain What happens next	Question or push for information
Take Action	Offer false reassurance

# Procedures for Responding to Concerns

## STAGE 1

*A worker/church attendee has a concern about the welfare of a child or the behaviour of an adult*

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

### RECORD AND REPORT

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

***(Standard Incident Forms are kept in the church office)***

## STAGE 2

*The Designated Person receives the report of concern*

*then has a duty to*

### REVIEW AND REFER

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

## STAGE 3

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

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

### SUPPORT AND REPORT

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

If the Designated Person for Safeguarding is not available,  
reports or concerns should be passed to another member of the Safeguarding Team.

**If a child is considered to be in imminent danger of harm a report should be made immediately to the police or Social Services**

## STAGE 1 – RECORD AND REPORT

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child or young person is to RECORD their concerns in writing and to REPORT their concerns to the Designated Person. If he/she is not contactable reports should be made to the Safeguarding Trustee.

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

### The duty to RECORD & REPORT

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

#### The record should:

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

If such a report is made in an emergency without reference to one of the Safeguarding Team, one of them should 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 their group leader. However, such conversations should not delay a report being made to the Designated Person.

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

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

<p><b>If a child is considered to be in imminent danger of harm a report should be made immediately to the police or Social Services (see page .... for relevant numbers.)</b></p>
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## STAGE 2 – REVIEW AND REFER

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

### The duty to REVIEW

reviewing the report that is received the Safeguarding Team:

should take account of their own experience and expertise in assessing risk to children

must take account of other reports that may have been received concerning the same child, family or adult.

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may speak with others in the church (including the Minister) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision that will be made

such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.

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

### **The duty to REFER**

The Safeguarding Team 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 is being harmed. asking for appropriate continued observation

refer the concern to others who work with the child/children in question asking for continued observation

refer to the adult about whom the concern has been raised

This may be the parent/carer of the child or it may be one of the children's workers. If there is any question at all of possible sexual abuse or serious physical abuse the Designated Person should never address the adult directly but should refer their concerns to the police or Social Services. To do so may place the child at more risk, or could make any statutory investigation difficult to pursue because the child may be intimidated.

Make a formal referral to the local Social Services Department

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

## **STAGE 3 – REPORT AND SUPPORT**

Responsibilities in stage 3 of the process are shared by the Safeguarding Team and the Minister.

### **The duty to REPORT**

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

report the referral to the Safeguarding Trustee

report the referral to the Minister

report the referral to the Regional Minister of the local Association

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Trustee acting on behalf of the trustees may also need to make further reports for example to Charity Commission

If an allegation is made against someone who works with children the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child

possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child

behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If a worker has an allegation made against them they should step down from all church duties until the incident has been investigated.

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

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

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

### **The duty to SUPPORT**

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected.

Child, Other Family Members, Church Worker/Volunteer, Safeguarding Team, Ministers/ Leadership Team

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

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

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

The Church should ensure that the following selection procedures have been followed:

- A written role description for each post

- All volunteers (both current and new) should complete an application form

- Prospective volunteers to be interviewed

- Two references will be taken up (at least one should be from outside of the church)

- DBS will be applied for

- The worker will be appointed for a probationary period of 6 months after which a second interview will take place.

- The volunteer should sign an undertaking to work within the agreed safeguarding policy and procedures

- Induction into the relevant procedures and ways of working will be undertaken (to include safeguarding training)

Administration of this process will be overseen by the Designated Person, but may be carried out by others.

Until this procedure is completed workers must be supervised.

All leaders and helpers should have a calling to work with children, which should, in turn, be recognised by the Church Leadership Team and have the agreement of existing children's leaders and helpers.



The first priority of leaders and helpers should be their own spiritual welfare, and, therefore, they should receive teaching and be part of a worship service or life group regularly.

All leaders and helpers should set a good example for Christ in their personal lifestyle.

Meetings for leaders and helpers will be held approximately once per term, for support and planning.

However anyone may raise any concerns or suggestions regarding the ministry amongst children with any of the Safeguarding Team or Leadership Team at any time.

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

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

Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that the young leader is helped to develop and hone skills, attitudes and experience.

A young leader must be closely supervised by an adult leader at all times, and never given sole responsibility for a group of children.

When considering ratios of staff to children the young leader needs to be counted as a child, not a leader.

The Safeguarding Children Policy applies to a young leader just as it does to any other person.

The permission of parents or carers needs to be sought for the young leader just as you would for any other person under 18 years of age

If the young leader accompanies a group on a residential activity ideally they should have separate sleeping accommodation to both the adult leadership team and the children they are working with.

Young Leaders should not be given leadership responsibility for a group immediately below their own age, to leave a gap of at least two years.

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

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Regional Minister of your local Baptist Association in addition to following the church's normal procedures.

### **When concerns are expressed about the Designated Person**

Any safeguarding concerns involving the Designated Person for safeguarding the concern should be raised with the Safeguarding trustee & or the Minister.