SAFEGUARDING POLICY

September 2025

Adopted by the Trustees of Harbour Church Poole

On:

Signed (on behalf of Trustees):

Andrew Upton

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Harbour Church Poole
KEEPING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK SAFE POLICY/PROCEDURE

This policy and the accompanying procedures draw on the Thirtyone-eight model Safeguarding Policy guidelines and seeks to be fully compliant with the '*Working Together to Safeguard Children*: *A Guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'* HM Government Document March 2015. The document merges safeguarding adults (referred to as '*adults with care and support needs'*) and children into one shared policy with separate sections where appropriate.

***This document may not be copied without approval by Harbour Church Poole leadership**.*

1. INTRODUCTION/OUR COMMITMENT

1.1. Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk (Adults with Care & Support Needs, and Carers) Within Harbour Church

Harbour Church has a growing congregation and is expanding its Children's and Youth work. The church takes extremely seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of those entrusted into the church's care. We are therefore, committed to and will champion the protection of children, young people and adults at risk both in society as a whole and in its own community.

The church fully endorses and will implement the principles that the welfare of the child and the wellbeing of the adult at risk are paramount. We will foster and encourage best practice within the church community by setting standards for working with children, young people and adults at risk.

We will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk. We are committed to acting promptly whenever there is a safeguarding concern and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child protection or safeguarding adults is necessary.

1.2. Why Do We Need a Policy on Keeping Children and Adults at Risk Safe?

As a Church, we are committed to reflecting God's standards in all that we do. We are fortunate to have many children, young people and adults involved in a variety of activities within the church. Most children will come from caring families and meet no harm at home or in any other setting. Many adults at risk do not consider themselves in that way and receive high standards of care either at home or in residential care. However, there will be some who are being abused or neglected at home or elsewhere. As caring Christians, we need to be ready to respond to their needs appropriately. We also need to safeguard children and adults at risk from harm within the church both by preventing abuse by adults and children/young people and minimising other risks within activities. It is the commitment of Harbour Church leadership that we will provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all children, young people and adults at risk. This will enable them to develop physically, socially and spiritually within the context of the church and minimise the risk of abuse.

It is the responsibility of all who worship at Harbour Church and all leaders of groups and organisations within the church to be aware of the policy and work within its guidelines. The policy applies to all adults who have direct contact with children and young people under 18 years old while attending or running church related activities. This will include any activities which run under the auspices of the church wherever they take place. The policy also applies to all those who work

with adults at risk on behalf of Harbour Church undertaking pastoral visits/running church related activities.

Policies and procedures are not sufficient alone and the church needs a culture of informed vigilance about the wellbeing of our children and adults at risk, addressing their needs fully. All church members are responsible for speaking out about any concerns or whistle blowing.

1.3. Definitions

Detailed definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse are covered in this section. Further details can also be found in Appendix 1.

1.3.1. Physical abuse

Physical abuse in adults or children may include assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

For most injuries to young children there will be suitable explanations as children do have accidents. However, it is important to record **all** injuries very carefully. Recording can do no harm and could be vital information for the future protection of a child. A parent/guardian may fabricate symptoms or deliberately induce illness in a child in order to get medical attention. Female genital mutilation is where external genitalia of girls are cut as a cultural practice and is illegal.

1.3.2. Neglect and acts of omission

Neglect is defined as the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development. This may include ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Neglect may occur in pregnancy where there is the misuse of drugs or alcohol. In children, neglect may involve the failure of a parent/guardian to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter including exclusion from home. Neglect can be abandonment or not providing adequate supervision of the child. There may be a failure to protect the child from physical harm or danger or failure to access appropriate medical care or treatment. Neglect may be emotional rather than physical – unresponsiveness to the emotional needs of the child.

Self-neglect covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding and depriving oneself of heating.

1.3.3. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the person is aware that this is happening. This may involve physical contact which can be penetrative or non-penetrative, or non-contact activities. This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts (such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images), indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. It may also include encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is perpetrated by men, women and other children against both boys and girls.

Most sexual abuse is not known until a child chooses to tell a trusted adult – this could happen in the Church context. Any statement of abuse must be taken very seriously. Sexual abuse often

starts very subtly and builds up so slowly that the child begins to accept the abuse as something he or she has to tolerate. By the time the child wants to tell "the secret", he or she feels guilty and confused and fears no one will believe the truth. The child may have become very good at covering up the abuse and may feel he or she is betraying someone close to them and loved by them.

1.3.4. Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse (sometimes referred to as psychological abuse) is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a person, including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks. It may also involve conveying to a person they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued to the extent they meet another's needs. It may include not giving them opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of how they communicate. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing people to be frequently frightened. Some emotional abuse is present as part of other forms of ill-treatment but it can be very damaging when it occurs alone.

In children in particular, there may be age or developmentally inappropriate expectations which may include interactions beyond the child's developmental capacity as well as overprotection and limitation of exploring and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. Emotional abuse could also cause severe, persistent adverse effects on child's emotional development, or put them in danger of the exploitation or corruption of a child.

1.3.5. Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse occurs in a domestic setting such as marriage, cohabitation or by any family member or carer. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse, as well as neglect and so-called 'honour' based violence.

1.3.6. Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it. However, holding a theological position is not in itself inherently spiritually abusive, but misuse of scripture, applied theology and doctrine is often a component of spiritually abusive behavior.

1.3.7. Child on child abuse

Child on child abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and nonintimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content and harassment. For further information please see: https://safeguarding.network/content/safeguarding-resources/peer-peer-abuse

1.3.8. Child to parent/carer abuse

Child to parent/carer abuse is where a child of any age displays repeated violent or abusive behaviour towards their parent or carer. This should not be confused with what can be expected of young children pushing boundaries. Special consideration should be given when dealing with behaviour by children and young people with special educational needs. There is currently no legal definition for child to parent/carer abuse so terms like "child to parent violence", and "adolescent to parent violence and abuse". Abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional and psychological, coercive control, digital and financial.

1.3.9. Organisational abuse

Organisational abuse includes neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

1.3.10. Discrimination

Discrimination abuse includes forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

1.3.11. Financial abuse

Financial abuse includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

1.3.12. Modern slavery

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

1.4. What is Safeguarding Children?

Safeguarding children is everything we do to promote the welfare and safety of children below the age of 18 years. Within this, child protection deals with children who are abused or neglected or at risk of being so.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or by others, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013)

1.5. What is Safeguarding Adults at Risk?

Most adults who are part of our church community can keep themselves safe and seek redress themselves where that safety and wellbeing is threatened. Safeguarding Policy and procedures relate only to the group of adults we define as adults at risk (previously known as vulnerable adults) Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. The Care Act 2014 emphasises the Wellbeing principle whereby an individual's wishes and feelings must be at the fore of any decisions and they should be assisted to fully participate in the process. The group defined by the Care Act as adults at risk are those who have a need for care and support and experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect and as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves. This may include carers in certain circumstances. This may be the very frail and elderly, people with severe mental illness, learning disability or serious physical illness or disability.

Local authorities have a duty to make enquiries or cause others to if they believe an adult is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect (section 42) There is particular protection in law under

the Mental Capacity Act 2005 for those who lack mental capacity to make certain decisions themselves due to illness or mental impairment. We are obliged legally to act in their best interests.

1.6. How to Know if a Child or Adult at Risk is Being Abused, Signs/Symptoms

Sometimes, a specific incident or injury will alert you but more often an accumulation of concerns will build up over time. Few signs of abuse are significant alone, but a cluster of signs must be taken seriously.

The child or adult might show by their *own behaviour* that abuse is taking place, behaving in a way which is inappropriate for their age and stage of development. Major changes in a child's or adult's behaviour would contribute to the possibility of abuse as one explanation.

There may be signs (see Appendix 1) that can be *observed,* for example, inadequate clothing, poor hygiene, hunger or tiredness. Developmental delay or poor growth can be significant when there are other signs to arouse concern. The child or adult might tell you or hint at telling you about abuse.

There might be concern about the *behaviour of the adults* in relation to the child or vulnerable adult, for example, reports that the child is left alone or not well supervised. A parent/guardian may say that they are not coping or are punishing the child excessively. Someone may observe that a parent/guardian is criticising, humiliating or scapegoating a child. A carer for an adult at risk may say they are not coping or they may be observed psychologically abusing the adult. Someone may appear to be exploiting or putting under pressure the child or vulnerable adult

Signs must be recorded carefully and referred to the Safeguarding Lead and Minister. It is not always clear how significant such signs are at the outset. Any bruise or burn in a non-mobile child should be taken very seriously and always reported to the Safeguarding Lead. An allegation of abuse or an injury is urgent and the evidence may be gone if there is a delay. A child's or adult's safety could depend on the quality of observation and recording. It is important not to wait for firm evidence before recording and sharing concerns and not jumping to conclusions or making assumptions. Advice must be sought at an early stage.

2. PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING

2.1. What Do You Do if a Child or Adult at Risk Talks to You About Abuse?

- Take what is being said seriously, however young or confused they are
- Keep calm and don't show distress
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Do not try to obtain more information than is necessary to establish concern. Don't ask questions but don't stop the free flow of information if the person wants to talk. Listen carefully without interruption
- Write everything down immediately using the child's or vulnerable adult's own words if possible. Refer to the Safeguarding Lead, the Minister or the Adult/Children's Services before discussing with the parents/guardians or anyone else

- Explain to the child/adult what you will do with the information next and in a way they can understand
- Don't make promises to the child/adult that you can't keep

Please see the Safeguarding Concern Reporting Flow Chart below for help with reporting any concerns.

Safeguarding Concern Reporting Flow Chart

A safeguarding concern is reported, or identified, by someone.

Is the child or adult at immediate risk?

Yes

If the person is at risk of immediate harm or needs medical attention, call 999 and ask for police and ambulance if necessary. Follow any advice given.

As soon as possible (but within 24 hours), follow the process on the right (relating to who the concern is about).

No

Is the concern about a member of the leadership?

Inform the Safeguarding Lead, who must...

... seek advice from Thirtyone:eight and, if so advised, the Designated Officer in the local authority

Is the concern about a member of the congregation/ another person?

Inform the Safeguarding Lead and Minister, who should...

... liaise with Thirtyone:eight if required

Is the concern about the Safeguarding Lead?

Inform the Minister (or other elder), who should...

... liaise with Thirtyone:eight if required

Record the concern (who, what, when, why, how) within 24 hours of issue being raised. Contact Thirtyone:eight or local authority for advice

If the person reporting the concern feels it is not being dealt with appropriately, they should contact Thirtyone:eigt or local authority for advice

2.2. Limited Confidentiality

No individual should promise confidentiality to someone who is a potential or actual abuser or to someone who makes an allegation against a particular individual. If a child or vulnerable adult makes an allegation, it is unacceptable not to pass this on as this will allow the abuse to continue. The child or young person should not be given responsibility for this decision, but advised of the need to refer this on. An adult at risk will be consulted early about what outcome they want but a referral should be made to Adult Social Services and advice sought even if they want nothing done.

If an adult who is not an adult at risk (see definition above) discusses their own past abuse, the adult needs to be advised of the very strong reasons for this information being given to the Police in terms of protecting children now. If they do not wish to do so, the listener does not have to immediately go against these wishes, but does need to discuss the matter with the Safeguarding Lead for advice. Particularly sexual abuse is often addictive and perpetrated over many years.

If someone admits to abusing children, they need to be advised that such information has to be passed on to the Police out of our duty to care for children and vulnerable adults. This is rare as most abusers are very practised at not telling anyone about their behaviour.

If there are any concerns, advice should be sought as soon as possible from the Safeguarding Lead or Thirtyone-eight or the relevant Poole Adult/Children's Services Team. If it is an allegation against a volunteer or staff member, this must be referred to the Designated Officer as well as the Safeguarding Lead, it is important not to delay such action.

2.3. Responding to Abuse or Neglect Concerns

Action must be taken where there are direct concerns about the abuse or neglect of a child or an adult at risk. It is not the Church's job to investigate abuse – it is the role of the statutory agencies - Police and Adult/Children's Services.

Time can be crucial particularly in relation to physical or sexual abuse so there should be no delay. Parents/guardians of children or young people should **not** be advised of the concerns until they have been discussed with the Safeguarding Lead or Adult/Children's Services. Similarly, carers for adults at risk shouldn't be advised until professional advice has been sought.

It is very important where there are suspicions of abuse or neglect that the vulnerable adult or child are not questioned about this. Instead, record all concerns and seek advice. The Safeguarding Lead will discuss the matter with whoever raises the concern, with Thirtyone-eight and with the Police and Children's Services if there are concerns about significant harm to the child or adult. If concern remains about a child or vulnerable adult after such a discussion or if no one is available, anyone can ring Adult/Children's Services directly. It will be helpful for future concerns to inform the Safeguarding Lead or Minister afterwards.

2.4. Allegations Against Church Leaders/Members of the Congregation

It is important to understand that even the most respected and trusted member of the Church community could be an abuser. The fact that someone is known well does not preclude them from being an abuser. Some people target churches as being places to obtain easy access to children or vulnerable adults and may patiently wait for their opportunity. The welfare of the child or adult has to come before loyalty to the Church, however unbelievable the allegation may be.

If a parent/guardian talks about concerns that someone in their care, or someone they know, is being abused, this must be passed on to the Safeguarding Lead and Adult/Children's Services even if the parent/guardian cannot be persuaded of the need to do this themselves. This is essential in order to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult and other potential victims.

Concerns about abuse by another child or young person or by an adult at risk also need to be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead. Although, many young people will experiment sexually, if there is an imbalance of power or age, this should be responded to in a similar way to sexual abuse by adults. Sexual activities remain unlawful for under 16 year olds and there is specific protection for under 13 year olds deemed unable to consent. There is also specific protection for 16-17 year olds and adults with learning disability or mental disorder from someone misusing a position of trust eg a Church volunteer.

All allegations against a member of the clergy, paid staff, church officer or volunteer will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer within BCP Council, the Safeguarding Lead, Thirtyone-eight as well as to Adult/Children's Services.

2.5. Post Referral to Adult/Children's Services

The Church will continue to offer support to the child or vulnerable adult and to the person who received an allegation. Such support needs to be agreed with Adult/Children's Services. The Police and Adult/Children's Services work jointly in investigating child abuse and safeguarding adults and the paramount concern is the welfare of the child or the wellbeing of the adult at risk.

Telephone referral to Adult/Children's Services should be followed up by a written confirmation within 24 hours. Adult/Children's Services will undertake a full assessment of the situation and this will often result in the family being offered the help they need. Very rarely will this involve the removal of a child from home. For adults at risk, the Local authority leads the enquiry and the adult's own views where they have mental capacity will be significant in decision making.

3. POLICY

3.1. Preventing Abuse Within the Church – Safer Working Practices

Within Harbour Church we often know each other well and there are excellent relationships across generations which benefit us all. While keeping children and young people safe from risk of harm, we must continue to build these relationships. For many of us, relationships with adults when we were young brought us to our present faith. Equally, we love and care for many adults at risk. We are able to continue to do this but need to do it in the safest way possible.

It is, however, important to have in place a policy which helps to ensure the safety of both children and adults. We need to create an "awareness" culture at the Church where there is an understanding of the risks to children and vulnerable adults and a clear view of what is and is not acceptable behaviour to both. This will also reduce the risk of unfounded allegations against adults.

3.2. Safer Working Practices in Relation to Children and Young People

3.2.1. Appointment of Church Minister, Elders and Trustees

The lead Minister and elders are required to undergo an enhanced DBS barring check, they must be fully accountable to one another including open access to electronic diaries where applicable. Safeguarding needs to be and should be a feature of discussion periodically within formal minuted meetings. The eldership will ensure that the lead Minister will be appointed, trained and supported in accordance with the government's guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring the following:

- There is a clear written job description/person specification for the post detailing to whom the individual is accountable
- Those applying have completed an application form and self-declaration form (Appendix 5) (any relevant issues arising need to be brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Lead prior to any appointment)
- Those shortlisted have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained
- A Disclosure and Barring Service check has been undertaken and approved
- Qualifications have been verified
- A training programme has been provided
- A probationary period has been completed
- The applicant has been given a copy of the church's Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns and to whom

3.2.2. Appointment of Church Children, Youth and Families Worker

The Leadership will ensure all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with the government's guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring the following:

- That there is a clear written job description/person specification for the post detailing to whom the individual is accountable
- Those applying have completed an application form and self-declaration form (Appendix 5) (any relevant issues arising need to be brought to the attention of the Safeguarding Lead prior to any appointment)
- Those shortlisted have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained
- A Disclosure and Barring Service check has been undertaken and approved
- Qualifications have been verified
- A training programme has been provided
- A probationary period has been completed
- The applicant has been given a copy of the church's Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns and to whom

- Regular recorded supervision has been provided where safeguarding issues is a standing agenda item

3.2.3. Appointment of Volunteers to be Leaders or Helpers

Those appointed as volunteer children and youth leaders or helpers within the church will follow the procedures outlined below. In addition, questions will be asked about the potential volunteer's response to child protection concerns and preventing abuse in the Church. This discussion will be between the employed Children, Youth and Families Worker and the prospective volunteer. The candidate's spiritual life and walk with God will also be explored. Any concerns should then be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead and the Minister.

Any person who wishes to be involved in "work" within Harbour Church that will lead to direct contact with children will be asked to complete the application and declaration form. A refusal to complete the form will automatically exclude the person from working in any role that allows contact with children or young people. All volunteers who have been at Harbour Church less than 12 months will be asked to provide two references, one of which will comment on previous work they have done with children and young people where applicable. For all other volunteers a verbal reference will be sought from the eldership. They will be required to undertake safeguarding training ideally within 6 months of commencing the role. This will be coordinated by the Children, Youth and Families Worker and Church Manager. All volunteers are to submit to a Disclosure and Barring Service check organised by the church's Recruiter. Volunteers will be asked to register on the live update service on the DBS to make future checks easier. **https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service.**

If there are any doubts about someone's suitability to work with children or young people, they should not be allowed to do so. No one has a right to work with children, but children have the right to the highest standard of care. It is important to realise that just because someone receives good references and a clear DBS check, this does not mean they pose no risk to children or young people. All new workers will undertake a three-to-six month probationary period, at the end of which their suitability will be evaluated by the Children, Youth and Families Worker. Anyone whose behaviour in any way causes concern about them working with children should be asked to stop such work. This does not reflect on their church membership and they should be encouraged to use their gifts in other areas of church life.

3.2.4. Practical Guidelines for Safer Working Practice with Children and Young People

3.2.4 (a) Venue

All leaders of groups will ensure that the venue is suitable and safe. If there are any concerns about this, they should be reported to the Children, Youth and Families Worker, who will share such information with the Minister. The whereabouts of the First Aid kit, the nearest telephone and fire extinguishers and exits should be known by leaders and helpers. There should be basic First Aid knowledge by leaders and hygiene standards should be maintained where food or drinks are served. Where children are taken away from the usual venue, leadership and parental approval should be sought. If a leader from the C&Y Team is needed (as a last resort) to drive children, they should have a full and clean driving license and notify the Children, Youth and Families Worker if they receive any points on their license. They should be covered for business use. There should always be two adults in the car when transporting children on behalf of the church.

3.2.4 (b) Adults Not to be Alone with Children

All adults working with children or young people will attempt not to be alone with a child or young person unobserved. This means there should always be two adults present during

activities. An adult is over 18 years old and has been through the safer recruitment process. This will apply wherever the adult is with a child including church members' homes or cars. There will be occasional situations when young people will be alone with team members for example in one to one mentoring circumstances but parents/guardians will have been made aware of this in advance, and will have completed the appropriate consent forms and read the related policies.

3.2.4 (c) Ratios

Ratios of adult leaders to children are a guideline of best practice, and are subject to change. For children under 2 years old, there should be one leader per three children. For children 2-3 years old, there should be one leader per four children. For children 4-8 years old, there should be one leader per six children. For children 9 years old and over, there should be one leader per eight children. In all circumstances, as noted above, there should always be at least two adults present during activities unless in an emergency. Where ratios are exceeded, additional helpers are available on standby and must be sought before the group commences.

3.2.4 (d) Drop-Off and Collection of Children

Children attending Harbour Church Toddlers and Kids on Sunday mornings must be dropped off and collected by their parent/guardian or another trusted adult appointed by the child's parent/guardian. Under no circumstances should children be allowed to leave of their own accord at the end of the session without a responsible, trusted adult. Parents/guardians have full responsibility for their children in church before and after children's activities.

3.2.4 (e) Residential Activities

In residential activities, it may be difficult to avoid rare occasions where only one adult is present, but this should not be with only one child or young person. The leader should inform the other leaders of the situation arising.

3.2.4 (f) One-to-One Mentoring

If specific situations arise where one to one contact with a child or young person is necessary (for example for spiritual mentoring/discipleship) the Minister and parent/guardian of the young person should be made aware of this in advance. The Children, Youth and Families Worker will add one-to-one meetings to the ChurchSuite calendar in order for the Minister to be aware. The Minister will be made aware of other team members engaged in one to one mentoring and of the circumstances via the Children, Youth and Families Worker. Such arrangements would normally take place in a building where others are present. Parental permission should also be obtained where the child is under 18 years old using the appropriate consent forms. After each mentoring session, notes should be made by the adult with a basic summary of what was discussed. This must be initialed by the young person and adult, and kept securely by the Children, Youth and Families Worker. This must be kept confidential between the Children, Youth and Families Worker and the Safeguarding Lead.

3.2.4 (g) Images of Children

Care will be taken about the use of photos or video images of children and young people. No details of the identity of the child should accompany photographs in church publicity or the website. Parents/guardians should update Harbour Church with their child's photographic permissions once a year using the Consent Form provided by the Children, Youth and Families Worker. Please refer to the Harbour Church eSafety Policy for more details.

3.2.4 (h) Social Media

Use of messaging and social media by leaders and volunteers needs to be with great care. All electronic communication should be appropriate. Please refer to the Harbour Church eSafety policy for more details.

3.2.4 (i) Support for Leaders and Helpers

All leaders and helpers should receive the support they need. They will be supported by the Children, Youth and Families Worker and will know who the church's Safeguarding Lead is. They will receive regular support in the form of meetings, training events and one-to-one conversations and messages.

3.2.4 (j) Conduct of Leaders and Helpers

Leaders and helpers need to try to behave in a way which could not be misconstrued. Relationships with children and young people should offer them a role model as Christians. This includes their conduct on social media, whether a young person will see it or not.

3.2.4 (k) Personal Care

Children in the Toddlers and Kids groups must have their parent (or a trusted adult appointed by their parent/guardian) called unless in same room as toilet door. Children in the Youth group can leave the group to go to the toilet whenever they like. Parents should be encouraged to take their children to the toilet before the session. All nappy changes for children in Harbour Church Toddlers must be done by the parent or guardian of the child.

3.2.4 (l) Touch

Touching of children and young people needs to be considered with care. It is not helpful to assume touch is never appropriate. Touch should always be appropriate to the situation and only given with the child's consent (e.g. they may ask for a hug, or the adult may ask if they would like one. This should only be an appropriate short hug or arm around shoulders). It should be age appropriate and any concerns about inappropriate touch by a child should be referred to the Safeguarding Lead. The use of touch must be to meet the child's needs, not the adult's. Any touching should take place in a public setting, observed by another adult. Care should be taken when playing physical games that there is no inappropriate touching and that children are happy with the activity. Leaders and helpers should monitor each other in the area of touch and should help each other maintain safe standards. Any concerns about the behaviour of another leader or helper should be referred immediately to the Children, Youth and Families Worker, Minister or Safeguarding Lead.

3.2.4 (m) Records

A register (paper or electronic) should be kept of all children involved in an activity. Consent and information forms should be filled out by parents/guardians for regular activities and these should be filed by the Children, Youth and Families Worker. The register should be completed each time the group meets - this includes Toddlers, Kids (Infants and Juniors) and Youth. This register can be done in paper form, but must be electronically stored at the earliest convenience. The electronic register also needs to include adults present.

3.2.4 (n) Requests to Look after Children/Young People/Baby-Sitting

It is not the church's policy to recommend named people to look after children/young people/provide baby-sitters to fulfil a need for members or others with whom the church has contact. Any contact and support arrangements entered into are a private matter between a parent or guardian and whoever they decide to invite to support their family need. If a need is specifically expressed, then the officers of the church should encourage the individual to make a private arrangement.

3.2.4 (o) Everyone's Responsibility

Protecting children within the Church does not just stop at the various organised groups. At other times in church life, children could be abused by someone worshipping with us. It is important that all adults, particularly the parents/guardians of the children take responsibility to ensure that children are not alone in unobserved parts of the church building or School grounds. Where mixed age social or musical activities take place two DBS checked adults should always be present with children.

3.2.5 Young People Integrating into the Wider Church

3.2.5 (a) Young People Joining a Ministry Team

Young people aged 11 or above may join a serving team within the church. In order for this to be set up, the young person or their parent/guardian must contact the Children, Youth and Families Worker to discuss this. If a Ministry Team Leader would like to approach a young person to join their serving team, they must contact the Children, Youth and Families Worker first. The Children, Youth and Families Worker may also initiate this approach to the parent/guardian to ask a young person to join a ministry team. The young person must start serving on the team on a trial basis (e.g. 2 sessions) before joining the team officially, and this must be after discussion with the Ministry Team Leader, the Children, Youth and Families Worker and the parent/guardian of the young person.

As a general rule:

- The young person must be 14 years of age or over to join the Children and Youth Team (Harbour Church Toddlers/Kids). To join the Children and Youth Team, the young person and the parent/guardian must fill in and sign the Young Helper Application Form and return it to the Children, Youth and Families Worker. It should be noted that the young person will not count as an 'adult' in ratios, and will instead count as a child, so the appropriate number of adults must be present. The young person will be required to read the Safeguarding Policy and sign a declaration to confirm this.
- The young person must be 11 years of age or over to join the Café, Welcome, Set-Up or Tech teams, but they must not be left alone with an adult who does not hold an up-to-date DBS check whilst serving on these team. They must read the relevant risk assessments when serving on these teams, guided by the Supervisor on duty.
- The young person must be 11 years of age or over to join the Worship Team. There is no requirement for them to set up or set down equipment. When this requires mid-week practices at Harbour Church Hub or a church member's house, the young person must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or by the Children, Youth and Families Worker (or another Youth Team member) via prior arrangement.

A young person may be required to use ChurchSuite when joining a Ministry Team. This should be discussed with the Children, Youth and Families Worker and parent/guardian of the young person. Please see the Harbour Church eSafety policy for more information about the use of ChurchSuite for young people.

3.2.5 (b) Young People Joining Small Groups

Young people aged 16 and over may be invited by the Children, Youth and Families Worker to join a Harbour Church Small Group. Before the young person joins a Small Group for the first time, it must be discussed with the Children, Youth and Families Worker and parent/guardian of the young person, and written consent must be provided by the parent/guardian (this also applies to young people whose parent/guardian does not attend Harbour Church), which can be done via email to the Children, Youth and Families Worker.

To join subsequent Small Groups, permission needs only to be sought verbally from the parent/guardian by the Small Group Leader. Small Group Leaders will be made aware of this at each Small Groups Equipping session.

Where possible, the young person will be accompanied to their Small Group by the Children, Youth and Families Worker or another member of the Youth Team, but this is not strictly necessary. Any safeguarding issues that arise during the course of the Small Group must be passed on by the Small Group Leader to either the Children, Youth and Families Worker or the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. The young person must be informed by the Group Leader (and reminded by the Children, Youth and Families Worker) about confidentiality within the Small Group. The young person must not be added to any WhatsApp groups created for the Small Group, but the parent/guardian may give consent for the young person's email address to be used by the Small Group Leader in order to pass on information. Alternatively, the parent/guardian's email address may be used.

Some Small Groups are held over Zoom; please see the Harbour Church eSafety policy for guidance on young people using Zoom.

3.2.5 (c) Young People Becoming Church Members

Young people aged 16 and over may be invited by the Children, Youth and Families Worker to become a member of the Church. This will only be offered after discussion with the Minister and the parents/guardians of the young person [check this for sure with elders]. The young person must attend the Membership course [/read the booklet], and either the Children, Youth and Families Worker or an elder must explain to the young person what is involved in becoming a member, and what will be expected of them. The nature of confidentiality around information given to members must be explained clearly to the young person and agreed to by them. Elders should seek to deal with any issues in the young person's membership alongside their parents/guardians where possible however, where this involves a safeguarding concern, or where a parent/guardian is not a member of the church themselves, this should be raised with either the Children, Youth and Families Worker or the Safeguarding Lead.

3.3 Safer Working Practice in Relation to Adults at Risk

3.3.1 Appointment of Pastoral Team

Those appointed to take a pastoral support role within the church will be required to submit to a Disclosure and Barring Service check organised by the church's Recruiter and Safeguarding training. The church leadership will be involved in the appointment of suitable persons for these roles. Oversight and line management of these roles will be the responsibility of the Minister.

3.3.2 Pastoral Team

Harbour Church has a small Pastoral Team engaged in overseeing pastoral care within the church. Small Group Leaders will be responsible for the low-level pastoral needs of their group. However, if additional needs arise via the groups, or wider church, that require more intensive input, group leaders will refer to the Pastoral Team. If necessary, someone from the team will be allocated to provide that extra support (NOT counselling) or assist with referring the person to specialist services/agencies. The work of the Pastoral Team will be overseen and supported by an allocated elder.

3.3.3 Appointment of the Pastoral Team

There is a less formal process of appointment for those who work within these groups. In one sense, everyone in the church is part of caring for those with learning disabilities, mental health problems, physical disabilities, the elderly frail or other vulnerabilities. It is not necessary to formalise all of these arrangements. Where this support or intervention is on behalf of Harbour Church it is important for those undertaking this to consider their role. Examples of this might include Communion at home, prayer ministry, and pastoral visiting. Such roles need to be seen as holding special significance for adults at risk and those who undertake them are appointed by Harbour Church to do them. This appointment may not be formal but some discussion about suitability should take place by the relevant person overseeing the work. All such volunteers must be willing to submit to a Disclosure and Barring Service check and Safeguarding training. Volunteers who have received a DBS certificate will be asked to register on the live update service on the DBS to make future checks easier. **https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service**

Harbour Church is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable. This includes pastoral support if allegations are made against volunteers. If there are any doubts about someone's suitability to work with adults at risk, they should not be allowed to do so. It is important to realise that just because someone has a clear DBS check this does not mean they pose no risk to vulnerable adults. Anyone whose behaviour in any way causes concern about them working with vulnerable adults should be asked to stop such work. This does not reflect on their church membership and they should be encouraged to use their gifts in other areas of church life.

3.3.4 Practical Guidelines for Safer Working Practice Within the Pastoral Teams

3.3.4 (a) Gender

It is important that people are matched appropriately when engaged in one to one support with vulnerable people, for example it would not be appropriate for a male to be matched to support a female.

3.3.4 (b) Handling Money/Financial Abuse

An adult may lack capacity about their finances. If this is the case, appropriate advice should be sought. Where a volunteer is getting shopping or handling money unavoidably, receipts should always be obtained. Confusion over financial situations is often a cause of safeguarding adult referrals.

3.3.4 (c) Child Safeguarding Concerns

During the course of supporting vulnerable adults people may well also come into contact with children. If there are concerns of a safeguarding nature about those children, appropriate advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Lead.

3.3.4 (d) Lone Workers

Consideration needs to be given about **how many people** should undertake an activity with adults at risk. There will be situations where it would be appropriate always to have two people helping an adult at risk. For example, where someone will be very distressed or where the adult lacks mental capacity. Guidance can be sought from the Safeguarding Lead in such situations.

3.3.4 (e) Visiting Residential Homes or Hospitals

When such visits are being undertaken on behalf of Harbour Church, it is important to consider safe practices. Consideration should be given to two volunteers attending if the adult lacks mental capacity. On arrival at a home, the volunteer should identify themselves and sign in if appropriate. Where they are left with the adult at risk, the volunteer should always clarify how they would get help if needed and what to do when

their time with the adult comes to an end. It is preferable to visit in a communal area where possible. Any concerns about the care within such organisational settings need to be reported in the same way as individual concerns above, and dealt with as safeguarding matters. Any concerns about the individual that are not related to safeguarding should be shared with the person on duty at the home and a check made as to where the home would like this recorded.

3.3.4 (f) Touch

This is an issue that requires careful thought for adults at risk. Many such adults are deprived of touch and will particularly welcome affection expressed in hugs etc. However, personal choice of the adult at risk must be respected and touch always offered sensitively and carefully.

3.4 Care For the Abused and the Abuser

As a church, we attempt to offer a loving Christian community to all who wish to be part of it. This might include abusers, both known and unknown. Ex-offenders including sexual abusers may become part of the community. They should be treated with love and respect, but helped to avoid further abusive situations. If someone has been convicted of sexual offences against children or vulnerable adults, they will not do any voluntary or paid work involving contact with children or vulnerable adults. Where they are known abusers, boundaries/contracts will be agreed with them to keep children/adults in the church safe. These should be written and Thirtyone-eight, the church leadership and Safeguarding Lead involved in a careful assessment. Any offenders will be carefully managed and monitored in line with the agreement.

We have within our church family many who were abused as children and still suffer from the consequences. The church offers a number of supports to such hurting adults including care by the pastoral team and the prayer ministry at the end of services. Where children or young people need support due to past or current experiences, this will always be offered in conjunction with the statutory services and with the consent of those with parental responsibility.

4 TRAINING AND REVIEW

4.1 Training

The leadership is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All of our employees and volunteers working with adults or children will receive induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis every 3 years.

4.2 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months and it will be the responsibility of the church leadership to ensure such reviews take place. Each review should include the safeguarding training needs of all relevant volunteers and the aim is that training should take place every 3 years. The church Recruiter will administer and verify DBS checks, and the Children's, Youth and Families Worker will be appointed by the church leadership. The Safeguarding Lead, who is a source of advice, will also be appointed annually. The Minister will oversee these arrangements, in particular circumstances in

conjunction with the Safeguarding Lead. Alterations to these procedures may be permitted with the agreement of the church leadership.

This document should be read and then the relevant form should be filled in and signed via ChurchSuite to confirm this. If you cannot fill in and sign the form via ChurchSuite, please print this page and return it, signed, to the Safeguarding Lead.

Signed: ……

Name: ……

Date: ……

For Safeguarding Lead only

Date for review: …September 2026……

APPENDIX 1: Signs of Abuse and Neglect for Children and Adults at Risk

*Signs of **physical abuse** might include:*

- Unexplained or recurring injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries or improbable explanations
- Admission of excessive punishment
- Child or adult flinching when touched
- Fear of returning home
- Self-destructive tendencies or aggression to other children
- Certain types of injuries, eg. object or finger shaped bruises, bite marks, burns or scalds, injuries to the face, head or genital area.

*Signs of **neglect** might include:*

- Loss of weight
- Leaving a child alone without proper supervision
- Exposure to dangers the child is not able to deal with
- Inadequate clothing, lighting, food or heating
- Being unkempt or dirty
- Failure to seek or follow medical advice.
- Neglect of accommodation
- Poor physical condition (e.g. leg ulcers or ulcerated bed sores)
- Clothing or bedding in poor condition including being wet or soiled
- Weight loss or gain through inadequate or unsuitable food
- Medication not given as prescribed
- Failure to ensure appropriate privacy and dignity

*Signs of **emotional abuse or psychological abuse** might include:*

- Behavioural signs eg. Overactive, aggressive, withdrawn, compulsive stealing or scavenging
- Language or developmental delay
- Inability to play in child
- Excessive lack of confidence or need for affection and attention.
- Use of excessive punishment by parents or over reaction to mistakes by child
- Eating problems, unusual weight gain

*Signs of **financial abuse of adults***

- Change in living conditions;
- Lack of heating, clothing or food;
- Inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money;
- Unexplained withdrawals from an account;
- Unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents;
- The recent addition of authorised signers on a client or donor's signature card; or sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents.
- Power of attorney obtained or misused when the adult lacks mental capacity for finances

*Signs of **organisational abuse of adults***

- Insufficient employee training and development
- Unacceptable practice encouraged, tolerated or left unchanged.
- Organisational standards not meeting those laid down by regulatory bodies eg CQC
- Adults at risk not treated with respect and dignity
- Diverse needs not recognised and valued in terms of age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, race or sexual orientation
- Services not flexible

*Signs of **discriminatory abuse of adults***

- Lack of respect for an individual's beliefs and cultural background
- Unable to eat culturally acceptable foods
- Religious observances not encouraged or anticipated
- Isolation due to language barriers
- Signs of sub-standard service offered to minority groups or individuals
- Repeated exclusion from rights afforded to citizens such as health, education, employment and criminal justice

Sexual abuse

Most sexual abuse is not known until a child or adult chooses to tell a trusted adult – this could happen in the Church context. Any statement of abuse must be taken very seriously. Sexual abuse often starts very subtly and builds up so slowly that the child begins to accept the abuse as something he or she has to tolerate. By the time the child wants to tell "the secret", he or she feels guilty and confused and fears no one will believe the truth. The child may have become very good at covering up the abuse and may feel he or she is betraying someone close to them and loved by them.

*Some signs of **sexual abuse** might include:*

- Unprompted allegation by the child or adult or hinting at a secret
- Behavioural changes – withdrawn, self-harm
- Loss of interest, withdrawn, anxious or depressed
- Appear to be frightened, fearful or avoiding eye contact
- Irritable, aggressive or challenging behaviour, unexplained sleep disturbance
- Poor concentration
- Self-harm, refusing to eat, deliberate soiling
- Eating problems, nightmares or sexual acting out
- Fear of someone
- Possession of unexplained amounts of money or gifts
- Unusual behaviour by an adult in relation to the child
- Urinary tract infections, vaginal, penile or anal infections
- Pregnancy in a woman unable to give consent
- Difficulty in walking or sitting with no apparent explanation
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes or bedding
- Bleeding, bruising, torn tissue or injury to the rectal, anal and/or vaginal area
- Bruising to thighs and/or upper arms
- Uncharacteristic sexually explicit/ seductive behaviour
- Self-harm
- Obsession with washing
- Organisation do not promote choice and individual focus
- Communication discouraged

- Whistle blowing policy not in place and accessible

Appendix 2: Useful Contacts

Concerns about children	
NSPCC help line	0800 800 500
BCP Children's Services First Response Hub	01202 123 334
Out of Hours Social Work Service	01202 738 256
Dorset Children's Advice & Duty Service	01305 228 558 (for professionals only)
Dorset Police Child Protection Unit	101 (Non-emergency) enquiries@ceop.gsi.gov.uk
	999 (Emergency)
Thirtyone-eight	0845 1204550 (option 2) info@thirtyoneeight.org
Concerns about adults	
Poole Adult Social Services help desk	01202 123 654 asc.contactcentre@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
Dorset Council early help and support	01305 221016
Out of Hours Service	01202 123 654
Thirtyone:eight	0845 1204550 (option 2) info@thirtyoneeight.org
Harbour Church Contacts	
Harbour Church Safeguarding Lead	Abbie Balachandran 07951 047 574 safeguarding@harbourchurchpoole.co.uk
Harbour Church Elders	Andy Upton (Minister) 07825 699475 andy@harbourchurchpoole.co.uk
	Tim Buttler (Minister) 07595 994 173 tim@harbourchurchpoole.co.uk
	Ben Lamb 07989 699 105 ben@harbourchurchpoole.co.uk
	Dave Gawler 07954 224 214 dave@harbourchurchpoole.co.uk
	Peter Phillips 07429 637 401 peter@harbourchurchpoole.co.uk
Thirtyone-eight	0845 1204550 (option 2) info@thirtyoneeight.org

Appendix 3: Harbour Church Poole Privacy Notice

How Harbour Church ("we") use your information
Your privacy is important to us. We are committed to safeguarding the privacy of your personal information.

Why do we collect and use your information?
We collect and use your information to contact you to send you our newsletter and communications regarding our activities, to provide appropriate pastoral care, to monitor and assess the quality of our services, to fulfil our purposes as a church and to comply with the law regarding data sharing. With your consent, we will send you information about our events and activities by post, telephone, email, WhatsApp and SMS. We do not share your information with others except as described in this notice.

The categories of information that we may collect, hold and share within Harbour Church:
- Personal information (such as name, telephone number, address and email address)
- Characteristics (such as gender, ethnicity, language, nationality, country of birth)
- Financial details as they relate to Harbour Church and which we will be legally required to share with HMRC and an external auditor
- Attendance tracking for pastoral purposes and to assess trends within the church
- In addition, we may take photographs in order to review, publicise or promote our services. Where consent is given, these may be shown internally at Harbour Church, on our website or on our social media outlets

Who do we share your information with?
We will not share your information with third parties without your consent unless the law requires us to do so. By sharing your contact details with us ChurchSuite, you agree to these details being shared with others using Harbour Church's ChurchSuite.

Storing your data
We hold your data for varying lengths of time depending on the type of information in question but in doing so we always comply with Data Protection legislation. We will contact you annually to check that the information we are holding is accurate and that you agree to us holding it. If you have access to ChurchSuite, you may at any time login to amend or delete your personal information. You may contact the Harbour Church office to request that your data is updated or removed.

Contact
Under Data Protection legislation, you have the right to request access to information about you that we hold. To make a request for your personal information contact Helen MacDiarmid in the Church Office. You also have the right to:
- object to processing of personal data that is likely to cause, or is causing, damage or distress
- prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing
- object to decisions being taken by automated means
- in certain circumstances, have inaccurate personal data rectified, blocked, erased or destroyed; and
- claim compensation for damages caused by a breach of the Data Protection regulations

For further information on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information and your rights to access information we hold on you please contact Helen MacDiarmid. If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioner's Office at https://ico.org.uk/concerns/
If you would like to discuss anything in this privacy notice, please contact:
Helen MacDiarmid Email: ops@harbourchurchpoole.co.uk Tel: 07468 459 523

Appendix 4: Harbour Church Safeguarding Policy Declaration

Safeguarding Policy Declaration 2025

Safeguarding Policy Declaration

At Harbour Church, we take Safeguarding seriously! This means we endeavour to keep our policies up-to-date, and make sure that everyone working with Children & Young people, and with vulnerable adults, understands those policies.

Please read our updated Safeguarding Policy, which can be found on our website here, or by asking Abbie or Izzie.

Then, sign below to say you've read it. If you have any questions, or would like to see any of the appendices or related policies, contact our Safeguarding Lead (Abbie Balachandran).

First & Last Name *

First Name | Last Name

Email

Role *

e.g. Children & Youth Team, Worship Team, etc.

I confirm I have read and understood the Harbour Church Safeguarding Policy *

Privacy - Terms

Appendix 5: Harbour Church Self-Declaration Form

Self-Declaration Form

Self-Declaration Form

As a place of worship/organisation we undertake to meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and all other relevant legislation, and the expectations of the Information Commissioners Office relating to the data privacy of individuals.

This process is subject to a strict code to ensure confidentiality, fair practice and security of any information disclosed.

All applicants are asked to complete this form which will be used and stored by the Recruiter.

Applicant Details

Applicant First & Last Name *

First Name | Last Name

Applicant Email *

Position Applied For (e.g. Children and Youth Helper) *

Privacy - Terms