CREECH ST MICHAEL BAPTIST CHURCH

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

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INTRODUCTION

Creech St Michael Baptist Church's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures have been formulated with guidance drawn from the Baptist Union of Great Britain and with reference to best practice guidance from Somerset Safeguarding Board. It is divided into four sections:

1) **Safeguarding Policy Statement** – this policy statement will be affirmed at the church's Annual General Meeting and reviewed and reaffirmed annually.

2) **Safeguarding Procedures** – these sections provide a clear outline of the reporting procedures in Creech St Michael Baptist Church

3) **Best Practice Guidelines** – these guidelines provide detailed information on key areas of safeguarding in the life of Creech St Michael Baptist Church

4) **Useful Contacts**

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

For the purpose of this guide, the term 'child' or 'young person' refers to anyone under the age of 18 years.

There is no standard single definition for an adult at risk, so for our policy we are using the following simple definition taken from thirtyone:eight

'Any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation'.

Creech St Michael Baptist Church refers to its ministerial team as 'Pastors'. Where reference is made in the following procedures to 'The Minister' this means the Lead Pastor (Matt Bradley) or Assistant Pastor (Mark Bailey). Where reference is made to Ministry Lead/s this means Zac Whitehouse (Children and Families) and Hannah Jenkins (Youth).

SECTION 1 – SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT FOR CREECH ST MICHAEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Our vision

The vision of Creech St Michael Baptist Church is:

"To see lives transformed by the presence and compassion of Jesus"

In fulfilling this vision, we:

- Welcome children and adults at risk into the life of our community
- Run activities for children and adults at risk
- Make our premises available to organisations working with children and adults at risk

Our safeguarding responsibilities

The church recognises its responsibilities in safeguarding all children and adults at risk, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all associated with the church and will pray for them regularly. In pursuit of this, we commit ourselves to this policy and to the development of sound procedures to ensure we implement our policy well.

- **Prevention and reporting of abuse**

  It is the duty of each church member to help prevent the abuse of children and adults at risk, and the duty of each church member to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and adults at risk. Any abuse disclosed, discovered, or suspected will be reported in accordance with our procedures. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

- **Safer recruitment, support, and supervision of workers**

  The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and adults at risk, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with a role profile, appropriate training, support, and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children and adults at risk. No individual can be involved in supporting any group until their successful DBS has come through and they have signed our Volunteer Agreement form; and they cannot be left unsupervised (not policy anyway with COSMIC and Youth Work) until they have attended appropriate SWBA safeguarding training. Generally, volunteers should be committed to the church fellowship through regular attendance and/or church membership. Exemptions can be given e.g. with volunteers for the church café and for specific roles within Holiday Club.

- **Respecting children and adults at risk**

  The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and adults at risk so that all children and adults are shown the respect that is due to them. In addition, we will create a culture of listening to children and adults at risk and will take into account their wishes and feelings when making decisions that affect them.

- **Safer working practices**

  The church is committed to providing an environment that is as safe as possible for children and adults at risk and will adopt ways of working with them that promote their safety and well-being.

- **A safer community**

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

Safeguarding contact points within our church

The church has appointed the following individuals to form part of the church safeguarding team:

RALPH BULLOCK, Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS)
He will advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and is ultimately responsible for taking the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Phone number ……07731634984…… Email address ……ralph@creechbc.co.uk……

BETH FRANKLIN, Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding (DDPS)
She is the primary source to receive concerns and will assist the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) in helping the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of **children and young people** and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Phone number …….07747 617 315……. Email address …….beth@creechbc.co.uk……

SHARON BARNES, Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding (DDPS)
She is the primary source to receive concerns and will assist the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) in helping the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of **adults at risk** and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

Phone number ……07793 747 419……Email address …… sharon@creechbc.co.uk……..

THE THREE POSITIONS ABOVE FORM THE 'CHURCH SAFEGUARDING TEAM'

CHARLES MEDLOCK, Safeguarding Trustee
He will raise the profile of safeguarding within the church and oversee and monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policy and procedures on behalf of the church trustees. He will keep in regular contact with the DPS as part of this oversight role which will inform the annual review of safeguarding. NB This is not an operational position in terms of decision making regarding reported concerns.

Phone number …… 07544 915453 …… Email address …… charles@creechbc.co.uk……..

Our Pastors are also an important part of the wider Church Safeguarding Team. The appropriate Pastor will be informed by the DPS regarding a reported allegation of abuse as soon as they are raised. When appropriate to do so as decided by the DPS, the Church Safeguarding Team will include the Pastors in discussions. It is also noted that in their position, Pastors may know of safeguarding concerns before anyone else and in these cases, they will bring them directly to the DPS within 24hrs.

Although not a part of the Church Safeguarding Team, Mark Bailey will also have a role within safeguarding as follows:

- Ensure that all those working with children and adults at risk adhere to safe practice guidelines.
- Oversight of all risk assessments stored in the church office.

As Office Administrator, Jane Warden will be responsible for the following areas regarding safeguarding:

- Processing DBS checks for church staff and volunteers (with the exception of the accredited ministers who are checked by the regional association).
- The collation of all online Volunteer Agreement Forms with the support of the Safeguarding Trustee and liaising with the DPS, Mark Bailey, Ministry Leads and Group Coordinators to ensure that no one works with children or young people or adults at risk until these forms are completed.
- With reference to the safeguarding training schedule, liaise with the DPS to physically book safeguarding training courses with the South West Baptist Association for all those working with children and young people and adults at risk.
- Support the safer recruitment process for volunteers.

Ministry Leads (Hannah Jenkins and Zac Whitehouse) and Group Coordinators

- Together with Mark Bailey, ensure that all those working with children and adults at risk, in their area of responsibility adhere to safe practice guidelines.
- Complete risk assessments as necessary and submit them to Jane in the church office for secure storage and periodic inspection by Mark Bailey.
- Inform the DPS and the church office when a volunteer leaves or joins their team.
- Keep Role Profiles for their area of ministry up to date.
- Follow safer recruitment procedures as noted within this policy and as identified in Appendix 7, using the application form in Appendix 6.

(Further definitions of these roles can be found in Appendix 4 – Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities)

Putting our policy into practice

- A copy of the safeguarding policy statement will be displayed permanently on the church noticeboards and church office and is available on our church website.
- Each worker with children and/or adults at risk will be given a full copy of the safeguarding policy and procedures and will be asked to sign to confirm that they will follow them through the online Volunteer Agreement form.
- A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of, or other person associated with the church.
- The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually, and any necessary revisions adopted into the policy and implemented through our procedures.
- The policy statement will be read annually at the church AGM, together with a report on the outcome of the annual safeguarding review.

Full policy approved at the Leadership Team Meeting, May 2026 and Policy Statement read at the church meeting, September 2026.

SECTION 2 - SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

The following safeguarding procedures set out how our safeguarding policy is implemented in the services, groups and meetings that are part of the life of Creech St Michael Baptist Church.

Each trustee, church leader and worker (paid or voluntary) needs to be familiar with these procedures to ensure that they have the knowledge and confidence needed to deal with safeguarding issues as they arise. The following pages give clear, specific information on how to recognise and report abuse and how to respond to concerns raised within the church.

All church workers (paid and voluntary) who work with children and/or adults at risk are required to attend the BUGB Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding training (or equivalent) before they are able to work without supervision. NB Policy for children's/youth work does not allow lone working. See page 16, 'Training 'section for details.

When requests for help and support for ministries involving children or adults at risk are advertised publicly in services or at church meetings, a reminder will be given that this is subject to DBS clearance, signing the Volunteer Agreement Form and completing SWBA safeguarding training.

2.1 PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING ABUSE

2.1.1 What to do if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused in a range of settings, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. There are many ways in which people suffer abuse. For more information, please see Appendix 1.

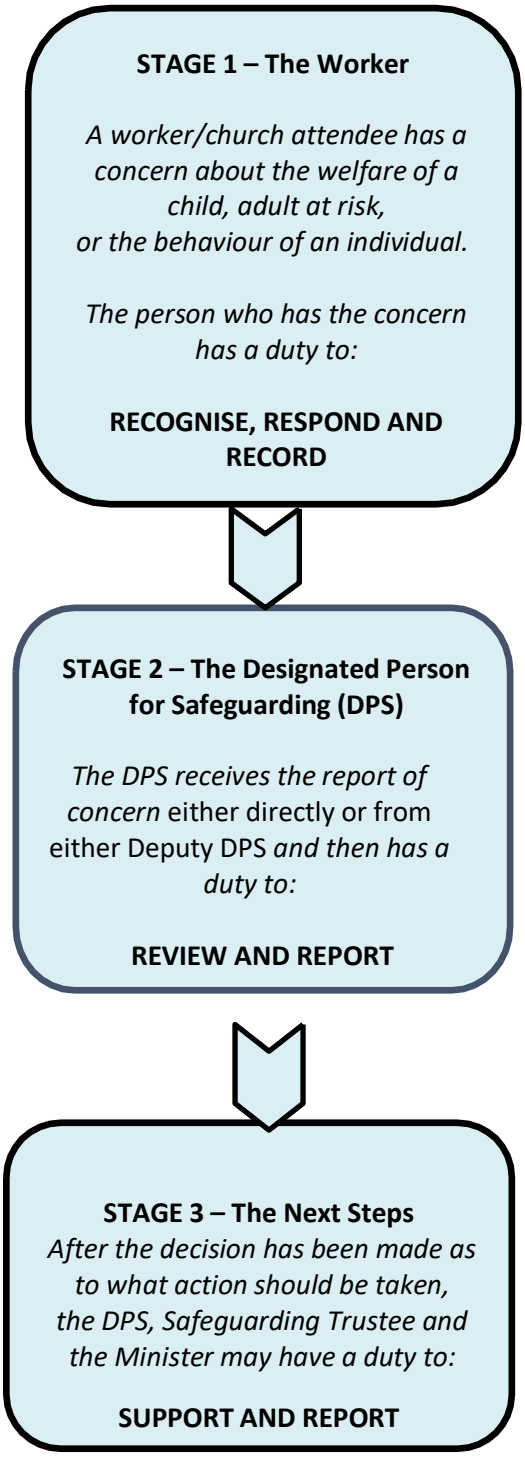
Everyone has their part to play in helping to safeguard children and adults at risk within the life of the church:

- If the behaviour of a child or adult at risk gives any cause for concern
- If an allegation is made in any context about a child or adult at risk being harmed
- If the behaviour of any individual towards children or adults at risk causes concern

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
• Listen to and acknowledge what is being said. • Try to be reassuring & remain calm. • Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next. • Try to give them a timescale for when and how you / the DPS will contact them again. • Take action – don't ignore the situation. • Be supportive. • Tell them that: They were right to tell you; You are taking what they have said seriously; It was not their fault; That you will have to pass this information on to the appropriate people. • Be open and honest. • Give contact details for them to report any further details or ask any questions that may arise.	• Do not promise confidentiality. • Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval. • Do not minimise what is being said. • Do not ask probing or leading questions or push for more information. • Do not offer false reassurance. • Do not delay in contacting the DPS. • Do not contact the alleged abuser. • Do not investigate the incident any further. • Never leave a child or adult at risk waiting to hear from someone without any idea of when or where that may be. • Do not pass on information to those who don't need to know, not even for prayer ministry.

2.1.2 Responding to Concerns

When there are concerns that a child, young person or adult is being abused, the following process must be followed. More detailed information can be found in Appendix 2.



A record must be made of the concern, either handwritten or typed using a standard Incident Report Form (Appendix 3) and the concern must be passed on to the relevant Deputy DPS (either children/youth or adults at risk) as primary contacts or the church DPS within 24 hours. Incident Report Forms are available from various points within the church building, including the church office or via email from any member of the safeguarding team.

The written record should: be made as soon as possible after the event; be legible; include the name, date of birth and address of the child or adult at risk or the person thought to be a risk to others; include the nature of any concerns and description of any bruising or injuries that have been noticed; include an exact record of what the child or adult at risk has said, using their own words where possible; include any action taken; be signed and dated; be kept secure and confidential (available only to the DPS and others responsible for safeguarding). NB Full details of what is required is indicated on the Incident Report Form.

The report will be reviewed by the DPS with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken (often in liaison with others) as to what action should follow. See appendix 2 for examples of possible actions. Any formal referral to the police or Social Services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report.

The DPS will make the Regional Safeguarding Lead aware of any referrals to statutory authorities.

Pastoral support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns (this could be the church as a whole, but more specifically victims; alleged perpetrators; children; adults at risk; other family members; church workers; the DPS; Minister; members of the leadership team).

Where formal referrals are made, reports may need to be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Charity Commission.

If the DPS is not available, or is implicated in the situation, any reports or concerns should be passed to another member of the church Safeguarding Team.

If you think that anyone is in imminent danger of harm, a report should be made immediately to the police by calling 999.

2.1.3 Responding to Concerns Raised about Adults at Risk

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

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

It is not your role to decide whether someone has mental capacity and is therefore able to make decisions that impact on their safety and well-being. Decisions on mental capacity are best made by professionals with the relevant background information to hand. **Always share your concerns with the relevant Deputy DPS or the DPS** even if you do not have the consent of the adult to do so – in this instance, make sure the DPS knows that the person concerned has not given consent for the information to be passed on.

The Care Act 2014 provides helpful guidance on these situations:

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

The DPS will consider all the information to hand and decide whether it is appropriate for the information to be reported to the statutory authorities (see appendix 2 for further information). If there are any concerns about an adult's mental capacity, the DPS will contact the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Team for advice.

2.1.4 Allegations Against Workers – reported direct to the DPS

If you see another worker acting in ways which concern you or might be misconstrued, speak to the DPS about your concerns as soon as you can. This includes the actions or behaviour of those in leadership positions in the church.

Church workers should encourage an atmosphere of mutual accountability, holding each other to the highest standards of safeguarding practice. The following procedure should be followed:

1) When an allegation of abuse has been made do not approach the alleged perpetrator about it
2) Follow the usual safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report**
3) Once the allegation has been reported to the DPS they can liaise with the relevant statutory authority (LADO) and the Regional Association Safeguarding Lead for possible further advice
4) Whilst waiting for an outcome from the statutory authorities, the worker about whom concerns have been raised will be supervised as closely as possible, without raising suspicion
5) Once the statutory authorities are involved, the church will follow their advice with regard to the next steps to take (for example, suspension of worker, putting a contract in place)
6) A written record of all discussions with statutory authorities or other parties should be maintained by the DPS and stored securely and confidentially, where only those directly involved in safeguarding (DPS, Safeguarding Trustee, Minister) can access them.

7) No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding, not even for prayer purposes.

The suspension of a worker following an allegation is, by definition, a neutral act. Our priority as a church is to protect children and adults at risk from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.

It may be necessary, for the sake of the child/adult at risk or to satisfy the needs of an investigation, for the alleged perpetrator to worship elsewhere. In such cases the DPS at the new church will be informed of the reasons for this happening.

When concerns are expressed about the Minister

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Minister should always be reported immediately to the Regional Association Safeguarding Lead by the DPS in addition to following the church's usual procedures. The Minister is not to be told that a concern has been raised about them.

When concerns are expressed about the church DPS/Safeguarding Trustee

Any safeguarding concerns involving the DPS or Safeguarding Trustee should be raised with the Minister, they in turn should contact the Regional Association Safeguarding Lead. The DPS/ Safeguarding Trustee is not to be told that a concern has been raised about them.

2.1.5 Abuse of Trust

Relationships between children and adults at risk and their church workers can be described as 'relationships of trust'. The worker is someone in whom the child or adult at risk has placed a degree of trust. This may be because the worker has an educational role, is a provider of activities, or is even a significant adult friend. It is not acceptable for a church worker to form a romantic relationship with a child or adult at risk with whom they have a relationship of trust.

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 young people. While by no means restricted to young leaders, such a position can easily lead to strong emotional attachments or dependency which must be avoided and not encouraged.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 expanded the list of roles which are legally considered to be positions of trust to include anyone who is in a teaching, coaching, instructing, training or supervising role within sport or religion. This means that since May 2022 if an adult of any age is in a role where they are working directly with young people aged 16 and 17 and forms a romantic or sexual relationship with them, they could be charged with criminal offences. If you have concerns about a relationship forming between an adult helper and a young person then you should notify the DPS.

2.1.6 Allegations Made Against Children and Adults at Risk

Children and young people are naturally curious about sex and sexuality. However, where a child is in a position of power or has responsibility over another child (as in a babysitting arrangement) and abuses that trust through some sexual activity, then this is abusive. Where one child introduces another child to age-inappropriate sexual activity or forces themselves onto a child, this is abusive. This is sometimes referred to as Peer-On-Peer Abuse or Child on Child Abuse. Such situations will be taken as seriously as if an adult were involved, because the effects on the child victim can be as great.

When such instances occur, they are investigated by the statutory authorities in the same way as if an adult were involved, though it is likely that the perpetrator may also be regarded as a victim, in their own right, as they may have also been abused. It cannot be assumed that young people will grow out of this type of behaviour, as most adult sex offenders started abusing in their teens or even younger. Any allegations or suspicions of this nature must be investigated as robustly as if an adult were involved.

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

When an allegation is made against a child or adult at risk the following procedure should be followed:

1) Do not approach the person about whom the allegation has been made or their parents / carers.
2) Follow the church's safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report**
3) Seek advice from the DPS, who will speak to the police or social services about when to inform a parent. The DPS will also seek advice about what steps need to be taken to ensure the needs of both the victim and alleged perpetrator are met; this may include placing the child or adult at risk on a Safeguarding Contract or equivalent (see section 3.4: Safer Community / Working with Alleged or Known Offenders)
4) Make sure there is pastoral support in place for the child or adult at risk throughout the process involved

2.1.7 Pastoral Care

Following an allegation/suspicion

When an allegation/suspicion arises in the church, a period of investigation will follow, which will be stressful for all involved. The church will ensure that one person is responsible for dealing with the authorities, another offers support to the victim/s and their family, and another gives pastoral care to the alleged perpetrator, without compromising the alleged victims or their families. It may be necessary to appoint other people to support the families involved.

Where a statutory investigation is under way, this support will be provided with the knowledge of the statutory authority involved.

Where the perpetrator accepts some responsibility, they will be encouraged to seek specialised interventions/treatment to reduce the risk of re-offending. This may only be appropriate once the investigation and legal processes have been completed.

Supporting those who have experienced abuse

As a church, we are committed to caring for those who have experienced abuse and refer to the Baptist Union of Great Britain **Supporting Those who have Experienced Abuse** guide to ensure that we adhere to a model of best practice.

We recognise it is important that those who have experienced abuse:

- Are accepted for who they are, without being made to forgive or being put into a position of feeling guilty and responsible for what happened to them.
- Know that God loves them unconditionally, and that nothing can or will change this truth.

- Can be confident that those in the church community who know about the abuse are with them on their journey – no matter how long or difficult that journey may be.

It may be necessary to signpost individuals to specialist support. The DPS has a list of relevant local information and contacts, ready for anyone who may need it.

2.2 SAFER RECRUITMENT

As a church, we are committed to safer recruitment practices. When recruiting both paid and volunteer church workers, the following process will be applied:

1. In the case of a paid worker: We will develop a clear role profile, person specification and application form, as appropriate to the role. For volunteers: We will give clear guidance as to the nature and expectations of each volunteer role through a Role Profile matched to each area of ministry and relevant Ministry Leads/Group Coordinators will oversee their work.
2. When advertising a paid role which involves working with children or adults at risk we will make it clear that any appointment is subject to a DBS check;
3. All applicants to paid roles will be asked to give the names of two referees and will also be asked to complete a detailed application form. All applicants to volunteer roles will give the name of one referee (with the caveat that a second could be sought) and will be asked to complete a simplified application form;
4. Shortlisting of applicants for paid workers will be carried out by at least two people, including the line manager or group leader directly overseeing the role being recruited for;
5. Interviews for paid positions will be carried out by at least two people, including the line manager or Ministry Lead. At least one person interviewing must have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. Interviews for volunteer roles will be undertaken by the Ministry Leads/Group Coordinator of the group applied for and they may bring in a trusted member of their team. Assessment of a volunteer's capability, suitability and experience will be carried out by observation of the volunteer in post by their Ministry Lead and/or by their Group Coordinator;
6. In the case of a paid worker: References, a Self-Disclosure Form and an enhanced DBS check must be completed satisfactorily before the appointed person starts in their role. The same applies to a volunteer role: although an enhanced DBS is not required in a small number of positions where there is no direct contact with children or adults at risk.
7. Unless specific exemption is given it is required that all volunteers involved in ministries within our church which deal with children and/or adults at risk should be committed to the church fellowship through regular attendance and/or in church membership.

Note: Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children or adults at risk to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children or adults at risk. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly offer work with children or adults at risk to an individual who is so disqualified or to knowingly allow such an individual to continue to work with children or adults at risk.

Additional checks for paid workers

In addition to the above checks which should be completed for both paid and volunteer church workers, an applicant's UK residency status and/or right to work in the UK will be checked when recruiting for a paid role.

References

Formal written references will be requested for all paid workers, normally in the form of at least one professional and one personal reference. For volunteers; written character references will be requested, and these may be in the form of email communication. All references must include the referee's assessment of the volunteer's suitability for the role and their suitability to work with children, young people and adults at risk, as appropriate.

Appointment and Supervision

The church's safeguarding policy and procedures will be discussed with the applicant (and all volunteers) and they will be required to sign the Volunteer Agreement on-line to indicate that they will adhere to them. All paid workers will have a role description and clear lines of accountability to a leader and the leadership team. Paid workers will also have an assigned supervisor whom they will meet with regularly to discuss work and address any issues or areas of concern. There will be a probationary period of 6 months in the role before any paid appointment is confirmed. There will also be regular team meetings to review procedures, share concerns and identify other matters that may need clarification and guidance. Assessment of a volunteer's capability, suitability and experience will be carried out by observation of the volunteer in post by their Ministry Lead and/or their Group Coordinator.

Training

It is important that all paid workers and volunteers understand our church's agreed safeguarding procedures and attend BUGB Excellence in Safeguarding training Level 2 at least once every four years. Where a paid worker is successfully recruited but has not yet been able to attend the training, they should be given a copy of the Baptist Union of Great Britain's ***Gateway to Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding*** booklet and asked to complete the relevant sections. Additional specialist training will also be arranged where needed, for example, in First Aid. All church leaders including the ministers, trustees, the DPS and deputy DPSs should attend BUGB Excellence in Safeguarding training Level 3 (or equivalent) at least once every four years. All paid workers and volunteers must read, sign and return the church Volunteer Agreement Form.

Young leaders under 18 years of age

In law, young leaders under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that they are helped to develop and hone their skills, attitudes and experience. Young leaders must always be closely supervised by an adult leader and never given sole responsibility for a group of children. When considering ratios of staff to children, young leaders need to be counted as children, not leaders. The safeguarding procedures apply to a young leader just as they do to any other person. Parent /carer permission needs to be sought for young leaders to attend an event or help in a children's group, just as for any other person under 18 years of age. Young leaders are not required to do L2 safeguarding training or to sign the church Volunteer Agreement Form. They are however given a Youth Volunteer Agreement according to which ministry they are supporting.

2.3 SAFER BEHAVIOUR – treat everyone with dignity and respect

The church has a code of behaviour for all those working with children and/or adults at risk so that everyone is shown the respect that is due to them:

- Think about language and tone of voice that you are using when engaging with children, young people and adults at risk. Be aware of your body language and the effect you are having on those you are working with. This applies to both in person and online interactions.
- Listen well to everyone. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or adult at risk is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is being spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the individual's body language to better understand what is being said.
- Be aware of any physical contact you may have with a child or adult at risk and record it when necessary. For instance, if you need to stop a fight, administer First Aid, give a hug to someone in distress, or protect yourself or others from danger.
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or adult at risk, even in 'fun' and do not scapegoat, belittle, ridicule or reject a child or adult at risk.
- Do not visit an adult at risk in their home on your own if you are the opposite sex to them. Meeting them with someone else present is always a better option.
- Do not transport adults at risk on your own.
- Keep a record of any significant incidents or concerns on a Safeguarding Incident Form or initial concerns on a Safeguarding Initial Concern Form (see Appendix 3). Enter the names of all those present and anything of note which you observe, e.g. details of any fights broken up by the workers, allegations made, etc. All workers who witnessed the incident, overheard it or responded in any way should record the details and sign and date the form.

Specific considerations when working with children:

- Do not invade the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or changing
- The level of assistance with personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Avoid rough games involving physical contact between a worker and a child.
- Avoid sexually provocative games
- When it is necessary to discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment. There may, however, on the rare occasion be circumstances where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third party. Training in safe restraint techniques will be provided by the church.
- Only invite children and young people to your home or on trips in groups and always make sure that another worker is present.
- Notify the DPS of any children's trips which take place in the name of the church. Parental permission must always be sought.
- Do not give lifts to children or young people on your own. Ensure that if transporting children as part of your church role, you have the correct insurance cover in place as well as parental permission.
- No person under 18 years of age should be left in sole charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.
- No one should normally be left working alone with children, young people or adults at risk, but should instead work as part of a team. If there are insufficient leaders for groups: internal doors should be left open; at least two people should be present before external doors are opened for an event; consider whether you could combine groups together or rearrange planned activities; reconsider whether you can run the group safely, carrying out a Risk Assessment to record your findings.

If workers do find themselves on their own with children or adults at risk, they should:

- Assess the risk of sending the child or adult at risk home.
- Phone another team member and let them know the situation.
- Train additional leaders as soon as possible.

If a child or adult at risk wants to talk on a one-to-one basis you should make sure that:

- You hold the conversation in a quiet space where other people are present.
- You leave the door open if you are in a room on your own.
- Another team member knows where you are.
- You do not promise confidentiality

Consideration should be given to how many workers should be involved with the group and whether they should be male or female workers, or both. See section 3.11 for recommended ratios. A couple or immediate family members should be considered to count as only one person when planning events or activities and the distribution of workers through different groups; for example if a couple or immediate family members want to work together then a third person will need to be assigned to that group. Wherever possible couples or people who are related to each other should work with separate groups. The only adults allowed to participate in children's and adult at risk activities are those safely appointed and appropriately trained. The leader of the activity should be aware of any other adults who are in the building whilst the activity is running.

SECTION 3 - BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The church is in an amazing position in society, with the opportunity to minister to individuals from the whole community, from the very young to the very old. These best practice guidelines are in place to help those working on behalf of the church to do it well, prioritising the safety and well-being of those they are working with. Whilst this section is divided into adults and children, some aspects of good practice will overlap.

3.1 – WORKING WITH CHILDREN

3.1.1 Ratios

When working with children the following recommended minimum ratios of workers to children 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 foe 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

NB Whilst the above represents accepted best practice guidelines Creech Baptist Church has adopted the further policy that no worker will ever operate in isolation (See Minutes of AGM May 2017). Where there are fewer than two adult workers available to run any group, that activity must be cancelled.

This does not take into account special circumstances such as behavioural issues, developmental issues, disability and so on, which may mean an increase to the recommended ratios. 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 workers. A married couple or any number of directly related individuals should be counted as one adult for the purposes of recommended ratios, rather than as 2 (or more) workers.

3.1.2 Children with Special Needs

Children and young people with additional needs can be at greater risk of abuse. They could require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility, etc, and some children may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age-appropriate way. Please speak with the parents/carers of children/young people with additional support needs and find out from them how best to assist the child or young person. Older children will have their own views of how they can be best supported.

3.1.3 Visiting Children or Young People at Home

It is unlikely that workers will need to make pastoral visits to children and their families at home on behalf of the church. If a situation occurs where it is needed then it should be done in pairs, and with the prior agreement of the Minister. As discussed previously, a couple would normally count as one person.

3.1.4 Children with no adult supervision

When children turn up to and want to join in with church activities without the knowledge of their parents/carers, workers will:

- Welcome the child and try to establish their name, age, address and telephone number.
- Record their visit in a register. (Where possible this should be done by accessing the 'Check in' or 'Attendance' function on ChurchSuite).
- Ask the child if a parent/carer is aware of where they are. Where possible, phone and make contact.
- Without interrogating the child, find out as soon as possible whether they have any specific needs (e.g. medication) so that you can respond appropriately in an emergency.
- Give the child a consent form and explain it needs to be filled in and brought back next time.

3.1.5 Mentoring

Mentoring of young people must only take place with the knowledge and consent of the Youth Pastor. If a worker is working with a young person as part of a recognised mentoring arrangement:

- The parents of all young people involved in mentoring are required to sign a consent form to say they are aware that the mentoring is happening and who it is with.
- Mentoring meetings should only be held in agreed places, and should be in view of other people.
- A mentoring meeting should have an agreed start and end time and the Youth Pastor should be aware that a meeting is taking place and where it is being held.
- A basic record should be kept of dates of significant meetings and any text messages or emails.
- Appropriate boundaries should be put in place in regard to times and demand, i.e. not phoning or texting late at night, etc.
- A record should be kept of all communications with a young person by the mentor
- A written record should be kept of issues/decisions discussed at meetings.

3.1.6 Peer Group Activities for Young People

All youth activities will be overseen by named adults who have been selected in accordance with safer recruitment procedures. It is accepted that groups aged 16+ may benefit from being led and run by peers. In this situation, adult leaders will contribute to programme planning and reviews and will always be present to oversee any peer-led activities taking place.

3.1.7 Physical Contact

- Keep everything public. A hug within a group context is very different from one behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Workers should avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure their personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances such as when they need medical attention.

- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream, etc), workers should encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued. If a team member is unsure whether the actions of a volunteer or worker constitutes a concern, they should raise this with the DPS.

3.1.8 Digital communication with young people

Safe Communication

It is Creech Baptist Church's normal operational policy not to use modern technologies in communicating directly with any child in school Year 6 or below.

NB Under no circumstances must a young person be put under pressure to provide their personal contact details: these must be willingly volunteered.

SEE APPENDIX 5 Using Social Media and Video Conferencing with Children & Young People

Email

Email should be limited to sharing generic information, for example, to remind young people about meetings. If email is being used, workers will ensure that they are accountable by copying each message to a designated email address. It is important that workers use clear and unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation, for example, avoiding inappropriate terms such as 'love' when ending an email.

Communicating using Instant Messaging (e.g. WhatsApp, Instagram)

Instant messaging should be kept to an absolute minimum. Workers should save significant conversations and keep a log stating with whom and when they communicated. This applies to communication both with children/young people and with adults at risk. Instant messaging should not be the primary means of communication between workers and those they are supporting.

Mobile Phones

Workers need to be cautious and careful in using mobile phones to communicate with young people:

- Mobile phone use should primarily be for the purposes of information sharing.
- Workers should keep a log of significant conversations/texts.
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be passed on to the worker's supervisor who will report to the DPS.
- Workers should use clear language and should not use abbreviations like 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love'. The use of emoticons/emojis is discouraged as these are ambiguous.
- Paid workers will be issued with a mobile phone under a contract that provides itemised billing and is made available for review by the safeguarding team.
- Workers should not take photos of children, young people or adults at risk unless permission is sought in advance and should not store such photos on personal devices.

Social Media

- If it is felt necessary for a group to communicate using social media, that group should have a site that is used solely for children's / youth work communications which must be totally separate from the workers' own personal sites. This is to ensure that all communication with children and young people is kept within the public domain.
- Workers should not send private messages to children or young people on social media and must ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Workers should not accept 'friend' or 'following' requests from children or young people on their personal site, nor seek to be 'friends' or a 'follower' of any child known to them in a church context.

Taking Videos and Photographs of Children

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches must be very careful if they use still or moving images of clearly identifiable people. Previous legislation was reinforced through the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)in May 2018. There are several issues to be aware of:

- Permission must be obtained, via the consent form, of all children who will appear in a photograph or video before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- It must be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this is regarded as a public area and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details, including email, postal address or telephone number.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.

Consideration of safeguarding when live streaming church services and events

When a service or event is being live streamed or recorded to be shared online at a later date we will ensure people are aware that they are being recorded and appropriate consent will be sought from those who participate in the service, or who may be visible to the camera.

Where children and young people are participating in services or events, we will ensure that appropriate parent or guardian consent is in place. Where children and young people are unable to be shown on camera consideration will be given to how else they can participate in the service.

This is in line with the guidance as set out in the Baptist Union of Great Britain guide: Recording and Livestreaming Services: Safeguarding Guidelines for Churches.

3.2 WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK

3.2.1 Premises

The church building will be made as accessible as possible to all people. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating will be addressed wherever possible, and where necessary, aids and adaptations put in place.

3.2.2 Language

Every effort will be taken to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility. We will be mindful of the language used within worship and the language used to describe people (such as derogatory words focusing on aspects of someone's disability, race or sexuality rather than the person themselves).

3.2.3 Worship

In all worship services, we will consider the varied requirements of our congregation and try to be as inclusive as possible, by:

- Providing some copies of large print type for all printed materials
- Speakers always facing the congregation and not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading
- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly
- Using inclusive language
- Using a variety of liturgy and resources to cater for different levels of understanding
- Using a microphone during times of open prayer so that all can hear
- Considering holding a service which specifically caters for certain groups of adults at risk, such as those with learning disabilities, the deaf or the visually impaired.

3.2.4 Insurance

We will take reasonable steps to safeguard adults at risk and will follow any specific safeguarding requirements as laid out by our insurance company.

3.2.5 Financial integrity

Arrangements are in place for dealing with money, financial transactions and gifts, as outlined below. These relate to both paid staff and volunteers:

- Those who work with adults at risk may become involved in some aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping or banking, etc. If handling money for someone else, always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done.
- Workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond any salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts received should be reported to the church trustees, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated church workers.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- Workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart to avoid any conflict of interest.

- If someone alters their Will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the trustees. Workers should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.
- Expert legal advice should be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and Appointeeship to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.

3.2.6 Photographs

Workers should make sure that they have the person's permission to take a picture, and that the subject is happy with the intended use of the pictures. When taking group pictures, workers should remember to get permission from everyone who will be photographed.

3.2.7 Live Streaming Services

When a service or event is being live streamed or recorded to be shared online at a later date, we will ensure people are aware that they are being recorded and appropriate consent will be sought to those who participate in the service, or who may be visible to the camera.

This is in line with the guidance as set out in the Baptist Union of Great Britain guide: Recording and Livestreaming Services: Safeguarding Guidelines for Churches.

3.2.8 Computers

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

3.2.9 Record keeping

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

3.2.10 Pastoral Relationships

All those involved in pastoral ministry should work in a way that follows clearly defined procedures, which set out the boundaries to protect those carrying out the pastoral ministry as well as those receiving it:

- Workers should be aware of the power imbalance within pastoral relationships and the potential for abuse of trust.
- Behaviour that suggests favouritism or gives the impression of a special relationship, should be avoided.
- Workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency within a pastoral relationship.
- Workers should be mindful of any physical contact or greeting they use within a pastoral relationship, seeking consent if physical contact is offered, for example as a means to offer comfort.
- Workers should never take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with someone with whom they have a pastoral relationship.
- All people receiving pastoral ministry should be treated with respect and should be encouraged to make their own decisions about any actions or outcomes.

- Workers should not pastorally minister to anyone whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Workers need to recognise the limits of their own abilities and competencies, and get further help when working with situations outside of their expertise or role.
- Workers should seek advice from the DPS if they believe that someone they are pastorally supporting is becoming dependent on them or developing an inappropriate emotional attachment.

3.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY - Safe Practice and Safe Premises

3.3.1 Consent forms

It is essential that we have important information about all children and young people involved in any activities at the church, which is recorded on our consent forms**.** The first week someone attends workers must record their name, medical emergency information and a contact name and number. Then they must bring their completed form back with them. Similar details will be gathered for adults at risk.

Whenever someone is asked to participate in a service which is to be livestreamed or recorded and shown at a later date consent for them to be on screen will need to be acquired in line with the guidance set out in the BUGB Guide: Recording and Live Streaming Services and Events: Safeguarding Guidance.

3.3.2 Health and Safety

All activities for children, young people and adults at risk will comply with the church's current health and safety policy and will be conducted in accordance with *Guidelines for users of Creech St Michael Baptist Church*, with particular attention paid to the sections on Fire Action, First Aid, PAT testing, Health and Safety and Kitchen and Food Hygiene.

Whenever possible, at all events involving food preparation, at least one worker will hold a valid Basic Food Hygiene Certificate.

Buildings being used for children's and adult at risk groups will be properly maintained. A representative from the teams involved will take part in an annual health and safety review in order to consider all aspects of safety for everyone involved in using the premises.

3.3.3 Fire

It is the responsibility of all group leaders/responsible persons within the building to ensure the safety of themselves and those who are in their care. In addition, it is a legal requirement that all group leaders/responsible persons are familiar with the emergency procedures in the event of a fire.

3.3.4 First Aid

Our church has a number of trained First Aiders and there is a list showing who they are on the noticeboard. All church groups will ensure that they have sufficient trained first aiders on their regular team so that there is always a first aider present at events and activities.

We have two first aid kits located inside the doors to the main upstairs worship area and in the entrance lobby of the lower church centre. There are incident reporting books in both First Aid boxes, which must be completed in the event of any accidents, injuries or incidents. There are incident reporting forms located on the wall at each First Aid location which may be used to report any concerns or 'near misses' that are observed. There is also an additional first aid kit which may be used for external events. A nominated individual will ensure that the contents of the first aid kits are checked on a regular basis. Completed accident forms should be passed on to the church office.

3.3.5 Supervision of Groups

The person responsible for a group/activity involving children, young people or adults at risk must be clearly identifiable at the start of the session and must keep a register or create an attendance record on ChurchSuite to record who is on the premises. These records must be safely and confidentially stored in a manner that makes them easily retrievable should the need arise. It is strongly recommended that all group/activity leaders utilize ChurchSuite.

3.3.6 Food Hygiene

The Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 state that anyone who handles food or whose actions could affect its safety must comply with the regulations. It therefore follows that those with responsibility for food will need, as minimum, to possess the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and be aware of food safety (preparation, handling and storage, disposal of waste, etc).

3.3.7 Risk Assessment

Before undertaking any activity with children or adults at risk, the leader of that activity will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out. It is essential that this risk assessment is written down and stored safely in the church office for future reference, but particular attention is drawn to the fact that a dynamic approach to risk assessment must be employed when working with children or adults at risk. It is therefore the responsibility of the group /activity leader, together with the other workers present to continually assess the level of risk presented by any activity and to make necessary adjustments to minimise any risk that is perceived. Where a situation arises that contributes to a previously unperceived risk, the written assessment must be amended to incorporate that risk and the action taken to mitigate it.

3.3.8 Insurance

Organisers of events held at an external locations and residential activity organisers will check that there is adequate insurance cover for any activities planned. If the trip is at a centre it is also important to establish that there is appropriate public liability insurance in place.

3.3.9 Transport

These guidelines apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children, young people and adults at risk on behalf of the church. They do not apply to private arrangements, for example, transport arrangements made between friends.

- Only those who have gone through the church safer recruitment procedures for workers will transport children and adults at risk (within the DBS eligibility criteria).
- All drivers will have read the church's Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by it.
- Drivers will be aged 21 or over and have held a full driving licence for at least two years.
- Drivers must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover and that the vehicle being used is road worthy.
- All hired minibuses will have a small bus permit, the necessary insurance and a driver with a valid driving licence that entitles them to drive a minibus.

Our practice specifically for transporting children is as follows:

- Parental consent will be given for all journeys.
- All children and young people should be returned to an agreed drop off point. At collection or drop off points, children should never be left on their own; make sure they are collected by an appropriate designated adult.
- At least two workers unrelated to each other should be present when transporting children as part of a church role. Where multiple vehicles are being used, they will travel in convoy. If it is necessary that one vehicle stops then all vehicles in the convoy will stop provided it is safe to do so.

3.3.10 Outings and Overnight Events involving Children

There are some specific considerations which need to be made for outings and overnight events involving children:

- A risk assessment must be carried out beforehand and stored in the church office for future reference.
- Parents will be informed in writing of all the arrangements.
- Consent forms will be obtained for the specific activities involved.
- There will be workers with first aid and food hygiene certificates with the group.

Sleeping Arrangements

Sleeping arrangements for overnight events will be carefully considered. It is not acceptable for workers to share sleeping accommodation with children/young people.

Adventurous Activities

No child will participate in adventurous activities without the written consent of the parent /carer. The activity leader will ensure that the staff engaged in such activities are properly trained and qualified and that the correct ratio of staff to children is met. At an activity centre or for an organisation whose own staff undertake such activities, if the activities come within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996, the activity leader needs to ensure that the premises are licensed.

Fire Safety

The event leader will have a fire safety procedure in place, which will include the following:

- Everyone will be warned of the danger of fire. If the overnight event is in a building, then everyone must be made aware of the fire exits and where the safe meeting point is located. Consideration should be given to practicing a fire drill on the first day.
- When using a building as a residential facility, ensure that the fire alarm is audible throughout the accommodation and that all signs and exits are clearly visible. The building will also need to comply with fire regulations.
- In the case of an emergency, ensure measures are in place to alert children and young people with disabilities (e.g. a child who is hard of hearing).

Safety

It is the responsibility of the workers to always know the whereabouts of every child/young person participating in an overnight event, and this may include monitoring access on and off the site.
General safety rules will be applied as appropriate (e.g. no running around tents due to the risk of injury from tripping over guy lines).

Swimming Trips/ Canoe & kayak activities

There will be an increased adult to child ratio for these trips. Prior to the trip, workers will establish the swimming ability of the children attending and obtain specific consent. Workers should never change in front of the children.
If it is necessary to change clothing, each child will change in an individual changing facility and not communally.

Named person for safeguarding on the trip

There will be a named person for safeguarding on all outings and residential trips. This person will not necessarily be the Church Designated Person for Safeguarding but they will be someone trained to Level 3 Excellence in Safeguarding. A discussion with the DPS will be held to identify who this person is and agree how information will be communicated to the DPS if a concern is raised during the event.

3.3.11 Outings and Overnight Events involving Adults at Risk

As with outings and events for children, there are additional considerations for a group taking adults with additional needs, such as learning difficulties or mental health needs, on outings or overnight events:

- A risk assessment must be carried out beforehand and stored in the church office for future reference
- Planning for the trip should consider specific medical, physical and support needs of each group member, bearing in mind that there may be people in the group who have individual care needs that will have to be met (including personal care)
- Adults at risk should be included in the planning of trips and events
- Consideration should be given to the suitability and accessibility of the venue and accommodation, travel time and mode of transport, and the affordability of the event
- Adults at risk should be given all the information about the trip beforehand so that they know where they are going, how long it will take to get there and what type of activities they will be taking part in.
- There should be a minimum of two leaders with each group; the individual needs of those attending may determine the additional number of people required.

Sleeping Arrangements

Consideration should be given to the individual needs of those staying overnight. If there is a need for personal care or additional support during the night, it would be better that the person's usual caregiver also attends the event and therefore shares a room with them.

Personal Care

It is not appropriate for church workers to perform personal care for adults at risk unless this is their usual task (i.e. if they have come along to help generally but also have a caring role for a member of the group, they can provide personal care for that person).

Activities

Leaders should consider the mobility needs of the group when deciding on activities or events. For example, if members of the group have difficulty walking, then including a walking tour around a town may be inaccessible to some who are attending. If you have members of the group who use wheelchairs then consideration needs to be given as to whether you have sufficient workers to support those who may need pushing.

Safety

It is the responsibility of the workers to always know the whereabouts of every person in the group; this may include monitoring access on and off the site.

General safety rules will be applied as appropriate and advice sought from the event organiser / venue about the fire evacuation procedures. A copy of the event/venue risk assessment should be included with the group leader's risk assessment.

Consent and Medical Information

It is important to recognise that adults at risk are mostly able to give consent for their own involvement in activities, inclusion in photographs and medical treatment. However, in some situations the question of capacity may arise. The guidelines clearly state that an adult at risk should have a say in their care and any arrangements made for them, however, there may be occasions when you need to involve others in decision making. In these situations, seek advice from the DPS with regard to who should be involved.

A medical consent form should be completed by each member of the group and held by the leader. This will include any health concerns, emergency contact information and contact details for their GP. This will allow emergency medical personnel to have access to information should the need arise.

Holding and Dispensing of Medication

Church workers should never agree to dispense medication for those on an event. If someone is unable to manage their own medication, then consideration should be given as to whether their usual carer could attend with them or whether they will not be able to attend the event.

Named person for safeguarding on the trip

As with trips arranged for Children and young people there will be a named person for safeguarding for all outings and residential trips involving adults at risk. This person will not necessarily be the Church Designated Person for Safeguarding, but they will be someone trained to Level 3 Excellence in Safeguarding. A discussion with the DPS will be held to identify who this person is and agree how information will be communicated to the DPS if a concern is raised during the event.

3.3.12 Hiring of Church Premises

The responsible adult for an activity held at Creech St Michael Baptist Church must read and sign to say that they agree to the conditions of hire as stated in our leaflet 'Hiring the Baptist Church Centre'. We require all external groups regularly working with children, young people or adults at risk on church premises to:

- provide confirmation of up to date safeguarding policy and procedures;
- ensure all paid staff and volunteers have been subject to DBS checks, in line with national government guidance; see https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-checking-service-guidance--2
- be able to demonstrate that all paid staff and volunteers have completed the appropriate level of Safeguarding training.

3.4 SAFER COMMUNITY

3.4.1 Bullying

Bullying is another form of abuse, and it can be verbal or physical. Bullying doesn't just happen to children, adults can be victims too. There is no legal definition of bullying, but it is usually defined as a repeated pattern of behaviour intended to cause emotional or physical harm to another person, or exert power over them. The effect of bullying on the victim can be profound, both emotionally and physically, regardless of their age, ability or status.

It is important to recognise that bullying happens within churches, and it is not isolated to the children and young people. Anyone in the church can be a victim of bullying, just as anyone in the church can be the bully, including those in leadership.

Some examples of bullying that could arise in the church context are:

- Being verbally or physically abusive towards another person
- Isolating or deliberately ignoring someone, or excluding them from group activities
- Spreading rumours and malicious untruths about another person in the church
- Use of email, phone or social media to publicly challenge or undermine someone
- Name calling and personal insults
- Making false accusations
- Sending abusive messages or degrading images via phone, email or social media

Bullying will always cause a great deal of pain and harm for those on the receiving end. Many people affected by bullying, both children and adults, believe they have nowhere to turn. They are scared to speak out and often blame themselves. They can become fearful and reclusive. It is important that churches are able to recognise when bullying is occurring and are prepared to take action to resolve the situation.

Some signs that can indicate a person is being bullied are as follows:

- Withdrawal from group or church activities; appearing anxious, tearful or more reticent than usual, particularly in a certain context; development of mental health difficulties, such as depression or anxiety disorders; drop in performance relating to any church roles; physical injuries.

In order to help prevent bullying, the following procedures will be adopted within the church:

- The children and young people will be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour for their groups, which makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable. This should be displayed somewhere visible to the whole church.
- The church will display signs stating the importance of valuing and respecting each other even in disagreements and this will be practically embedded into the leadership approach to others.
- Everyone in the church, whether children or adults, should know how they can report any incidents of bullying.
- All allegations of bullying will be treated seriously and details will be carefully checked before action is taken.
- The bullying behaviour will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible.
- An attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour.
- All allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with the actions that are taken.
- Where an allegation of bullying is made against a church or group leader, advice will be sought from the Association Regional Safeguarding Lead as to how this should be addressed.

- Incidents of bullying may be reported to the statutory authorities in line with the church safeguarding procedures.

It is important to distinguish bullying from other behaviour, such as respectfully challenging or disagreeing with someone else's beliefs or behaviours, setting reasonable expectations with regard to work deadlines and activities or taking legitimate disciplinary action.

Online safety

Bullying online and on social media is as serious as physical, in person bullying. In contrast to in person bullying there is often no escape from bullying online in a world where people, especially young people, are accessing their online world from wherever they are; there is no "safe space" and the emotional impact of online bullying can be significant as a result. With this in mind the same procedures apply to disclosures of online bullying as in person incidents.

3.4.2 Working with Alleged or Known Offenders

When it is known that a person who has been convicted of abusing children, young people or adults is attending our 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 allegations of abuse but hasn't been convicted.

In determining the details of the contract:

- The DPS will inform and take advice from the Association Regional Safeguarding Lead.
- A risk assessment will be undertaken with the help of the Regional Safeguarding Lead to determine the contents of the Safeguarding Contract using the BUGB safeguarding risk assessment tool.
- There will be a discussion about who should be informed about the nature of the offence and the details of the contract.
- The rights of the offender to re-build their life without people knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against the need to protect children, young people and adults at risk.
- The members of the church Safeguarding Team will always be informed.
- The DPS should determine whether the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register. If so, the DPS should make contact with the offender's specialist probation officer (SPO) who will inform the church of any relevant information or restrictions that they should be aware of.

An open discussion will be held with the person concerned which will contribute to the risk assessment and in which clear boundaries are established for their involvement in the life of the church. A written contract will be drawn up which identifies appropriate behaviour. The person will be required to sign the contract and it will be monitored and enforced. If the contract is broken certain sanctions will be discussed and considered with the Association Regional Safeguarding Lead.

3.4.3 Alleged or known offenders who are themselves adults at risk

A formal contract may be quite a daunting process for someone with learning difficulties or a young person, yet having safeguards in place is still necessary. Therefore, an alternative may be to arrange a meeting with the individual in question where they can be taken though the main elements of a formal contract in a way that is non-threatening and easy to understand. Notes would be taken and the individual would need to verbally agree to the requirements laid out in the meeting.

Rather than signing a formal 'contract', the individual would instead sign to say that they agree with the minutes or meeting notes, and that they will stick to what has been agreed during the meeting. This will

result in the same outcome as a contract, but is a more informal and appropriate approach for an adult at risk. The agreed requirements will need to be reviewed regularly to make sure that the individual is complying, exactly as a formal contract would be. The church will work with the Association Regional Safeguarding Lead throughout this process.

SECTION 4 - USEFUL CONTACTS

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
In Somerset this function is administered by a team who are contactable through Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224

Direct Number for the LADO 01823 357823

Police
Contact 101, or 999 in an emergency

Adult Social Services

8am—6pm	Adult Social Care	0300 123 2327
Out of hours	Adult and Mental Health	01823 368244
Email	adults@somerset.gov.uk	

Children's Social Services

8am—6pm	Children's Social Care	0300 123 2224
Out of hours	Emergency Duty Team	0300 123 2327
Email	childrens@somerset.gov.uk	

Local Baptist Association Regional Safeguarding Lead
Kath Needham 01392 433533
safeguarding@swbaptists.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline
24/7 telephone and email contact offering help, advice and support.

	0808 800 5000
Email	help@nspcc.org.uk

APPENDIX 1 - DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Understanding, Recognising and Responding to Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or a child or children. There are many different ways in which people suffer abuse. The list below is, sadly, not exhaustive.

Type of abuse	Child	Adult at risk
Physical	Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.	To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering to an adult at risk.
Emotional	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 and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.	The use of threats, fear or power gained by another adult's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological distress. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.
Sexual	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 non-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.	Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour. No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.
Neglect	Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.	A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs are not met. Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.
Type of Abuse	**Additional Definitions**	
Financial	The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	
Spiritual	The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context; the abuse of trust by someone in a position of spiritual authority (e.g. minister). The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.	
Discrimination	The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	

Institutional	The mistreatment or abuse of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.
Domestic Abuse	Domestic abuse is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody regardless of their age, gender, sexuality or social status. Domestic abuse can be physical, sexual or psychological, and whatever form it takes, it is rarely a one-off incident. Usually there is a pattern of abusive, coercive, and controlling behaviour where an abuser seeks to exert power over their family member or partner. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 identifies children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
Online Abuse	The use of information technology (email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, etc.) to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner. The Online Safety Bill, 2021, introduces new rules for internet search engines and firms who host user-generated content, i.e. those which allow users to post their own content online or interact with each other. Those platforms which fail to comply with the rules could face penalties of up to 10% of their revenue, and in the most serious cases some may even be barred from operating.
Self-harm	Self-Harm is the intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is used as a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. An individual may also be neglecting themselves, which can result in harm to themselves.
Mate crime	'Mate crime' is when people (particularly those with learning disabilities) are befriended by members of the community, who go on to exploit and take advantage of them.
Cuckooing	Cuckooing is the term used to describe occasions where the homes of adults at risk are taken over and used to distribute drugs or as a base for gang or criminal activities. The tenant may believe that the people who are in their home are their friends.

Modern Slavery	Modern slavery is the practice of treating people as property; it includes bonded labour, child labour, sex slavery and trafficking. In the UK we see examples of this through County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation and forced labour
Human Trafficking	Human trafficking is when people are bought and sold for financial gain and/or abuse. Men, women and children can be trafficked, both within their own countries and over international borders. The traffickers will trick, coerce, lure or force these vulnerable individuals into sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, domestic servitude or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice.
Radicalisation	The radicalisation of individuals is the process by which people come to support any form of extremism and, in some cases, join terrorist groups. Some individuals are more vulnerable to the risk of being groomed into terrorism than others.
Honour / Forced Marriage	An honour marriage / forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. The motivation may include the desire to control unwanted behaviour or sexuality.
Female Genital Mutilation	Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). FGM is a cultural practice common around the world and is largely performed on girls aged between 10 and 18. Performing acts of FGM is illegal in the UK as is arranging for a child to travel abroad for FGM to be carried out.
Peer-On-Peer Abuse	Peer-on-peer abuse is where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development.
Child On Child Abuse	Child on Child abuse is when a child abuses another child of any age or stage of development
Historic Abuse	Historic abuse is the term used to describe disclosures of abuse that were perpetrated in the past. Many people who have experienced abuse don't tell anyone what happened until years later, with around one third of people abused in childhood waiting until adulthood before they share their experience.

Whilst it is not possible to be prescriptive about the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, the following list sets out some of the indicators which might be suggestive of abuse:

- unexplained injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to such injuries
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- a child or adult at risk 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 in children
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourished, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

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

APPENDIX 2 – DETAILED GUIDANCE ON REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

STAGE 1 – THE WORKER

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk is to **RECOGNISE** the concerns, make a **RECORD** in writing and **RESPOND** by passing on their concerns through an Incident Report Form to the relevant Deputy DPS or the DPS. If they are not contactable, or they are implicated in the situation, a member of the church Ministry Team should be contacted instead.

Concerns should be passed on to the relevant Deputy DPS or DPS within 24 hours of the concern being raised. If anyone is considered to be in imminent danger of harm, a report should be made immediately to the police by calling 999. If such a report is made without reference to the DPS, they should be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

A written record using the standard Incident Report Form should be made as soon as possible after a child or adult at risk tells you about harmful behaviour, or an incident takes place that gives cause for concern.

The record should:

- be hand-written or word processed 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 or adult at risk'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 or adult at risk has said, using their own words where possible
- 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 by the DPS only to the church Safeguarding Team (including the church minister), representatives of any statutory authorities involved and the local Baptist association.

If concerns arise in the context of children's or adult at risk work, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance wish to talk it through with their group leader, where appropriate. However, such conversations should not delay concerns being passed on to the relevant Deputy DPS or DPS. It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and pass on their concerns to the relevant Deputy DPS or DPS.

If an issue concerns an adult at risk who does not give permission to pass on the information to anyone else, the worker should explain that they will need to speak with the DPS, who will have greater expertise in dealing with the issue at hand.

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 pass on the concern to the relevant Deputy DPS or DPS.

STAGE 2 – THE DESIGNATED PERSON FOR SAFEGUARDING (DPS)

The duty of the DPS on receiving a report is to **REVIEW** the concern that they have received and **REPORT** the concern on to the appropriate people, where necessary.

The duty to REVIEW

In reviewing the report that is received, the DPS:

- should take into account their level of experience and expertise in assessing risk to children or adults at risk.
- must take into account any other reports that have been received concerning the same individual or family.
- may speak with others in the church where appropriate (including the Minister and church Safeguarding Team, unless allegations involve them) who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision being made. Such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.
- may consult with other agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

The duty to REPORT

The DPS will decide who the report should be referred on to, working in conjunction with the church Safeguarding Team where appropriate. They may:

- refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child or adult at risk is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation.
- refer the concern to others who work with the child or adult at risk in question, asking for continued observation where appropriate.
- Inform parents / carers under certain circumstances, where doing so would not present any further risk of harm.
- Make a formal referral to the police or local Social Services team. With adults at risk, confidentiality means that someone's personal business is not discussed with others, except with their permission. This is not always possible when considering passing relevant information about abuse or concerns to the statutory authorities, however, it is possible to keep the information confidential to the relevant parties. This means not telling or hinting to others what has been disclosed, not even for prayer ministry purposes. For adults at risk, concerns will only be referred to the police or Social Services without consent where:
    - the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice
    - there is a risk of harm to others
    - in order to prevent a crime
- If an allegation is made against someone who works with children* the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or equivalent. The LADO is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
    - behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
    - possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
    - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

- If an allegation is made against someone who works with adults at risk*, it should be reported to the police or Adult Social Services.

  **If a worker has an allegation made against them, they should step down from all church duties until the incident has been investigated by the statutory authorities. It may also be appropriate to put a Safeguarding Contract in place; this should be discussed with the Regional Safeguarding Lead.*

- Whenever a formal referral is made to the police, Social Services or LADO, the DPS should report the referral to:

  - The Safeguarding Trustee
  - The Minister
  - The Regional Safeguarding Lead

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy. All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the DPS and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

STAGE 3 – THE NEXT STEPS

Responsibilities to **REPORT** and **SUPPORT** in stage 3 of the process are shared by the church Safeguarding Team and the Minister.

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, including:

Victims; Alleged perpetrators; Children; Adults at risk; Other family members; Church workers; Church Safeguarding Team; Minister; Leadership Team.

The duty to REPORT

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

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, young people or adults at risk, there is also a statutory duty to report the incident to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

APPENDIX 3 – SAFEGUARDING FORMS

SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT FORM

To be completed by the member of staff or volunteer reporting the incident/concern and reported to either the Deputy DPS children and young people Beth Franklin (beth@creechbc.co.uk 07747617315) or Deputy DPS adults at risk Sharon Barnes (sharon@creechbc.co.uk 07793747419).

NB This form is not for a Health and Safety related incident (see separate form for this).

- Safeguarding is the action you take to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and protect them from harm.
- Safeguarding means preventing and responding to abuse, harm and neglect and ensuring children and adults at risk have safe and effective care.

PERSON REPORTING THE INCIDENT OR CONCERN:
Name:
Address:
Phone number:
Email:
Role in Church:

IF APPLICABLE:

DETAILS OF CHILD/ADULT AT RISK YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT:
Name:
Date of Birth / Approximate Age:
Address and any other contact details (if known):
Do they know that you are sharing concerns about them?
If not, please explain why:

IF UNDER 18 PLEASE INCLUDE DETAILS OF THE PARENT OR CARER:
Name:
Address and any other contact details (if known):
Relationship to the child/ young person:
Do they know that you have concerns that you are sharing?
If not, please explain why:

DETAILS OF ALLEGED PERPETRATOR OR PERSON YOU ARE CONCERNED IS A POSSIBLE RISK (IF RELEVANT)
Name:
Are they an adult or a child (under 18):
IF APPLICABLE, IN RELATION TO BOXES ABOVE
Relationship to the child/adult at risk:
Does the child/adult at risk live with the alleged perpetrator?

IF YOUR CONCERN DOES NOT NATURALLY FIT INTO THE CATEGORIES FOR REPORTING ABOVE, GO STRAIGHT TO THE BOX BELOW.

DETAILS OF INCIDENT OR CONCERN:

- Remember to include the 4 W's – Who, What, Where, When.
- Be clear whether this is something you have been told about or something that you have observed directly.
- Include names of anyone else who witnessed the incident or is aware of the concern.
- Refer to the church safeguarding policy if you are unsure what to include.

Remember that you **MUST NOT:**

- Investigate suspected/alleged abuse yourself
- Evaluate the grounds for concern
- Seek or wait for proof
- Discuss the matter with anyone other than the relevant Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding or the Designated for Safeguarding in his/her absence.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

HAVE YOU CONTACTED ANYONE ELSE (SOCIAL SERVICES, POLICE, MINISTER)? YES/NO

Please give details of who and when below:

Organisation:

Name of contact:

Date of contact:

This Incident Form should be passed to the relevant Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding (children and young people or adults at risk) within 24 hours of any incident or concern arising. In their absence pass the form to the Designated Person for Safeguarding, Ralph Bullock (ralph@creechbc.co.uk 07731634984). Do not delay reporting your concerns because you do not have all the information requested in this form.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm, please **call the DPS** straight away and use this form to follow up on that call. If they are not available contact the LT Safeguarding Trustee, Charles Medlock (charles@creechbc.co.uk 07544915453). Remember **if no one is available** call the police or social services - **do not wait** for the DPS or others mentioned to be available.

Remember: Treat this information confidentially. Do not discuss the contents of this form with anyone other than the Deputy DPS (or DPS in their absence), not even for prayer purposes.

Signed …….

Date …….

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSE TO RECEIVING AN INCIDENT FORM

To be completed by the DPS or the appropriate Deputy DPS in his absence.

Date and time the incident form was received:

Was further investigation deemed necessary?

If not, why?

Was this the first incident concerning this child/adult at risk/person?

If 'no' how many incidents have been reported to date?

Following further investigation record additional details in chronological order:

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

WHO, IN THE MINISTERIAL TEAM OR ANY OUTSIDE AGENCY WAS SPOKEN TO ABOUT THE INCIDENT/CONCERN?

Please give details of who and when below:

(For each person spoken to, include the organisation and the main areas of discussion/recommendation)

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

IN THE OPINION OF THE DPS (OR DEPUTY DPS IN HIS ABSENCE) HAS THIS CONCERN BEEN DEALT WITH SUFFICIENTLY?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what action has been taken?

If no, what further action will be taken?

Signature of DPS or appropriate Deputy DPS in his absence:

Date and Time:

APPENDIX 4 – SAFEGUARDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each church needs to identify and fill several important posts that underpin effective safeguarding in the church. These notes outline the main responsibilities relating to safeguarding connected with key leadership roles.

Trustees

- Ultimately responsible for safeguarding
- Responsible for the implementation of policy and procedures
- Responsible for supporting the church workers
- Responsible for raising awareness about best practice within the church
- Responsible for ensuring that the relevant people have received the appropriate training

Safeguarding Trustee

- Takes a lead on safeguarding matters for the trustees
- Is the point of contact with trustees for safeguarding issues
- Ensures church policy and procedures are reviewed annually
- Updates the online Volunteer Agreement Forms as required
- Meets with the Safeguarding Team every three months through Safeguarding Team Meetings
- Writes the Annual Safeguarding Review using information gathered at the Safeguarding Team Meetings, and brings it to the attention of the Leadership Team and presents it at the Church AGM

Designated Person for Safeguarding

- Receives all reports of concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- Listens, observes and passes on those concerns appropriately, having taken advice from the relevant people
- Acts as a link between the church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding matters
- Keeps the Safeguarding Policy up to date and ensures it is reviewed annually and brought to the Leadership Team for approval.
- Maintains the safeguarding training schedule for all staff and volunteers.
- With the Safeguarding Trustee, co-presents the safeguarding slot at the Church AGM.

Deputy Designated Persons for Safeguarding (One with a responsibility for children and young people and one for adults at risk)

- Deputises for the DPS in their absence
- Primary person for related incident reporting
- Passes on incident report forms to the DPS immediately
- Will be involved in discussions relating to reported incidents at the discretion of the DPS

Mark Bailey: Although not a part of the Church Safeguarding Team, will also have a role within safeguarding as follows:

- Ensure that all those working with children and adults at risk adhere to safe practice guidelines.
- Oversight of all risk assessments stored in the church office.

As Office Administrator, Jane Warden will be responsible for the following areas regarding safeguarding:

- Processing DBS checks for church staff and volunteers (with the exception of the accredited ministers who are checked by the regional association).
- The collation of all online Volunteer Agreement Forms with the support of the Safeguarding Trustee and liaising with the DPS, Mark Bailey, Ministry Leads and Group Coordinators to ensure that no one works with children or young people or adults at risk until these forms are completed.
- With reference to the safeguarding training schedule, liaise with the DPS to physically book safeguarding training courses with the South West Baptist Association for all those working with children and young people and adults at risk.
- Support the safer recruitment process for volunteers.

Ministry Leads (Hannah Jenkins and Zac Whitehouse) and Group Coordinators

- Together with Mark Bailey, ensure that all those working with children and adults at risk, in their area of responsibility adhere to safe practice guidelines.
- Complete risk assessments as necessary and submit them to Jane in the church office for secure storage and periodic inspection by Mark Bailey.
- Inform the DPS and the church office when a volunteer leaves or joins their team.
- Keep Role Profiles for their area of ministry up to date.
- Follow safer recruitment procedures as noted within this policy and as identified in Appendix 7, using the application form in Appendix 6.

The Minister(s)

- Shares with the trustees the general responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the church's safeguarding policy
- Takes responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral needs of all are being met
- May need to be made aware of safeguarding issues in line with the guidance on page 6

For more information:

Please see www.baptist.org.uk for more information about safeguarding in Baptist churches, including a range of specialist guides and a library of free downloadable resources.

BUGB Excellence in Safeguarding training for your church:

Information and booking arrangements for the BUGB Levels 2 and Level 3 Excellence in Safeguarding training can be made through your local Baptist association team. Please see their website for details of nearby courses or the opportunity to host safeguarding training at your church.

In an emergency:

If you find yourself facing an emergency situation, where you believe that someone attending your church is being harmed or is at imminent risk of harm, please ring the police on 999 and ask to speak to an officer in the child or adult protection teams. Always keep records and let your DPS know that you have made this call.

APPENDIX 5: USING SOCIAL MEDIA & VIDEO CONFERENCING WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND ADULTS AT RISK:

Use of social media to engage and communicate with young people within the church

- The church's Safeguarding Team recognise that changes in society and social interactions mean that it may be appropriate to extend the use of social media with children, young people, and adults at risk in order to continue to meet the social, pastoral and caring elements of our ministry and to maintain a sense of family and inclusivity across the ages.
- Participation in group settings must be entirely voluntary on the part of the individuals participating and under no circumstances should pressure be applied to children, young people or adults at risk to divulge their contact details or join in online sessions. Parental/guardian consent must be obtained for children and young people participating in online groups.
- It remains the policy of Creech Baptist church to limit any 1 to 1 contact with individuals and wherever possible to use group settings to communicate with children, young people and adults at risk.
- If a child or young person wishes to talk about a pastoral issue or concern, always seek to have their parents/guardians with them in the chat or video call. If the child or young person is reluctant to talk in front of their parents/guardians encourage them to suggest another adult friend who they would be happy to speak in front of.
- On no account should individual communication with a child, young person or adult at risk take place on a worker or volunteer's personal social media accounts and any requests to 'friend' from a child, young person or adult at risk to these accounts must be refused. Repeated friend requests must be reported to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- Only social media that enable a record of communication to be stored are to be used in any way. Apps such as Snapchat, House Party etc must not be used under any circumstances as the content of messages cannot be stored and become invisible after a certain amount of time. It must be possible to retrieve the content of any messages sent and received.
- WhatsApp or other group chat apps may only used to communicate in a group setting. On no account may they be used to communicate with individual children, young people or adults at risk.
- Care must be taken in setting up group chats in order to ensure they cannot be accessed by third parties. It is the responsibility of the group administrator or meeting host to be sure they can identify each individual participant before inviting them to join the chat. Where requests to join a group or meeting are received, the admin or host must be satisfied that they have identified a known individual before granting access.
- The content of conversation in group chats or online meetings must be monitored and controlled by the host. Normal Safeguarding protocols must be adhered to and any concerns regarding behaviour, or about a child, young person or adult at risk's safety, reported according to the Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
- Communication on messaging apps should be kept to a minimum and used mainly for communicating such matters as the timings of video group chats or meetings and the sharing of specific prayer requests between the members of the group.

If any child, young person or adult at risk makes contact with a leader via direct message, outside of the group chat:

- Keep screenshots or documentation of the messages and any response.
- Determine whether it is necessary for the sake of pastoral care to respond but, sensitively, ask that the young person does not message you in that way again.
- Consider whether an immediate response is needed, particularly if it is late at night – even if there is a simple response, consider leaving it until the next day.
- Consider sharing the response with the whole group rather than getting into a one-on-one discussion with the young person

If, despite your best efforts to maintain boundaries around when you are available, a child, young person or adult at risk contacts you 'out of hours', think about how you respond.

- If they appear in emotional distress or are threatening to harm themselves then you should contact the DPS immediately and initiate safeguarding reporting procedures. You may also need to contact the parents and even the police if the risk of harm is imminent.

- If they appear to need to have a talk through a situation, consider arranging a time to meet them in the following days to work through it. (This meeting should take place in line with church safeguarding policy and procedures)
- Keep a record of any discussion that has taken place and send it to the DPS within 24 hours.

Use of Video Conferencing with Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

- Each volunteer or worker with children, young people and adults at risk retains the same duty of care in the online environment as when meeting face to face. The requirement to RECOGNISE RESPOND RECORD REPORT safeguarding concerns remains the same. It is worth noting that the visual access into participants' homes by both the host and other attendees may give rise to an increased risk in behaviour of an inappropriate nature or observations that give rise to a previously unperceived concern. If anything, that happens online gives rise to concerns these should be recorded and reported to a member of the Safeguarding Team, according to procedures.
- The DPS must be made aware in advance that any online group meetings are taking place.
- All communication with children and young people regarding group meetings, including time, date, meeting ID and any passwords for the session is to be communicated to the parents or carers of the young people invited. Normally this will be by group email to the relevant parents using 'ChurchSuite'. Meeting IDs are not to be communicated publicly through the Church weekly email or posted on the website.
- It is the responsibility of the meeting host to ensure they have parental/guardian consent for each child or young person engaging online. If a child or young person invites a friend whose parents/guardian are not on the 'ChurchSuite' communication list, that child or young person must be refused access to the meeting until consent can be confirmed.
- A waiting room should be set up for the meeting and no attendees are to be granted entry to the meeting until there are at least two adult leaders/helpers present – one of whom must act as the meeting host. If the host identifies inappropriate behaviour of any attendee, they are to exclude that attendee from the meeting and not readmit them until they deem it safe to do so. In any such event the DPS must be informed in order to consider the most appropriate course of action.
- It is recommended that 'break out rooms' are not used in online meetings with children, young people or adults at risk but if they are, there must always be at least two adult leaders present in each room.
- At the end of the meeting, at least two adults are to remain in the meeting room until such time as all the attendees have left. If necessary, the meeting host is to close the meeting for all.
- Online children and youth group meetings are not to be recorded. Where the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures of Creech Baptist Church are followed there will be no need to keep an additional record.

APPENDIX 6: Volunteer Application Form

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

1. Personal Details

- Full Name:
- Address:
- Postcode:
- Telephone:
- Email:
- Date of Birth:

2. Role Applied For

- Group/Area of Service:
- Availability (e.g. days/times/frequency):

3. Church Involvement

- Please tick one of the following that applies to you:

  [ ] I am in membership at Creech Baptist Church

  [ ] I am currently not a member of the church

  [ ] I am currently not a member but would be interested in finding out more about membership

- If you are attending Creech Baptist Church, approximately how long have you been coming along?
- And, if relevant to you, what is your typical frequency of attendance at our Sunday services?

  [ ] Most Sundays

  [ ] 1-2 times a month

  [ ] less than once a month

- Briefly share why you feel called/you'd like to volunteer for this ministry/area of service:

4. Skills & Experience

- Relevant skills, qualifications, or experience:

5. Reference *(known to you for more than 2 years, can be a church member but cannot be a family member)*

1. Name:

   Relationship to you:

   Contact details:

NB We reserve the right to take up an additional reference if deemed necessary.

6. Self-disclosure

- Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or cautioned?
- If yes, please give details (this will be considered in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974):

7. Safeguarding

- You will be required to undergo a DBS check for roles with children, young people, or adults at risk.
- You will be required to attend BUGB L2 Safeguarding Training for roles with children, young people, or adults at risk.
- You will be required to read, complete and return the church Volunteer Agreement Form. This includes agreeing to abide by our church Safeguarding Policy - available from the church website: https://www.creechbc.co.uk

7. Declaration

I confirm that the information given is correct and understand that it will be held in accordance with the church's Data Protection Policy.

Signature:

Date:

If known to you, please return this application form to the Ministry Lead/Group Coordinator of the group/area of service you are applying for, or return it to the church office: office@creechbc.co.uk

Created: March 2026 (Ralph/Matt) and amended September 2026 (Ralph)

APPENDIX 7: Safer Recruitment Procedures for Volunteers

Safer Recruitment Procedures for Volunteers

To be followed by Ministry Leads and Group Coordinators

1. New volunteers, (not those currently in post) coming via the office or through you as Ministry Lead or Group Coordinator must be given a copy of the relevant role profile to read. They must also be given an application form to complete (either electronically or hard copy) and they need to return it to you or to the church office.

2. The reference can then be requested, either by yourself or by Jane in the office. If you do receive the application and request the reference, then please send copies to Jane so they can be stored centrally.

3. You are then responsible for reading the reference, meeting with the applicant and determining their suitability.

Take into consideration the church policy:

Unless specific exemption is given (e.g. community volunteers for the café or for certain non-child facing roles for Holiday Club) it is required that all volunteers involved in ministries within our church which deal with children and/or adults at risk should be committed to the church fellowship through regular attendance and/or be in church membership.

4. You may have already had a quick chat before they 'applied' but please have a longer chat, following up on what they have put in the application form. If you wish to have another trusted person from your team present, then please do so.

5. There is a provision within the application form for you to request a second reference if you feel this is appropriate.

6. If you have any issues/concerns over their suitability, then please contact me as DPS for advice.

7. Once you have been through this process and you are happy with their suitability, then let both me and Jane know. We can then sort out their DBS check and safeguarding training if one or both are appropriate for them to do, given their role.

8. They cannot start their role until their DBS is cleared (if they require one) and they have read, signed and returned the Volunteer Agreement. If safeguarding training is required, they need to be supervised until this is arranged and completed. NB Policy for children's or youth work e.g. COSMIC, Creche and Youth groups requires no lone working in any situation.

9. Please provide them with appropriate training, support, and supervision.

10. The assessment of a volunteer's capability, suitability and experience will be your responsibility, carried out by observation of the volunteer in post. If you do have any concerns once in post, please raise this with me so we can discuss next steps.

Ralph Bullock (DPS Creech BC) April/September 2026