



FAQs for Parents for Safeguarding

Q: May I have a copy of your child protection policy and procedure?

A: We have a clear set of guidelines on how we will keep children safe and respond to child protection concerns. A copy of the policy and procedure is available on our website and can be given to you on request. The policy and procedure include:

- A short policy statement, setting out the priority we give to keeping children and young people safe and, in broad terms, how we seek to achieve this.
- A commitment that no staff member or volunteer will inflict physical or psychological harm on a child under any circumstances.
- A detailed step-by-step process on how we handle safeguarding issues.
- Any additional guidance, information or expectations that you need to be aware of, including the details of the Designated Safeguarding Coordinator (who has overall responsibility for keeping the children safe in church activities) and how to contact him, as well as contact details for the Christian Safeguarding Service (which the church belongs to), the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (which the church is affiliated to), and the local safeguarding services such as the local authority and the police.

We are also able to provide you with a written copy of specific steps we will take when there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, including:

- Steps we will take if we are concerned that a child may be at risk of abuse.
- The procedure we will use in the event of peer-on-peer abuse (for example, bullying) in our church.
- Steps we will take to deal with allegations or concerns that an adult working with children and young people in our church is at risk of abusing a child or young person.
- The complaints procedure that enables children, young people and families to raise a safeguarding concern.

We will be also able to provide you with additional written guidance, information and expectations around the behaviour of employees and volunteers, such as a staff code of conduct and information on how staff will respond directly to a child who discloses abuse.

Q: Who is the lead person responsible for safeguarding children and what training have they had? How recently were they trained?

A: We will be able to name a lead person who is responsible for safeguarding children in our setting; we refer to this person as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Our DSL has had training on bullying, physical abuse, sexual harassment, sexting¹, hazing², online safety, and substance abuse. They have also had training on extremism and radicalism.

The DSL has had the training that gives them the knowledge and skills they need for their role. Training is repeated at frequent intervals or if our circumstances change.

Q: Do you have a complaints policy?

A: Sometimes you may be alerted to an issue regarding an out-of-school setting by your child or another parent. We have a clear policy how to deal with complaints. It includes instructions on how to raise a complaint, whether in person or in writing, who to complain to, and how it will be dealt with. It also covers how a complaint can be raised with the local authority, including contact details for the designated officer or children's social care.

The complaints policy is on our website.

Q: What training have staff and volunteers had?

A: All staff and volunteers have undertaken safeguarding training. They should have, at least, a good working knowledge of and be suitably trained in health & safety, safeguarding and child protection.

We will be able to tell you what training the staff and volunteers have done and how recently.

¹ **Sexting** is sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images (primarily between mobile phones).

² **Hazing** (initiation ceremonies) refers to the practice of rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group.

Q: Who is in charge of first aid?

A: We will be able and to provide you with the name of the appointed person in charge of first aid and tell you what first aid training this appointed person has had that is appropriate to the circumstances in our risk assessment.

We have carried out risk assessments to identify what could cause injury or illness in our setting, decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously, and take action to control or eliminate the hazard.

We also have a first aid kit available.

Q: Do you have a parental consent and emergency details form that I need to return to you?

A: We will ask you for more than one emergency contact number and any necessary medical information for your child. This information will be collected at or before the first session.

It may be requested in either electronic or printed form.

If your child attends church activities for over a year, we will ask you for updated information.

Q: How will you securely store the information you hold on my child? Who has access to it and will you give it to anyone else?

A: The electronic data is encrypted and password protected. The paper copies are secured in a locked cabinet.

Only the Overall Safeguarding Coordinator and the Designated Safeguarding Lead have access to it.

This information is not given to other parties without your child's consent (and your consent if your child is under 13 years) unless it is at the request of the police or another statutory authority.

Q: How are staff and volunteers recruited? What checks do you undertake to ensure that they are suitable to work with children? How recent were the checks?

A: We safeguard and promote children's welfare by making sure that we have robust policies and procedures in place to prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering in church activities.

We will be able to provide you with the range of checks that we undertake to reassure you that your child is safe in the care of our staff and volunteers. We do not rely on one single check (e.g. DBS check) to determine whether staff or volunteers are suitable.

Some of the many checks that we undertake are:

- Recruitment checks: for example, it is best practice for us to check that the prospective volunteers or employees have the right skill set, such as the ability to communicate and interrelate with children at the appropriate level. We might choose to ask for details of previous experience by interviewing candidates, for instance.
- Pre-employment checks: Before employing someone, we confirm their identity and that they are permitted to work in the UK>
- References: Seeking references from previous churches and/or organisations allows us to get independent and factual information before appointing a volunteer or staff member.
- DBS checks: The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) issues criminal record certificates to help us decide on the suitability of staff, especially when working with children. There are different levels of DBS check depending on the type of work or activities being undertaken.

We will be able to give you details of the staff code of conduct which will describe what is acceptable behaviour for staff and volunteers.

We will also be able to tell you how the performances of individuals in post are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that they continue to have the necessary skills and training to carry out their role. (Due to confidentiality for the individual, we will not disclose the performance of individual volunteers or staff members.)

Q: My child has Special Educational Needs or a disability (SEND) or both. How will you cope with this?

A: We may not always have the skills and resources to meet your child's particular additional needs.

We would like a discussion with you as to how we can provide for your child.

Q: My child needs help with using the toilet; changing; feeding; their medication, etc. How will you cope with these personal-care needs?

A: With personal care needs that have been mentioned, we would expect parents/carers to provide the help.

Q: Is my child allowed unsupervised access to the internet?

A: There is no permissible use of the internet in the children's work.

Where there is access in the older age activities, there is always supervision to ensure that there is no access to inappropriate or harmful material (such as pornography, racist, radical or extremist sites or pop-ups), or any harmful online interaction with other users (such as chatrooms where adults can pose as children or young people).

(based on 'Keeping Children Safe: during Community Activities, After-School Clubs and Tuition – Questions to help parents and carers choose out-of-school settings,' Department of Education, HM Government, October 2020)