

# **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN CHURCH CROOKHAM BAPTIST CHURCH POLICY AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENT**

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**POLICY STATEMENT**  
**On Safeguarding Children in Church Crookham Baptist Church**

1. The principal purpose of Church Crookham Baptist Church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the principles of the Baptist denomination. The church may also advance education and carry out other charitable purposes in the United Kingdom and / or other parts of the world.
2. In fulfilling this vision we
  - welcome children into the life of our community;
  - have a programme of events for children; and
  - make our premises available to organisations working with children.
3. The church recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children 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).
4. As members of the church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all children associated with the church and to pray for them regularly. In pursuit of this we will seek to apply and develop the policies and procedures outlined in our Policy and Procedures Document.
5. It is the duty of us all to prevent the abuse of children (whether physical, emotional, sexual or spiritual, or through neglect), to respond to any concerns about the well-being of children and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. We will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.
6. The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of all those working with children in the church and provide appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children. All trustees and children's workers will complete recognised safeguarding training in the year they are appointed and at least every three years thereafter.
7. 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.
8. 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 wellbeing.
9. The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and will seek to ensure that any instance that may arise is managed appropriately.
10. The responsibility for the safeguarding of children by any organisation using church premises rests directly with such organisation.

## **SAFEGUARDING TEAM**

The church has appointed:

**Natasha Atkins, Designated Person for Safeguarding (01252 625742)** - who will advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and take the appropriate action if any abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected. In the event that the Designated Person is not available then contact should be made with **Sue Smith (01252 681493)**; and

**Terry Bateman, Safeguarding Trustee (01252 690007)** - who will oversee and monitor the implementation of the policy and the procedures on behalf of the church's leadership / charity trustees.

Whenever possible, the Safeguarding Team will work together if any issue arises.

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

A copy of the above Policy Statement will be displayed permanently on the noticeboards in the entrance foyer and church hall.

Each worker with children will be given a full copy of this Policy and Procedures Document and will be asked to sign that they are willing to follow such policy and procedures.

A full copy of this Policy and Procedures Document will be made available on request to any member of, or other person associated with the church.

The policy and procedures within this document will be monitored and reviewed annually by the church's leadership / charity trustees.

The Policy Statement will be read annually at the church meeting, usually at the AGM in April, together with a report on the outcome of the annual 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

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless / 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

This arises 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 that 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-nourishment, untreated illnesses or inadequate care.

**It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one 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.**

### Spiritual

This occurs when someone uses their power within a framework of spiritual belief or practice to satisfy their own needs at the expense of others – in particular when such use of power leads to any ways in which children might suffer harm.

## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

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

Everyone has their 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 fellow church attendees 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

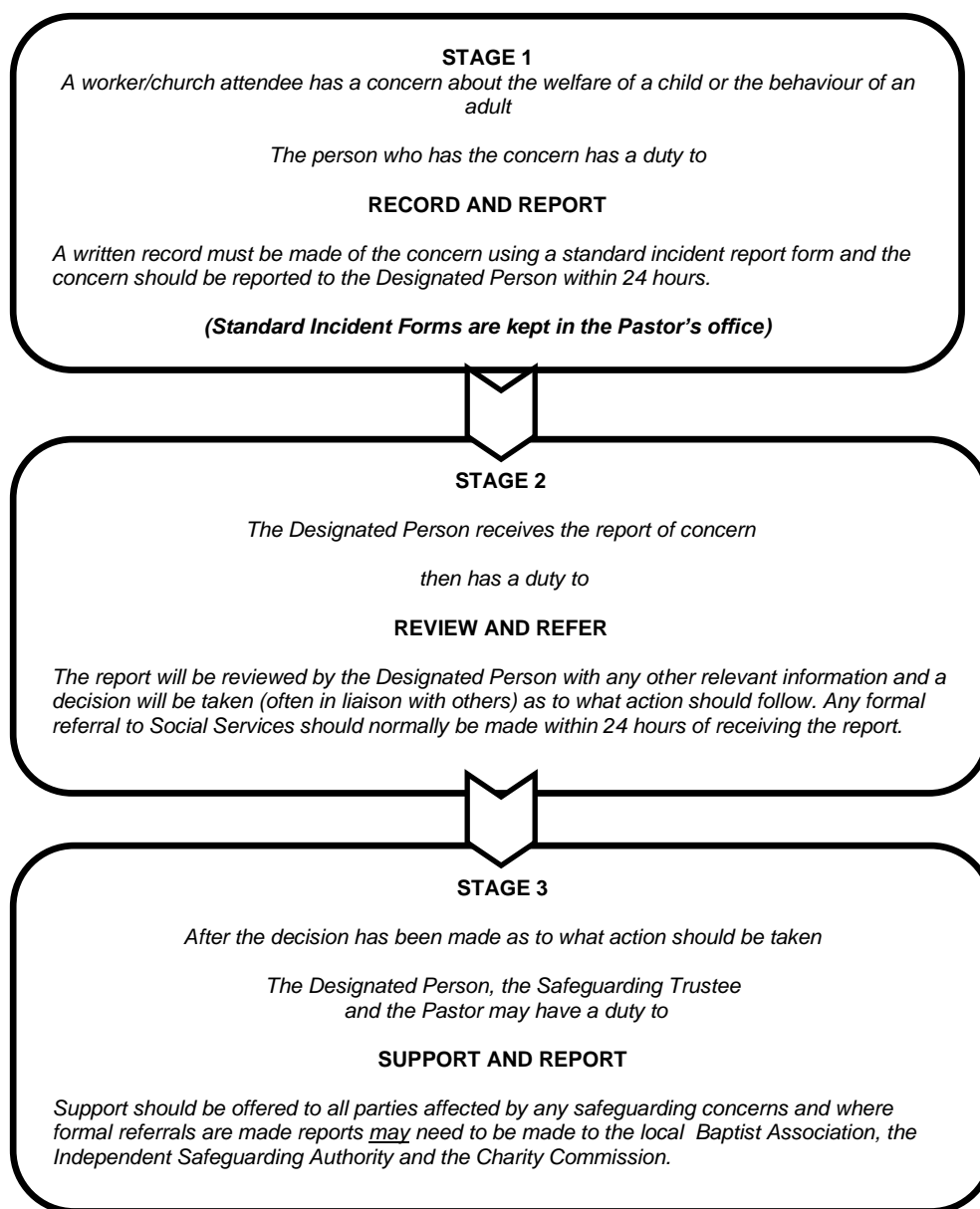
**Do not** act alone

**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.

Do	Don't
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***



If the Designated Person for Safeguarding is not available,  
any 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 (see page 20 for relevant numbers).**

## STAGE 1 – RECORD AND REPORT

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child is to RECORD their concerns in writing and to REPORT their concerns to the Designated Person. If they are not contactable reports should be made to any other member of the Safeguarding Team. 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 Pastor as far as this is consistent with the welfare of the child concerned and possible pastoral responsibilities to any others involved; and
  - representatives of the professional agencies.

If such a report is made in an emergency without reference to one of the Safeguarding Team, the Designated Person 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.

**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 20 for relevant numbers.)**



## **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**

In reviewing the report that is received the Designated Person:

- 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;
- may speak with others in the church (including the Pastor) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision that will be made;
- should ensure that such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action; and
- 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 Designated Person in liaison with the Safeguarding Trustee 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 otherwise 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 this stage of the process are shared by the Safeguarding Team and the Pastor.

#### **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 Pastor; and
- report the referral to the Regional Minister of the local Association.

In certain circumstances the Safeguarding Trustee acting on behalf of the church's leadership / charity trustees may also need to make further reports – for example to the 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 they are 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 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 this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the Charity Commission in any annual return made by the church to the 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, which may include the child, other family members, the church worker/volunteer, the Safeguarding Team and the Pastor/ 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 Children's Leaders and Helpers**

The Church will endeavour to ensure that the following selection procedures have been followed:

- A written role description for each post should be prepared
- All volunteers (both current and new) should complete an application form
- Prospective volunteers should be interviewed
- Two references should be taken up (at least one being from outside of the church)
- A DBS check should be undertaken
- Any worker should initially be appointed for a probationary period of 6 months after which a second interview should take place.
- Each worker should sign an undertaking to work within the agreed safeguarding policy and procedures
- Induction into the relevant procedures and ways of working should be undertaken, including in particular safeguarding training. All children's workers and trustees will complete recognised safeguarding training in the year they are appointed and at least every three years thereafter

Administration of this process will be overseen by the Designated Person, but may be carried out by others. All records relating to the recruitment of workers, including DBS checks, will be securely stored in the Pastor's office, with the detailed arrangements being overseen by the Designated Person.

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 regular attendees of the Sunday morning worship service as well as, if possible, a homegroup.

All leaders and helpers should set a good example to everyone of Jesus Christ in their personal lifestyle.

Meetings for leaders and helpers should be regularly held 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 should be given to ensure that any young leader is helped to develop and hone skills, attitudes and experience.

A young leader should 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.

This Safeguarding 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 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 – an age gap of at least two years should be maintained.

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

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Pastor should always be reported immediately to the Regional Minister of the 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 should be raised with the Safeguarding Trustee and the Pastor.

## RESPECTING CHILDREN – CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

The church's code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children seeks to ensure that all children are shown the respect that is due to them. The code includes the guidelines set out below.

Leaders and helpers should:

- treat all children with respect and dignity;
- use age appropriate language and tone of voice. They should also be aware of their own body language, the potential effect they are having on any child and should avoid invading anyone's personal space;
- listen well to children, being careful not to assume they know what a child is thinking or feeling. They should listen to what is spoken and how it is said, observing the body language to better understand what is being said;
- not engage in any of the following:
  - invading the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or showering
  - rough games involving physical contact between a leader and a child
  - sexually provocative games
  - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in 'fun '
  - scapegoating, belittling, ridiculing or rejecting a child;
- not use physical punishment when it is necessary to control and discipline children;
- make sure another adult is present if, for example, a young child has soiled their underclothes and needs to be thoroughly washed. If possible, the child's own parent or carer should be called in to carry out such a task;
- not respond to or encourage excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature;
- unless in emergency situations never be alone in the church premises (or a single room) with a single child. If working alone with two or more children this must be under arrangements agreed with the Designated Person which may include ensuring clear visibility to other adults, leaving doors open or having two groups working in the same room;
- ensure that appropriate supervision and accountability structures are in place on any occasion when one to one work with a child is required within a larger group setting;
- only invite children to their home, or on trips, in groups, and always make sure another adult is present. The Designated Person should be notified of any trips for children which take place in the name of the church. Parental permission must always be sought for such an event;
- not give lifts to children on their own, even for short journeys. They must ensure that if transporting children they have the correct insurance cover for passengers and, wherever possible obtain parental permission;
- not share sleeping accommodation with children if taking a group away;

- be aware of any physical contact they may have with children and record it when necessary. Examples might include needing to stop a fight, administering First Aid, giving a hug to a child who is distressed, removing a child from danger, or protecting themselves or others from attack; and
- keep a log book, with any significant incidents recorded in the Church Incident Book. Any record should include the names of all children and adults present and anything of note which was observed e.g. details of any fights broken up by the workers, allegations made by children, incidences where a child was asked to leave. All workers who witnessed, heard or responded in any way should record details, and sign and date the entry.

### **Abuse of Trust**

Relationships between children and their leaders/helpers can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The leader is someone in whom the child has placed a degree of trust – this may be because the leader has an educational role, is a provider of leisure activities, or even is a significant adult friend.

It is, therefore, not acceptable for a leader/helper to form a romantic relationship with a child with whom they have a relationship of trust.

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

### **Electronic Communication**

Electronic communication has become enormously important and popular over the past ten years. It is an easy way to communicate with children in particular. However, there are dangers associated with electronic communication that call for vigilance:

- electronic communication is often an extremely informal mode of communication which can create the potential for communication to be misunderstood;
- because of the informal style of electronic communication workers can easily cross appropriate boundaries in their relationships with children; and
- some adults who are intent on harming children choose to use electronic communication as a way to meet and 'groom' children.

The guidelines set out below are intended to maintain healthy and safe relationships between adults and children:

- electronic communication must never become a substitute for face to face contact with children;
- parents or carers and children themselves have the right to decide if a worker is to have email addresses or mobile phone numbers etc
- workers should only use electronic means of communication with those children from whom

appropriate consent has been given;

- direct electronic communication with children of primary school age is inappropriate and should be avoided;
- only workers who have been appointed under the church's agreed procedures should use any electronic means of communication to contact children on behalf of the church or one of the church's organisations;
- contact with children by electronic communication should generally be for information-giving purposes only and not for general chatter;
- workers should not share any personal information with children and should not request or respond to any personal information from the child other than that which is necessary and appropriate as part of their role;
- workers should be careful in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives. Clear, unambiguous language should be used and the use of unnecessary abbreviations should be avoided;
- electronic communication should only be used between the hours of 8.00 am and 10.00 pm;
- official church emails to children should be sent out with a church header and footer indicating to the child that this is an official communication; this should also be copied to the church e-mail address;
- any photos or video taken on personal mobile phones should not be uploaded to social networking sites without parental permission;
- workers should not retain images of children on their mobile phone;
- the use of instant messenger services should be kept to a minimum;
- where a child in need or at a point of crisis uses this as a way of communicating with a worker:
  - -significant conversations should be saved as a text file if possible, and
  - -a log should be kept of who and when they communicated;
- if adults are intending to add children to their social networking sites they must first have the permission of the parents of the child;
- adults should not normally make 'friend requests' of children;
- it should not become expected behaviour that adults say yes to children when a friend request is received;
- it is the adult's responsibility to ensure that all of the content on their site is appropriate for children to see (including contents of photos uploaded);

- all communication with children should be kept within public domains; and
- all communications with children should be transparent and open to scrutiny.

**Remember – never alone and unseen is the basic rule of thumb in safeguarding children – this rule must be appropriately applied in all activity involving electronic communication.**

### **Good Practice Guidelines for Discipline**

A policy based upon the following guidelines should be agreed by each section of the church's youth work, taking account of the particular age group and general activities of the children:

- children should be disciplined without the use of physical punishment, shouting or name calling;
- discipline is about the leaders' / workers' relationship with children, not their mastery of them;
- good discipline is built on respect between leaders and children. (This does not imply equality but does have an implication for leaders' attitudes towards children);
- minor incidents/offences should be dealt with immediately on the spot. This prevents escalation and enables major offences to be seen as major;
- acceptable ways of dealing with discipline include:
  - chastising the individual/group by criticising the behaviour not the child / children
  - moving the offender to a less volatile situation / changing the group activity
  - removing the child to a calm space away from others and staying with them until they have cooled down, but keeping the time out short;
- if the above mentioned procedures fail to bring about the desired result, refer the issue to the Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee; and
- allegations and incidents of bullying should be reported to the Designated Person or the Safeguarding Trustee. Bullying is generally defined as behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

It is possible that in an emergency, and not necessarily within a disciplinary context, a situation may arise where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third party from harm; any such action should be limited and appropriate to the situation.

### **Good Practice Guidelines with Colleagues**

If another leader / helper is seen acting in ways which might be misconstrued, everyone must be prepared to speak to them or to one of the Safeguarding Team about such concerns. Leaders and helpers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.



## Ratios

When working with children the following recommended minimum ratios apply:

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

These recommendations do not take into account any special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability and so on, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratio.

In calculating the ratios of workers to children, young leaders who are under the age of 18 should be counted as one of the children, not one of the leaders/helpers.

## Good Practice Guidelines Regarding Health & Safety

All leaders and helpers are responsible for being observant for any health and safety issues which may affect their group, for example:

- access to the building should be safe and well lit;
- there should be adequate heating and lighting in the venue;
- enough space and appropriate activities should be available for all children;
- a First Aid kit and phone should be available;
- the premises should be checked for hazards (e.g. piles of chairs etc);
- equipment should be checked for sharp edges or missing parts;
- no smoking should be permitted;
- fire drills should be carried out at least annually; and
- any food should be prepared carefully and hygienically.

## **Risk Assessments**

A generic written risk assessment will be carried out at the beginning of each academic year by the Trustee / Deacon responsible for church building maintenance. This will cover the general week to week Sunday morning activities. A specific risk assessment will be carried out by each group leader, in liaison with the Trustee / Deacon responsible for church building maintenance, for any other children activities which may take place throughout the year.

Risk assessments will be made available to the Leadership Team.

## **A SAFE COMMUNITY**

### **Safe Premises**

The church takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that the premises are safe for all who use them. The following checklist identifies guidelines to ensure the safety of all, especially, children:

- all doorways and passages are to be kept clear at all times;
- Emergency Exits are to be clearly shown at all times;
- the kitchen is to be out of bounds to children unless supervised by a parent or carer;
- a First Aid Kit will be kept in the kitchen with a Report Book for all usage; and
- any hazards noticed are to be notified to the trustees for action to be taken.

### **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 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 must be paramount.

Where someone attending the church is known to have abused children, then whilst extending friendship to the individual, the church in its commitment to the protection of all children will meet with the individual and discuss boundaries that the person will be expected to keep. It may be appropriate to draw up a formal contract between the church and the person who has abused. This might also state that the abuser or alleged abuser (until such time as the allegation has been cleared or proven) must decline offers of hospitality from church members where there are children present in the home.

**Where necessary this will include working with other agencies such as the local Baptist Association, Baptist Union, Probation Service and so on.**

### **A contract would specify the following:**

- the meetings the person can attend;
- that the person will always sit apart from children;
- any requirement that the person is always accompanied by a befriender on church premises;
- the requirement that the person will not attend small group meetings where children are present;
- that the person will decline hospitality where there are children present;
- the requirement that the person will never be alone with children while attending church functions; and
- the requirement that the person will stay away from areas of the building where children meet.

Appropriate guidance will be sought on who within the church can and should be notified if an offender joins the congregation. On this matter – and indeed on any other issue raised in this document – the Safeguarding Team will seek, as necessary, further advice and guidance from the Baptist Union and other relevant agencies.

## HELPFUL NUMBERS

Children's Social Care Services

8.45am—5pm                ????????

Out of hours                ????????

Police    ????????????

??????? Baptist Association    ????????