



Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines



Bromley Baptist Church.

Policy Statement

Policy statement on the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

Our commitment to Safeguarding was first acknowledged by its church membership at a meeting held on the 15th June 1999 and we recommit ourselves to these principles annually. The policy is reviewed and evaluated regularly by the those named below and was last significantly reviewed in 2021. The Policy Statement is presented this year to the church's AGM for ratification as follows:

- As members of this church, we commit ourselves to nurturing, protection and safe keeping of all, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults
- It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent, wherever possible, any physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults whilst in our care
- In order to achieve best practice any abuse discovered or suspected will be reported according to BBC's guidelines
- We recognise that our work with children, young people and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the whole church

The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to providing supervision. All Trustees, CYFW leaders and helpers, House Group Leaders, Coffee Morning Leaders, Pastoral Visitors and those finding themselves ministering to these vulnerable groups will attend annually an update on the Church's Safeguarding policy. They will also attend the Baptist Union Safeguarding Training at least every three years (Everyone to level 2 and those with leadership roles to level 3). There is also an expectation that the minimum Health and Safety training will be attained.

- Each worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults must know the guidelines, and undertake to observe them. Each shall be directed towards a copy of the church's agreed procedures and safe to grow guidelines
- As part of our commitment to children, young people and vulnerable adults, the church has appointed three persons as listed below. Their role will be regularly explained to children, leaders and parents and their names, addresses and phone numbers publicly displayed.

Minister: Rev'd Dr Stephen Langford

Safeguarding Lead Officer & Designated Person for Safeguarding :

Clare Morris

Trustee for Safeguarding: Clare Morris

Assistant Safeguarding Officer: Hannah Arnold

Date: November 2025



Bromley Baptist Church Guidelines for Good Practice

The church should ensure that:

- As far as possible a worker is not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room.
- Access to the building is safe and well lit.
- The worker is aware of the church's Health and Safety Policy including how to report incidents and concerns, where the First Aid equipment is kept and what procedures should be followed in the event of a fire.
- Each worker will be reminded of these 'Safe to Grow' Guidelines on an annual basis.
- Each worker attends a 'Safe to Grow' level 2 training course as soon as possible upon starting a Children's or Youth Work Role and again every three years.

The worker should:

- Treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and dignity befitting their age; watch language, tone of voice and where they put their body.
- Not invade the privacy of a child/young person when showering or toileting. Some children may need help when toileting but help within the

cubical must be approved by the parents/carers. Another adult must also know that this is happening and be within the vicinity if this takes place.

- Not play rough, overly physical or sexually provocative games.
- Not give excessive attention to any one child.
- Know when a child needs comfort or support and show this appropriately. If a child needs a hug then the parents must be informed of this and also a child should never be hugged in a room alone.
- Ensure that if a child is being driven home they sit in the rear of the car and that the worker has written permission. Another adult present would be preferable.
- Not stay in a room with the children/youth on their own on a sleep over.
- Never give food/sweets/flavoured drinks to a child or young person without the leader of the groups permission, due to allergy awareness and other information that they may be aware of as a leader.
- Know where the contact information for the groups are in case of an emergency.
- Wherever possible not raise their voice and use other forms of communication to get the children's attention. (Clapping, copying games etc) This is in line with department for education guidelines and play-worker good practice. There are times when a voice needs to be raised, but let's keep this to a minimum and a definite need to do basis!
- Always ensure that all workers are working from the same page and that no one is working in a way unbecoming.
- Never put themselves in a position where they find themselves alone with a child.



Bromley Baptist Church

Guidelines for Safe Practice

GUIDANCE based on

Baptist Union Safeguarding documentation

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

This guidance covers the following topics:-

- Parental Consent
- Health and Safety
- Risk Assessment
- Ratios
- Transporting Children
- Outings and Overnight Events
- The All Age Community (Advice about children and church on Sundays and at other church events)
- Other Groups That Use Church Premises (Guidance about other groups that use the Church premises)
- When a Known Offender is present in Church
- Electronic communication

Parental Consent

A key component in developing safe practice with children and young people is to work in partnership with parents/carers. When children and young people are in the care of church organisations it is important:

- to have the consent of the parent/carer
- to have a point of contact in the event of an emergency
- to know key information about the child or young person that may impact on their wellbeing
- to provide clear information to parents/carers about the organisation and activities the child or young person is involved in and the safeguarding policy of the church

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

- Full name
 - Address
 - Home telephone number and alternative contact number(s) in case of an emergency
 - Date of birth
 - Details of any medical conditions the church should be aware of, or of any food or drug allergies etc.
 - Details of any behavioural issues or other matters that might be relevant
- In addition consent should be explicitly obtained for the following:

- emergency medical treatment
- travel arrangements when transport is being organised
- taking the child or young person off the church premises for occasional activities (where appropriate)
- special consent for any overnight event or activity
- use of the child's photograph in church publicity material or on the church website
- electronic communication with the child/young person
- for children up to the age of 11, consent regarding who is entitled to collect the child from a group

Parents/carers should be given the following information:

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

Safeguarding

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

The church's written procedures should make it clear who is responsible in each group for obtaining the parental consent forms and how these should be stored. The information should be held in accordance with the church's Data Protection Policy. In complying with data protection legislation, churches should ensure that the information they retain is accurate and that information is held only while the information is necessary and relevant. This means that churches should be careful about keeping their records of children and young people up-to-date:

- parents should be asked to complete the consent form annually, ensuring that the contact information is accurate and that any changes in a child's medical condition, etc. are updated
- the records of any children and young people who have stopped attending should be deleted

Health and Safety

Procedures to promote safe practice

There is widespread concern that the 'Health and Safety culture' that has become part of the modern society has got out of control. Some have become so afraid of taking risks that children and young people are prevented from taking part in activities that bring enjoyment, adventure and challenge into their lives. However, that same 'Health and Safety culture' has grown up because in the past we have often been careless of risk. Schools, clubs and churches have organised activities without giving due care and attention to the potential hazards that might cause harm to children and young people – hazards that could have been foreseen. Often very simple measures can be taken that enable children and young people to continue with all of the activities that

they were doing, but in a way that minimizes the risk. A very simple example would be using round-ended scissors rather than scissors with a sharp point.

We are not trying to create the illusion of a risk-free world for children and young people. Indeed that would be unhealthy for children's development. Some degree of risk in life is unavoidable. Part of a child's development is in learning to live in a world that can sometimes be threatening and harmful. However, we should seek to minimize the occasions for unnecessary risk. The law does not expect us to eliminate all risk, but under our duty of care churches are required to protect people as far as is 'reasonably practicable'.

"All children both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, from a very young age and from their earliest play experiences." We need to develop a sensible culture of safety when working with children and young people. The best way to do this is to introduce procedures and practices that become 'second nature' to those who are working with children and young people in the church.

A desire to safeguard children and young people from harm will mean that we need to be safety conscious. This will begin with the buildings in which the activities take place.

Every church should have adopted a Health and Safety policy. The church's Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures should refer to the Health and Safety policy. Someone should be designated to work in partnership with the church's named Health and Safety Officer to ensure that the policy is implemented with children in mind.

As an exercise, try going around your church building using 'the eyes of a child'. Look around the church from their height and see what you notice.

Furniture Is it in a safe condition, child sized etc?

Equipment Are potentially hazardous tools, cleaning fluids etc stored in a safe, locked place?

Electrical Do you have checks on all electrical equipment and use socket covers when they are not in use?

Lighting Is the building well lit internally and externally especially around entrance points?

Security How easy would it be for a child or young person to leave the building during an activity without being noticed?

How easy would it be for a stranger to get into the building during a children's or young person's activity without being noticed? **First Aid** Is there a first aid box - is it kept full?

Are there people who are trained in first aid on site?

Do you have an accident book for record purposes?

Fire Equipment Is there suitable firefighting equipment over the whole of the premises?

Has a fire risk assessment been carried out? Do you carry out fire drills?

Do all of the children's and young people's workers know how to respond to a fire alarm? Under the church's Safeguarding Children Policy every worker should be given clear information about the following:

- their individual responsibility to uphold the church's Health and Safety Policy

- how to report incidents and concerns under the church's Health and Safety Policy
- where the First Aid equipment is kept and how accidents should be reported
- what procedures should be followed in the event of a fire

Risk Assessment

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

What is a risk assessment? A risk assessment means looking at what could go wrong and deciding on ways to prevent or minimise that risk. We all carry out informal risk assessments every day:

- Is it going to rain? I'll take my coat and an umbrella just in case.
- Is it safe to cross the road? Find a safe place to cross, look right and left...

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

- A **hazard** is anything that could cause harm
- The **risk** is the likelihood (whether high or low) that someone will be harmed by the hazard

Step 1: Identify the hazards

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

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

2: Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard think through who might be harmed:

- groups of people (eg children, young people, youth leaders, parents)
- individuals - (eg a child with special needs)
- How might they be harmed? What type of injury? **Step**

3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

What can you do about the hazards?

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

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Writing down your risk assessment and sharing them with your colleagues helps to ensure everyone understands the risks and subsequent controls. Risk Assessments can then be reviewed and reused at a later date.

Step 5: Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

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

General risk assessments and specific risk assessments

A general risk assessment should be done at the beginning of each term or set of sessions, considering the programme and the venue. Specific risk assessments should be done for activities which are out of the ordinary, for example a trip out, or an activity with particular risk factors (cooking, woodwork etc.).

Example grids for carrying out a risk assessment are shown below:

Activity-Youth Club (general)			
Identify the Hazards	Who might be harmed and how?	Evaluate the risk and decide on precautions	Review your assessment and update if necessary
Inadequately supervised children/young people Accidents, bullying, etc.	Young people Leaders/helpers Parents	Ratio of staff to young people (see <i>Safe to Grow</i>) All rooms that are being used to be adequately staffed Any young people with special needs - do they need particular help for certain parts of the programme?	If a volunteer can't come at the last minute, how does that affect your evening's programme?
Accidents playing games	Young people Leaders/helpers	First aid kit and first aider on premises Think through games - are they suitable for the age profile of young people? Access to phone	Re-assess risk Is field clear of hazards?
Safety of premises	Young people Leaders/helpers Parents	Walk around the premises and consider what could reasonably be expected to cause harm	Another group is sharing the premises on a particular night
Use of kitchen	Young people Leaders/helpers	Young people to stay out of kitchen unless adequately supervised	
Trips out		Separate risk assessment to be done	

Your written procedures should include a clear indication about:

- When a risk assessment should be carried out
 - General risk assessments
 - should these be 'termly' or 'quarterly'? (set a frequency that is appropriate for the way in which the group runs)
 - Special risk assessments
 - whenever an activity may involve greater risk
 - always if an activity takes place away from the normal venue
- Who is responsible for carrying out the risk assessment
 - The group leader will be responsible for conducting the risk assessment
- What record should be kept of the risk assessment?
 - Group leaders should keep completed risk assessments in their Safeguarding folders

Within the training and induction programme organised by the church for its children's and youth workers, a module on risk assessment should be introduced for those who will have this responsibility. A common method of risk assessment should be agreed to be used by all church organisations.

Ratios

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

The age of the children and young people

- Generally speaking the younger the children the higher the ratio should be of adults to children.

Special needs

- Do any of the children have special needs that will require additional support?

Behavioural issues

- Do any of the children or does the group as a whole present challenging behaviour that can be difficult to control?

The venue

- If your buildings are large and sprawling and it is difficult to contain children and young people while on the premises it may be necessary to have additional personnel
- Activities that take place away from the church premises normally require a higher ratio of adults to children than those that take place inside.

Covering for emergencies

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

Recommended minimum ratios

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

increase the recommended ratio in order to ensure the safety of the children and young people.

Remember that in calculating the ratios of workers to children you should not include young leaders who are under the age of 18 among your number of adult workers.

These workers should be DBS checked and trained to the relevant level. Level two safeguarding for all workers, level 3 safeguarding for all leaders. If workers are related in ANY way, they should ensure that a non related worker is present. Any extra adults that help who are not DBS checked should never be left alone with children. A qualified first aider should always be present on site when a group is running. If the group leave the premises, a first aider should accompany them.

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1 DBS checked worker:3 children (minimum 3)	1 DBS checked worker :3 children (minimum 3)
3 years	1 DBS checked worker:4 children (minimum 3)	1 DBS checked worker:4 children (minimum 3)
4 - 7 years	1 DBS checked worker:8 children (minimum 3)	1DBS Checked worker:6 children (minimum 3)
8 - 12 years	3 DBS checked adults for up to 30 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	3 DBS checked adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children
13 years and over	3 DBS checked adults for up to 30 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	3 DBS checked adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

What happens when ratios fall below the required level?

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

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

The one-off situation

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

- Determine whether it is safe to continue with the planned programme ○ Are there ways of working that would reduce the risks?

- If this is a week when additional staff were required because of the nature of the planned activities should the activities be changed?
- If children's and young people's safety is being put at unacceptable risk then the event should be cancelled • Write a report detailing:
 - the circumstances that led to the reduced staffing levels
 - the actions that were taken to reduce the risk to the children and young people.
- Give a copy of the report to the Designated Person for Safeguarding

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

The on-going situation

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

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

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

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

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

Transporting Children

Please note that this section should be read in conjunction with the code of behaviour for transporting children and young people.

Giving lifts to children and young people is one of the areas where boundaries can become blurred in the life of the church community. Is the leader of a group offering a lift to a child to attend a meeting as part of her responsibility as an appointed leader in the church, or because she is a friend of the child's parents, or a relative of the child? For the sake of clarity it is better to work on the principle that whenever an appointed children's or youth worker gives a lift to children (other than their own children) to a church-run children's or young people's activity they should follow the procedures laid down by the church.

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

When children are transported in cars

- Written permission from the parent/carer should be obtained.

- The driver should understand and agree to the church's code of behaviour when transporting children or young people.
- The driver should have fully comprehensive insurance which covers voluntary work (or in the case of a paid youth worker or children's worker, insurance that covers them for transporting others in the course of their employment).
- Seat belts should always be worn and the proper child seats and child restraints should be used for young children in accordance with the law
- If a volunteer driver who has not been appointed as a children's or young people's worker is used to transport children and young people on church activities, the driver should be appointed following the procedures outlined under the church's Safeguarding Children Policy.

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

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

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

- Ensure that the mini-bus or coach is fitted with seat-belts on all of the seats and that seat-belts are always worn.
- Ensure that the number of children and adults does not exceed the capacity of the coach or mini-bus so that all can have an allocated seat with a seat-belt.

Outings and Overnight Events

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

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

Overnight events

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

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

Risk assessment

- Particular note should be taken regarding the proposed venue and its suitability for providing sufficient rooms for children and adults to sleep together with arrangements for toilets and washing etc.

- Are there sufficient fire exits from the sleeping accommodation in the event of a fire?
- Are all of the workers conversant with the procedures in the event of a fire?
- Ascertain prior to the event the local telephone numbers and other information that would be needed in the event of an emergency (caretaker or other contact for property if not on site, local doctor, the location of the nearest Accident and Emergency Hospital etc).

Parental consent

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

Sleeping arrangements

- Males and females should sleep separately
- If it is a mixed group of both boys and girls, there must be a mix of male and female adult workers
- Come to a measured judgement based on the circumstances of the group you are taking away as to whether it is wise for adults to share sleeping accommodation with children or young people. This will depend on the ages of the children, their need of support, the likelihood of older children bullying younger children, and the nature of the venue. If adults share sleeping accommodation with children and young people, children and young people should always be able to dress and undress separately from adults. An adult should never sleep alone in a room with children or young people.

Checklist for Residential Activities

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

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

sure you have a fire drill as soon as possible after entering the premises.

- Know where the fire extinguishers are.
 - Church halls and rooms used for sleeping larger numbers of people must have two means of exit.
- Know where the nearest hospital and doctor are.
- It is a good idea to notify the local police. This applies if you are sleeping in any building, even if only for one night, and even if it is your own church. Also it is helpful to inform the fire brigade. The named organiser of the event will be responsible for this.
- Ensure that parents/carers have returned a health form stating any special dietary requirements and current medication, giving the name and telephone number of the child's doctor and consenting to emergency medical treatment.
- Residential activities must have safety rules
 - letting adults know where you are
 - not entering the kitchen without asking the cook, etc.
- Make sure the children have correct clothing for whatever activity they are taking part in. It is useful to issue a 'kit list' for residential activities.
- Where outdoor activities are concerned, either leaders should have the appropriate qualification, or if the activity is being provided by an outside organisation, then you should check that this organisation is registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and has appropriate insurance.

The All-Age Community

The church community is unlike many other communities that work with children and young people. The church community is an all-age community seeking to make space for all - all ages, all abilities, all backgrounds. Indeed one of the five core values of the Baptist family is that we believe that we are called to be inclusive communities, with a gospel welcome extended to all.

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

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

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

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

The following examples highlight the dilemmas faced by churches:

Case study 1

A church organises groups for children on a Sunday morning which begin about twenty minutes after the start of the service and which end at the same time as the service ends. The leaders of the groups understand that they are responsible for the children as soon as the children leave the service until the group ends.

After the service tea and coffee is served. During this time the children and young people tend to move around the building freely and to entertain themselves in the church halls.

- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children before the group starts, particularly if the children are not accompanied to church by their parents?
- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children at the end of the service?

Case study 2

A church holds an all-age service. No groups are organised for the children. The service has not been planned by the Junior Church leaders. Many of the children come with their families, but a number of children come unaccompanied.

- Do the Junior Church leaders have any responsibility for the children?
- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children before the service starts?
- Who is responsible for the welfare of the children at the end of the service?

Case study 3

A church plans a social event to which all ages are invited, although children and young people are expected only to attend with their parents. Once on the church premises the children and young people take themselves off for some of the time to do their own thing while the adults mingle and enjoy one another's company.

- Can the church assume that the children and young people are the responsibility of their parents at events like this?
- Does the church bear any responsibility for their welfare and safeguarding?

Case study 4

A church puts on a musical or dramatic production. It wants to include the whole church family and encourages the participation of children, young people and adults. The rehearsals and the events themselves entail a large amount of interaction between children and adults.

Who takes responsibility for the welfare of children and young people in this situation? Can measures be taken to ensure that all of the interaction between adults and children is positive and healthy?

Some general points need to be made with regard to all of these situations:

- All of these situations give rise to circumstances where children and young people could be placed in a vulnerable situation should a bully or a potential abuser wish to take advantage.
- These situations highlight the importance of the Safeguarding Children Policy being adopted, owned and understood by the whole church membership. The annual review of the policy should address areas of

church life where adults, children and young people come together but where no formal children's or youth activities are being organised. The report of the review should also give an occasion for educating the church meeting and helping all church members and members of the congregation to understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.

- Wherever possible it should be clear when representatives of the church are taking responsibility for the welfare of children and young people and when children and young people on church premises are in the care of their parents/carers.
- Good and clear communication with parents/carers is imperative so that they understand when the church is taking responsibility for their children and when the church understands the children and young people are in the care of their parents/carers.
- Whenever children and young people are on church premises, regardless of whether they are in the care of their parents or of the church, the church will be responsible for health and safety issues regarding the church premises.
- If the church is aware of hazards affecting the welfare and safety of children and young people in the context of church-organised activities or relating to the church premises, it has a duty to take action to minimize the risks posed by those hazards.

Before and after church services

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

Sunday School leaders should ensure that the parents know when Sunday School has finished and that they have handed over responsibility of the children to their parents again.

Family or All-Age Services

During all age services the parents (or designated adult) have responsibility for their children. Where a child attends without a parent, their usual Club or Sunday school leader should be responsible for them, and the parent informed of this.

However, even though it is clear that children and young people are in the care of their parents for a family service, the church should continue to have a duty of care with regard to the wider welfare issues for the members of the congregation including children and young people.

Social events open to the whole church family

As with All Age services, the child is the responsibility of the parent/carer or an adult designated by the parent. It is advisable that the event is advertised appropriately as a FAMILY event and that children must be accompanied by an adult. **The Multi-Generational Dramatic or Musical Production**

The experience of putting on a dramatic or musical production that brings the whole church family together can be a powerful way of building relationships across the church family. However, care should be taken that the church's Safeguarding Children Policy is not compromised during the process, thus putting children or young people at risk. However, neither should fears about safeguarding issues make such a project

unworkable, because it is thought that everyone who has any kind of contact with children or young people will have to have a DBS Disclosure.

At least 2 named people will have responsibility for the children and young people during any rehearsals or auditions, **additional to the individuals in charge of the production itself**. If a parent is in attendance, they have responsibility for their own child. The named persons will have been appointed under the church's Safeguarding procedures and subject to a DBS check. They are not only responsible for the safety of the children but also to ensure that any interactions or behaviours between children, young people and adults are appropriate.

Other Groups That Use the Church Premises

Not all of the groups using the church are organised and run by church members and the building is often hired by others. For outside hirers who are using your building and who work with children or young people, it is good practice to require them to have a safeguarding children policy and accompanying procedures in place, based on the Home Office recommendations 'Safe from Harm'.

You should include a clause to cover this in any official hiring agreement that you may use. As evidence of this you would be entitled to request to see a copy of the safeguarding policy and procedures document. It is not your responsibility to ensure that the safeguarding policy is being properly implemented. This responsibility lies with the group themselves and their trustees. However if it came to light that a group using your premises were not following appropriate safeguarding procedures and that children or young people were being placed at risk, the church should seriously consider terminating the rental agreement.

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

'One-off' private hirers (for example, children's parties) would not be expected to have a safeguarding policy, but they would still need to show due care and attention.

When a Known Offender is Present

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

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

When it is known that a person who has been convicted of sexually abusing children or young people is attending your church, it is important that their behaviour within the church community is properly managed and that a contract is put in place. There are also times when it will be appropriate to take such measures with a person who has faced a series of allegations about the sexual abuse of children and young people but has never been convicted (such allegations may be revealed on an Enhanced DBS Disclosure under relevant non-conviction information). If an offender is on the Sex Offenders' Register they will be monitored under guidelines known as the MultiAgency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). In the latest guidance there is provision to require a written contract to be in place if the offender wishes to attend a place of worship.

In determining the details of the contract:

- there should be a discussion about who should be informed of the nature of the offence and the details of the contract
 - the rights of the offender to re-build their lives without everyone knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against the need to protect children and young people
 - the Safeguarding Trustee, the Designated Person for Safeguarding and the Minister should always be informed
- the Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee should determine whether the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register
 - if so, the Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee should make contact with the offender's specialist probation officer (SPO) who will inform the church of any relevant information or restrictions that the church should be aware of
- The Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee should inform and take advice from the Regional Minister in the local Baptist Association.

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

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

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

- If the initial contract allows the person to attend the morning service where children and young people are present, a new contract might require them only to attend an evening service.
- If only a few people know of the person's conviction, more people might be told in order to protect children and young people. In doing this a

balance has to be made between protecting the civil liberties of the offender, the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the protection of children and young people. Any disclosure of the person's criminal background would need to be the minimum necessary to achieve the aim of safeguarding the children and young people in the church's care.

- Ultimately, it might be necessary to ban the person from attending the church. If you are concerned that the person might join another church you should not forewarn other local church leaders by giving details of the person concerned to all local churches. Rather you should ask other local church leaders to inform you if any new person joins their church. If the person joins another fellowship it would be appropriate to indicate your concerns to this specific church leader. If the person is on the Sexual Offenders Register the Safeguarding Trustee should make the offender's Specialist Probation Officer (SPO) aware that they have been banned from the church and reasons for this.

A [template for a model contract with ex-offenders](#) can be found on the Baptist Union website but churches are strongly encouraged to take advice and guidance from a Regional Minister before implementing any contract. Some churches, aware of the needs of offenders to be re-integrated into society in a way that protects children and young people, have established what have become known as 'circles of support' for those offenders who are governed by a contract in the life of the church.

Electronic Communication

These guidelines are for usage of mobile phones, email and social networking sites.

Email addresses and mobile phone numbers may only be shared with the consent of a young persons parent/carer.

Email and text messages should not be sent directly to individual children under the age of 11 years.

Only church appointed children and youth workers should have access to the email addresses and mobile numbers of young people.

If a worker receives any form of contact via electrical devices from a young person or child they should always

- Save the information
- Make a record of the date and time
- Record the nature of the content (if a verbal conversation by phone)

If a worker would like to contact a young person

- Is the communication necessary and appropriate?
- Share information with everyone not just an individual. No general chatter.
- Use clear ambiguous language
- Avoid abbreviations
- Ensure anyone can easily access the information
- Do not use any system between 20.00 and 08.00
- Do not store photographs without permission of the parents/carers
- Log all communications

On social networking sites

- Use the Bromley Baptist Church facebook site when possible to share information
- All content must be appropriate for anyone to view
- Adhere to age restrictions on sites at all times. Do not accept communication from anyone under the age
- Be aware of the content of uploaded photos
- Be totally transparent and open to scrutiny
- Remember if it is not necessary, do not write it

Always copy information sent to children/ young people to the others in the group and always to the workers. Keep records of shared information for at least two years.



Bromley Baptist Church SETTING OUT RESPONSIBILITIES

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The charity trustees of the Church are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Safeguarding Policy is implemented and resourced in the Church.

It is the trustees who have a duty of care to the children and young people who are involved in the life of the Church. Should there be an incident that gives rise to an investigation, it will be the trustees who will be deemed to be responsible for the outworking of the church's policy and procedures.

Therefore all trustees should be fully conversant with the Church's Safeguarding Policy. The trustees should:

- Maintain their understanding by attending safeguarding training to level 3 at least every three years
- have a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing the Policy;
- give support to those who are working with children and young people;
- ensure that the training needs of workers are met;
- make appropriate budget provision for children's and young people's work, including budget provision for the training of workers, paid and voluntary;
- find ways of communicating the policy to all within the Church.

Much of the work involved can be delegated, but the trustees cannot delegate their overall responsibility.

SAFEGUARDING TRUSTEE

It is recommended good practice for the trustees to appoint one of their number to take a lead on safeguarding matters on their behalf. It is not necessary for this person to have an expertise in the area of safeguarding, only an understanding of the Church's policy and procedures and a willingness to oversee this area of the Church's life on behalf of the trustees.

The responsibilities of the Safeguarding Trustee are:

- to ensure on behalf of the trustees that proper processes are in place and to review and update the safeguarding policy and procedures;
- to monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the trustees;
- to ensure that the policy and procedures are reviewed annually, and to present a report of the annual review to the trustees
- to receive reports from the Designated Person for Safeguarding regarding any safeguarding incidents and to be responsible for keeping the trustees informed as appropriate.

In monitoring the implementation of the policy and procedures they should, for example, monitor from time to time whether appropriate DBS checks (formerly CRB checks) are being carried out.

Note 1. In the absence of an appointed Safeguarding Trustee, the trustees will jointly assume the above responsibilities and make arrangements for their effective discharge.

Note 2. The Safeguarding Trustee need not necessarily be the person who 'heads up' safeguarding matters in the church – the Safeguarding Lead Officer. They may do so, but it may be appropriate for someone else to be appointed to take the lead on safeguarding. The important thing is that the Safeguarding Trustee takes a particular interest in this area of the life of the Church on behalf of the trustees.

Note 3. The Safeguarding Trustee is primarily responsible for reviewing and updating the Policy and Procedures, etc, but in practice the Safeguarding Lead Officer and the Designated Person for Safeguarding would have a direct interest in this function. The Annual Review and Annual Report would provide a mechanism for addressing this, and also an opportunity for others to be consulted.

Note 4. The Safeguarding Trustee should be appointed by the trustees.

SAFEGUARDING LEAD OFFICER

This is the person who has primary responsibility for making sure that the policies, practices and procedures relating to Safeguarding are properly implemented in regard to the children's and youth work of Bromley Baptist Church.

It involves making sure that the right culture is created and maintained, and that those involved in children's and youth work embrace that culture. The practice and procedures will need to be appropriately reinforced by reminders and by training.

They would have primary responsibility, but working with Leaders, of identifying training needs and arranging training.

They would have primary responsibility, but working with Leaders, of making sure that DBS checks are carried out as appropriate and of making sure that recruitment procedures are adhered to.

They should also be the person who keeps the church's records of training that has taken place, and also records relating to recruitment and appointment and supervision of workers.

The Safeguarding Lead Officer should be appointed by the Charity Trustees.

DESIGNATED PERSON FOR SAFEGUARDING

Note: The text will use the singular, but the appointment can be shared between more than one person. Guidance advises that one person should take the lead in the role and be the 'named person'.

This is the person who will take a key role in helping the Church to respond appropriately to any concerns that are raised about the safety or well-being of children and young people. This should, as far as possible, be someone with relevant knowledge and skills for the role, or someone who is willing to develop such skills. The person does not need to be a 'professional' but does need to give time to understanding the principles of safeguarding and dealing with concerns.

The DPS may be the same person as the Safeguarding Trustee, although very often they may not be. They do not need to be a Trustee, and indeed the role could be performed by someone outside the church.

The DPS's role is to:

- receive and record information from anyone who has safeguarding concerns;
- assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying or obtaining more information when they need to;
- consult with outside bodies where appropriate to discuss concerns (eg Regional Minister, the Local Authority Designated Officer, Social Services or the police);
- make a formal referral to Social Services or the police if appropriate or as advised;
- inform both the Safeguarding trustee and the Minister of any referral;
- make referrals as appropriate to the independent safeguarding Authority;
- be the link between the Church and the Eastern Baptist Association for safeguarding matters

The DPS should also be the person who retains the records relating to DBS checks. Note. The Designated Person for Safeguarding should be appointed by the Church Meeting.

THE MINISTER

The Minister shares with all the trustees the general responsibilities for the adoption and implementation of the safeguarding policy and procedures. But he or she will also have particular pastoral responsibilities. He or she should therefore:

- Be made aware of any safeguarding and child protection issues within the Church;
- Take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate pastoral support is provided in the context of any safeguarding investigation. In these circumstances the Minister's responsibility is to offer pastoral leadership to the whole church community. It may not be appropriate for the Minister to provide pastoral care directly to those involved, but to ensure that the pastoral needs of all are being met. It is important for the Minister to recognise that:

It is not possible or appropriate for one person to offer pastoral care to both an alleged victim and an alleged perpetrator of abuse; Church communities can too easily become polarised in these situations and it is important for the Minister to be able to take a role that seeks to hold the Church together.

Note. Wherever possible the Minister should not also be the Designated Person for Safeguarding or the Safeguarding Trustee.

WORKERS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

All of those who work with children or young people without exception (and whether paid or voluntary) should take personal responsibility for implementing the policy. They should each:

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

LEADERS OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUPS

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

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

DBS CHECK VERIFIER

Whenever a DBS check (formerly CRB check) is required, a Verifier is required to check the forms and carry out a stringent identity check of each person being checked.

ALL ATTENDEES (church members and non-church members)

All church attendees have a part to play. It is the responsibility of all within the church community to ensure that there is a welcome for children and young people and an intolerance of all that brings them harm.

All attendees should be alert to situations where children may be vulnerable. All members of the church community have a responsibility to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people and to report any child abuse that may be disclosed, discovered or suspected. All should know who to speak to if they suspect that a child or young person is being harmed.



APPENDICIES

Procedures if abuse is disclosed or discovered

Types of abuse

- Physical abuse – where someone is injured or hurt on their body
- Emotional abuse – children do not receive love and affection, a person may be frightened by threat or taunts, a person maybe given responsibilities beyond their years.
- Sexual abuse – where a person is using a child to satisfy their sexual desires
- Neglect – where an adult fails to care for a child and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development

Signs of abuse

These may be signs to indicate abuse, but please do not jump to conclusions as there may be other explanations:

- physical - unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention over a period of time
- emotional - reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden under achievements, attention seeking, running away, stealing, lying
- sexual - pre-occupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings; being sexually proactive with adults; disturbed sleep; nightmares; bedwetting; secretive relationships with adults or children; tummy pains with no apparent cause

- neglect – looking ill cared for and unhappy, being withdrawn or aggressive, having lingering injuries or health problems

If abuse is disclosed or uncovered

- Do not delay
- Do not act alone
- Do not start to investigate
- Consult with the person to whom you are responsible
- Treat the information with confidence
- The minister is to be informed by the safeguarding trustee
- Contact the parent/guardian if appropriate

If a child informs you of abuse

- Accept what the child/young person says
- Be aware that the child/young person may be at risk further
- Tell the child/young person they are not to blame
- Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Let them know what you are going to do next, who you will tell and what may happen
- Do not promise that you will keep this a secret
- Finish the conversation positively
- Write up the conversation as exactly as you can, including times, dates and what was said