

Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

This document provides the policy, procedures and good working practices which the Elders of Bethany Chapel (the “Elders”) have put in place for the protection of children, young people and adults at risk/vulnerable adults during Bethany Chapel’s organised activities.

1. POLICY

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.”
- Colossians 3:17

This biblical direction requires that every action undertaken by the church be done in a manner that is consistent with the person and character of our Lord Jesus Christ. This principle is at the heart of our best efforts to ensure the safety, care and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk/vulnerable adults.

We are to show love, compassion, meekness, gentleness and kindness, to be peaceable, mild and courteous in our speech and behaviour. We are to comfort, help and support the distressed as well as protecting and defending the weak, the vulnerable and the innocent. Jesus directs us to welcome children (Luke 9: 48), protect children (Matthew 18: 6) and allow them free access to Him (Mark 10: 13-16).

Under The Children Act 1989 a ‘child’ is defined as a person under 18 years of age. Children are valued yet vulnerable members of our community who need special care.

There are various different definitions of adults who require protection. For the purpose of this policy an ‘adult at risk/vulnerable adult’ is broadly someone aged 18 years or over who has additional care or support needs and/or who is at risk of abuse or neglect and is in need of protection for some reason. Such persons are also valued yet for different reasons they are also vulnerable members of our community who similarly need special care.

Bethany Chapel will always prioritise the safety of the children and young people entrusted to our care and the safety of adults at risk/vulnerable adults. We recognise the role that the statutory safeguarding authorities (Social Services and the Police) have in investigating all suspicions and allegations or discovery of child abuse and the abuse of adults and we will cooperate fully with all agencies to protect those at risk of harm or abuse.

Aims

For these reasons the aims of Bethany Chapel’s Safeguarding Policy are to:

- A. Provide a safe and caring environment for all children, young people and adults at risk/vulnerable adults within Bethany Chapel’s care during any church activity.

- B. Provide a framework of procedures and practices that promote and safeguard the well-being of all children, young people, and adults at risk/vulnerable adults.
- C. Support those persons working with children, young people and adults at risk/vulnerable adults within Bethany Chapel and during any of its activities.

Everyone has a role to play in fulfilling these aims and in keeping each other safe.

2. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

The Safeguarding Team

The Safeguarding Team consists of the Safeguarding Coordinator and one or two Safeguarding Officers. The Safeguarding Team will have at least one male and one female member.

The Safeguarding Coordinator is to be appointed to the role by the Elders.

One or two Safeguarding Officers will also be appointed by the same process as that for the Safeguarding Coordinator.

The Safeguarding Coordinator and the Safeguarding Officers must each:

- be a member of Bethany Chapel;
- be over 25 years old; and
- have received an enhanced DBS check satisfactory to the Elders.

The main functions of the Safeguarding Coordinator are:

- to act as an advocate for safeguarding;
- to report any relevant concerns to the appropriate statutory authorities; and
- to oversee the preparation, implementation and regular review of the Safeguarding Policy.

The main functions of the Safeguarding Officers are:

- to act as advocates for safeguarding;
- to assist the Safeguarding Coordinator;
- to provide alternative points of contact for safeguarding issues (and in particular to act as points of contact in the event of a concern or complaint relating to the Safeguarding Coordinator); and
- to contribute to the preparation, implementation and regular review of the Safeguarding Policy.

Pictures of each member of the Safeguarding Team and appropriate contact details will be on public display within the church premises and on the Bethany Chapel website.

Activity Workers (Volunteer or Employed)

All persons who help to run activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults within the church must apply for the appropriate **enhanced DBS Certificate for review on behalf of Bethany Chapel**. The resultant DBS certificates will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Team before any Activity Worker is approved for involvement in church activities involving children, young people or adults at risk/vulnerable adults.

An Activity Worker's DBS certification will require renewal every three years or as appropriate for as long as they have involvement in running activities involving children, young people or adults at risk/vulnerable adults within the church. (It is recommended that Activity Workers sign up for the DBS update service to facilitate this.)

At each activity involving children or young people one of the Activity Workers will be identified as the Activity Leader. The Activity Leader has responsibility for:

- planning and delivering the activity;
- organising and managing the Activity Workers involved in running the activity;
- choosing whether to admit any other attendees to the activity and, if so, supervising them whilst they are present (see 'Other Attendees' below);
- recording any information relating to any incidents, accidents or concerns during the activity; and
- notifying the Safeguarding Team of any such incidents, accidents or concerns.

Other Attendees

Other persons (who are not Activity Workers) may sometimes be present under supervision at church activities involving children or young people because:

- they are assisting or contributing on a one off basis to the activity in some form or capacity (eg a specialist provider or guest speaker);
- they are being trained or mentored in that activity;
- additional helpers are required; or
- they are responsible for a child or young person who is attending (eg a parent).

In such circumstances it is the Activity Leader's responsibility to ensure that such persons are not left unsupervised with a child or young person (other than a child or young person for whom they are responsible).

Approved Person

All those involved in church activities involving children or young people will normally be members of Bethany Chapel. **In exceptional circumstances a person who is not a member may be approved by the Elders to lead or regularly participate in activities involving children or young people. (This may be because the person has particular skills or knowledge, or, they are leading a specific event at Bethany Chapel.)**

An Approved Person must:

- be over 18 years old;
- be a member of a like-minded Church which shares essential doctrinal beliefs with Bethany Chapel;

- have provided character reference from 2 referees (one of which must be from a church leader) which are satisfactory to the Elders;
- have formally agreed to place themselves under the authority of the Elders at all times of involvement in Bethany Chapel activities; and
- have received an **enhanced** DBS check satisfactory to the Elders.

Ineligibility

We believe wholeheartedly in forgiveness and restoration, which are both at the heart of the Gospel. However we also believe in protecting the vulnerable, and, conducting ourselves so as to avoid bringing dishonour to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we carry out all of our activities.

For these reasons anyone who has a current warning/conviction or previous warning/conviction of a sexual nature, or related in any way to current or previous abuse of children, young persons or adults at risk/vulnerable adults, will be ineligible to be a Safeguarding Coordinator, a Safeguarding Officer, an Activity Worker or an Approved Person.

Training

Bethany Chapel will endeavour to provide both initial and on-going training in matters relating to this policy for the Safeguarding Coordinator, the Safeguarding Officers, all Activity Workers, and any Approved Person.

3. GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH ACTIVITIES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

A child or young person is deemed to be 'unaccompanied' at an activity if their parent/carer/guardian/responsible adult is not present at the same premises during that activity (Most obviously for activities taking place at the chapel, this means not being present within the chapel building and grounds).

Before

- All workers/volunteers MUST familiarise themselves with this Policy, any guidelines issued by the Safeguarding Team, and, exercise good working practices.
- **The Activity Leader MUST check that all workers/volunteers have familiarised themselves with the up to date version of this Policy.**
- The Activity Leader MUST consider in advance whether the planned activity poses any particular risks to those expected to attend, and, implement appropriate risk management steps to remove or reduce such risks to an acceptable level (to at least the same level of protection as they would want if those attending were their own family members).
- Parents/carers/guardians will be required to fill in a consent form prior to their children/young people taking part in any church activity when one of the child's parents/carers/guardians/a responsible adult acting 'in loco parentis' will not be present at the same location as the activity. This consent form could be provided in advance or on the day.

- A properly equipped First Aid Kit should be available and **where possible** there should be at least one trained first-aider present at all activities involving unaccompanied children or young persons.

During

- The Activity Leader MUST decide whether or not it is appropriate and safe to admit each child or young person, and, any other person who wishes to attend that activity. The Activity Leader has the authority to refuse admission where they consider it is inappropriate and/or unsafe to admit that person for any reason. The Activity Leader may contact a member of the Safeguarding team for advice if they are unsure.
- If a child arrives at an activity without written consent or a responsible adult every effort should be made to contact their parent/carer by phone to obtain consent. Should this not be possible, the child will not be able to attend the activity **and arrangements should be made to keep the child/young person safe until they can be collected**. A record of this MUST be entered **via a Safeguarding Log Entry and reported to the Safeguarding Team**.
- An Attendance Register (**see attached example**) MUST be completed to include:
 - (i) the name, date and location of the activity;
 - (ii) the names of all Activity Workers, and other attendees who are present (as well as the children/young people information required below).
- The Attendance Register MUST record for each child or young person
 - (i) the time at which they entered our care for the activity (**for most this will be the start time**)
 - (ii) whether they remained accompanied by a responsible adult and, if not, telephone contact details for their responsible adult;
 - (iii) the time at which they left our care; and,
 - (iv) **with whom they left our care (eg 'parent/carer who brought them') or that they were allowed to leave unaccompanied.**
- The Activity Leader must ensure that there is appropriate control and monitoring of entry and exit to the location of the activity.
- Any first aid given MUST be recorded **via a Safeguarding Log Entry and reported to the Safeguarding Team**. Parents/carers MUST also be informed.
- If a visit to hospital is necessary, the child MUST be accompanied by an adult and the parent/carer MUST be informed IMMEDIATELY. It is preferable to dial for an ambulance. The incident must be recorded **via a Safeguarding Log Entry and reported to the Safeguarding Team**.
- Excessive physical contact between leaders and children or young people is unnecessary and it is unwise under any circumstance.
- **Activity Workers** should avoid being alone one-to-one with a child if at all possible. If a private conversation is necessary this should take place in as public a context as possible (e.g. in a room with the door open) and always inform another leader of the situation in advance.

After

- Any incidents, accidents or concerns during an activity MUST be recorded **via a Safeguarding Log Entry and reported to the Safeguarding Team** at the time or as soon as possible after the activity.

- All relevant information incidents, accidents or concerns during an activity MUST be provided to one of the Safeguarding Team at the first opportunity (ideally within 24 hours). The Safeguarding Coordinator MUST be informed as soon as practically possible.
- Any personal information held by Bethany Chapel which relates to the children, young people, adults at risk/vulnerable adults is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and should be treated consistently with those obligations.

4. GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL VISITS

The primary purpose of a pastoral visit is to offer Christian fellowship and support for the person(s) visited. This will often include providing some spiritual content, asking how the person is doing and asking if there are **additional** things which the church could be doing to support that person. **It is essential that those conducting pastoral visits do not 'gossip' in any way.**

Before

- All Pastoral Visitors MUST familiarise themselves with this Policy, any guidelines issued by the Safeguarding Team and exercise good working practices.
- All Pastoral Visitors intending to conduct a pastoral visit MUST contact the person(s) to be visited in advance to offer a visit and to expressly check whether a visit is welcome and convenient.
- All Pastoral Visitors MUST agree with the person(s) on the time, location and all Pastoral Visitors for the pastoral visit.
- If the person wishing to receive a pastoral visit is likely to be on their own the Pastoral Visitors MUST offer the individual the option to have someone else present for the pastoral visit.
- A lone Pastoral Visitor MUST NOT conduct a pastoral visit with someone of the opposite sex (except in exceptional circumstances which have been discussed and agreed in advance with the Elders).
- **It would be beneficial if Pastoral Visitors could** identify in advance an appropriate short bible passage to read with the person(s) visited and be prepared to pray with the person visited.
- If the person(s) to be visited has not been able to attend a communion service for an extended period of time then the Pastoral Visitor(s) should consider whether they would be able to lead a short time of communion and, if so, take appropriate bread and wine/wine substitute to facilitate this within hygienic and safe containers.

During

- All Pastoral Visitors MUST NOT surprise the person(s) receiving a pastoral visit by bringing other pastoral visitors or arriving early.
- On arrival, the Pastoral Visitor(s) should check whether it is still convenient to have the pastoral visit. If the person receiving a pastoral visit would prefer to rearrange the visit for any reason then the Pastoral Visitor(s) MUST comply with the request and agree to rearrange the pastoral visit.

- On arrival, the Pastoral Visitor(s) should also check **in at least broad terms** how long the person(s) visited wants the pastoral visit to last. The Pastoral Visitor(s) should then manage their time to ensure that the person(s) visited's preference for duration is respected. **(The person visited can change their mind about how long they want the visit to last.)**
- All Pastoral Visitors should remember that the primary purpose of a pastoral visit is to offer Christian fellowship and support for the person(s) visited.
- Pastoral Visitors MUST NOT pry or press the person(s) receiving a pastoral visit into revealing details or issues which they do not wish to share. Be led by what the person(s) wishes to volunteer. (If there is a spiritual or church discipline issue justifying any exploration this will be conducted by the Elders, and, if there is a safeguarding issue justifying exploration this will be conducted by the Safeguarding Team.)
- **Unless there is a concern regarding the person (see 'After' below for how to address different types of concern), the Pastoral Visitor(s) should not share with others any personal information provided by the person(s) visited.**
- If the person(s) visited would welcome prayer from the wider church fellowship on a topic discussed at the visit it is that person's decision as to what information is shared in making the prayer request. Pastoral Visitors should ask the person to specify what details should/should not be shared in requesting prayer and carefully note this.
- The Pastoral Visitor(s) should remain vigilant throughout the visit for any signs that the person(s) visited is uncomfortable with any aspect of the visit. If any such signs are detected then the Pastoral Visitor(s) should promptly offer to draw the visit to an end.
- The Pastoral Visitor(s) should offer to read an appropriate short bible passage with the person(s) visited, and, to pray for them. Ask the person(s) visited if they would like to pray (without applying any pressure to do so).
- If the Pastoral Visitor(s) have prepared in order to be able to lead a short time of communion then communion should be offered as an option to the person(s) visited (without applying any pressure). Before starting any communion ask the person(s) visited if they would like to participate in any way (eg by reading a passage or praying). Honour their wishes as to whether and how any time of communion takes place.

After

- All Pastoral Visitors MUST maintain the confidence of the person(s) visited.
- If the person(s) receiving a pastoral visit reveal a safeguarding issue then the Pastoral Visitor(s) MUST report the safeguarding issue immediately to a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- If the pastoral visit causes a Pastoral Visitor(s) to have another (i.e. non-safeguarding) concern for the person(s) visited then the Pastoral Visitor(s) should notify the Elders.
- If the person visited has asked for prayer from the wider church fellowship on a topic then the Pastoral Visitor(s) should notify the Elders of the details which the individual has stated they want shared.

5. TOILET USE

Children and young people should only attend activities unaccompanied if they are able to attend to go to use toilet facilities unaccompanied. Activity Workers will NOT accompany children or young people into bathrooms/toilets or assist them to use the toilet.

If a child or young people appears to be having difficulties in using toilet facilities then the Activity Workers will call through a doorway to check whether a child or young person is OK and will then contact their parent/carer/guardian if there is a problem.

Activity Workers may assist an adult at risk/vulnerable adult IF the activity worker is comfortable providing this assistance, and, the adult at risk/vulnerable adult gives their clear oral permission for the individual to provide such assistance.

6. MEDICATION

We do not administer either prescription or non- prescription medications to the children, young people or adults at risk/vulnerable adults under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home or, where appropriate, by the person themselves.

Exceptions may possibly be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions) with standard medication delivery mechanisms (eg 'inhalers' or 'EpiPens') **but only if the Activity Leader is comfortable with doing so.** Parents/carers/guardians of such children should address their situation with the Activity Leader in advance to discuss and, if agreed, develop an agreed action plan.

7. DISCIPLINARY ISSUES & PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

We NEVER administer any form of physical/corporal punishment (even if parents/carers/guardians have suggested or given permission for it). There MUST be no smacking, spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children.

Physical restraint will ONLY be used on a person where oral control has failed, AND, it is believed the risk of harm to the person or to others would be greater if they were left unrestrained. The minimum restraint necessary MUST be used.

Any incident involving the use of physical restraint MUST be recorded in the Log Book for the activity. Any incident involving physical restraint of a child/young person MUST also be notified IMMEDIATELY to their parent/carer/guardian.

8. REPORTING A COMPLAINT OR INCIDENT

If you become aware of a situation or behaviour of leaders, other adults or children with which you are uncomfortable for any reason:

- You should IMMEDIATELY raise any concerns relating to an activity with the Activity Leader and ask that your concerns are recorded in the Log Book;
- The Activity Leader MUST record any concern(s) raised and any action(s) taken in the Log Book as soon as possible and notify the Safeguarding Coordinator;
- If **either** your concerns involve the Activity Leader, you are unable to contact the Activity Leader, or, you are dissatisfied with the Activity Leader's response then you should contact one of the Safeguarding Team at the earliest opportunity. **(The Safeguarding Team's contact details can be found on the website at [web address].)**

The Safeguarding Coordinator will inform the Elders of any concerns and together they will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may or may not involve outside agencies. In either case a written record will be made and kept by the Elders.

The Safeguarding Coordinator and the Elders will endeavour to respect the rights and feelings of all parties involved in an alleged incident and will maintain due confidentiality, discussing the issues with properly authorised persons only.

9. ANNUAL REVIEW

Our policy and procedures will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Team. **If any other person wishes to suggest an improvement to our policy and procedures they should contact the Safeguarding Team. (The Safeguarding Team's contact details can be found on the website at [web address].)**

Recommendations for amendment will be brought to the Elders who will consider and decide upon the recommendations.