



# **SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

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***Charity No: 1179013***



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## MISSION STATEMENT

Highfields Church is committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all children and vulnerable adults who come within its care. We aim to create an atmosphere conducive to meeting those needs within a safe environment. We will provide appropriate experiences including opportunity to learn of God through the Scriptures.

We will endeavour to ensure that each child or vulnerable adult is respected as an individual and due consideration will be given to their wishes and feelings.

We recognise the importance of the family and will work in co-operation with parents / guardians and carers in meeting children's and vulnerable adults' needs.

We will strive to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and will take action where abuse is suspected, has occurred or is likely to occur.

We will give support and supervision to all paid and volunteer workers involved in children's, young people's work and those who work with vulnerable adults and will ensure the policy is adhered to, by providing training on a regular basis.

Safeguarding issues refer to all children and young people up to and including those of 18 years old and vulnerable adults will also receive the overall care afforded by the Policy.

This policy does not cover situations where the building is hired out to external groups or organisations for activities with children, young people and vulnerable adults which is deemed to be independent from the ministry of Highfields Church.

This Policy has been compiled in accordance with The Children Act (1989), Safe from Harm (Home Office) (1993), Working Together to Safeguard Children (1998), The Protection of Children Act (1999) and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006).  
The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2016)

The Policy has been agreed by the Trustees of Highfields Church and is available on request from the Highfields Church Office and on the church website **[highfieldschurch.org.uk](http://highfieldschurch.org.uk)**

The Church is continuously updated on matters of good practice by the umbrella body—**[thirtyoneeight.org](http://thirtyoneeight.org)**.

## **APPOINTMENT OF WORKERS**

Both paid and voluntary workers whose roles have substantial involvement with children and vulnerable adults must complete a Self-Declaration/Voluntary Disclosure Form indicating any investigation into their conduct with children or vulnerable adults. This form also gives details of the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS), the Church's Compliance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and our Equal Opportunities Policy.

All workers who have the care, sole charge or supervision of children and vulnerable adults must apply for Enhanced Disclosure through the Church's Registered Body – **thirtyoneeight.org**. The Church complies with the code of practice regarding confidentiality and storage/ disposal of records.

### **Paid Worker/Club Leaders**

Where a Children's or Youth Worker is to be employed by the Church the post will be advertised publicly. The job specification will carry references to our Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, our Equal Opportunities Policy and our Safeguarding Policy.

Applicants will complete detailed application papers and at interview with the Trustees will be informed of the need for Enhanced Disclosure including the possibility of disclosure of confidential information only to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Applications will be discussed by the Trustee with responsibility for Children and Youth Work and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the final appointment will not be made until Enhanced Disclosure is received. They will receive a copy of the Policy.

### **Trustees with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding:**

Andrew Rees (07503 182530)

### **Safeguarding Co-ordinator :**

Nigel Graham

### **Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator:**

Ruth Evans

### **Volunteer Workers**

Volunteer Workers aged 16 years and over will be interviewed by the Paid Worker/Club Leaders and references will be sought one of which, if appropriate, will be from the person's present or past employment. He / she will be given the same Self-Declaration Form as the Paid Worker/Club Leaders and the same information will be given regarding the possibility of confidential information being given only to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Lead Recruiter).

Young people under 16 years of age are not appointed as workers but as helpers and are always supervised, so they do not need the Disclosure Procedure.

## **TRAINING, SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT**

All those who work directly with children and vulnerable adults are:

- known to the Paid Worker/Club Leaders
- made aware of the Church's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,
- required to attend training sessions as arranged by the Paid Worker/Club Leaders, Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Trustees as appropriate but at least annually.

The Paid Worker/Club Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all volunteer workers have been trained.

Training must cover the contents of this Policy and the discipline procedures that are acceptable and unacceptable as outlined in this Policy.

Any new workers who do not undertake the training within twelve months of working in a group will be suspended from working until the training has been completed.

The Paid Worker/Club Leaders and / or one of the Trustees together with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will provide overall guidance and supervision of the Safeguarding Training and Leaders-in-charge of a group or club (whether paid or voluntary) will be responsible for notifying their team of the requirements to be trained and to ensure this is completed. The Paid Worker/Club Leaders together with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator are responsible to the Trustees for maintaining and assuring policy and practice.

Should a worker have a complaint or allegation made against them they will be required to suspend their activity until the matter has been resolved. Circumstances will dictate if advice is to be sought from appropriate organisations before the worker is approached / suspended. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator in consultation with the appropriate Trustee will make the decisions. Support for the worker as required will be provided by a member of the Church Pastoral Team.

Similarly, should a worker receive a confidence / disclosure which he / she finds distressing, pastoral support will be arranged by the Paid Worker/Club Leader / Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Trustee. In all instances of pastoral support the personal details of the child / young person or vulnerable adult will not be disclosed.

This Policy is designed for the safety and protection of children / young people and vulnerable adults as well as for the security and protection of workers by providing a framework for practice. A policy does not preclude the need for common sense, which must always prevail.

## **GUIDELINES FOR WORKERS**

### **GENERAL CARE AND SAFETY**

All children, young people and vulnerable adults will be treated with respect and not be subject to derisory comments or treatment particularly in relation to gender, race, religion or disability.

Responsible people within Highfields Church

**Andrew Rees** is Trustee with responsibility for Highfields Congregation and Emergency Out-of-Hours Contact (07503 182530).

**Nigel Graham** is the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Lead Recruiter,

**Ruth Evans** is Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator for Highfields

**Jess Sanderson** Recruiter (029 2065 0740)

**Jo Deeley** Recruiter (029 2065 0740)

Each section within the Children and Youth Work of Highfields Church has a Leader-in-charge with responsibility for the workers and children in that section. These Leaders will maintain contact details for all the workers and Children / Young People in the group, and will be accountable to the Paid Worker/Club Leader / Trustee.

Leaders-in-charge of clubs / groups must ensure there is adequate supervision by their fellow workers otherwise the activity should not take place. Adult to child ratios are:

0-2 yrs of age 1 adult to 3 children

2-3 yrs of age 1 adult to 4 children

4-8 yrs of age 1 adult to 8 children

The Leader-in-Charge must also know the whereabouts of the First Aid Kit.

Physical punishment of any kind must not be used but appropriate means of discipline will be agreed between the Paid Worker/Club Leaders and the Trustee /Safeguarding Co-ordinator taking account of the age of the children. The agreed discipline procedures are contained in documents held by the Paid Worker/Club Leaders.

Great care must be exercised if physical restraint is required to prevent a young person harming him / herself or others and a minimum of two workers should be involved in any restraint.

Bullying and discriminatory behaviour by the children / young people and vulnerable adults will not be tolerated but dealt with appropriately by the workers under section 4. above.

Workers wishing to undertake activities outside those of the whole groups must do so with the consent of the Paid Worker/Club Leaders and the parents, guardians or carers.

Parents or other adults and older children helping on an occasional basis must be supervised by a Leader-in-charge.

Workers who become concerned about the behaviour of another worker must report their

concern to the Paid Worker/Club Leader, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or the Trustee. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Trustee will decide on the appropriate action. Confidentiality must be observed and names and details of the incident will not be shared with anyone other than those directly involved.

## **TRANSPORT**

1. Seatbelts must be worn by all Children and Young People in workers' cars and wherever provided in coaches / minibuses. Children should be transported in suitable seating as required by law for their age.
2. Workers should try to avoid long periods in transit with Children / Young People or vulnerable adults. Should the rare occasion require them to transport one child or vulnerable adult alone, the worker should record the start and end times and mileage of the journey - and report these to the Leader-in-charge / Paid Worker/Club Leader as soon as possible after the occurrence
3. Where a parent or non-leader/ worker is asked to transport children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis (e.g. weekly) Enhanced Disclosure must be applied for. Where parents make their own private arrangements, the Church has no responsibility.
4. Children and vulnerable adults should travel in the rear of a vehicle driven by a worker, where possible.
5. Where children have to be collected by someone other than the recognised parent / guardian a simple password system should be used.
6. Drivers and vehicles must be properly insured and legally roadworthy.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Leaders-in-charge must ensure that parents are given the opportunity of refusing permission for their Children / Young People to be photographed, i.e. opportunity to opt-out. Permission should be sought annually from all parents / guardians concerning the taking of and use of photographs for publicity purposes. Photographs of Children / Young People should not be made available for downloading / copying or printing to anyone other than the Leader-in-charge.

## **COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Permission should be sought annually from parents / guardians and from the Child / Young Person before communicating by e-mail, phone or Social Networking sites. Electronic communication should primarily be used for factual / administrative matters. Where communication with Children / Young People is made by Text / Email / SMS or IMS etc a record of such communications should be kept. Printing of emails / IMS conversations and copying of Text / SMS messages to paper will allow for this.

N.B. Neither paid nor volunteer workers can be requested to communicate on Social Networking sites with children under 13 yrs of age.

Where workers communicate in this way, the records of such communications should be shown to the Paid Worker/Club Leaders on a regular basis.

If the Paid Worker/Club Leaders / Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Trustee do not consider that



the communications are relevant or appropriate the worker may be required to cease communications with the Children / Young People.

#### **RESIDENTIAL SITUATIONS**

1. Written consent of parents / guardians must be obtained prior to residential activities taking place. In addition any medical problems the Child / Young Person may have should be enquired of and responses recorded. The Church has a standard form for use in such circumstances. Anyone aged 18 years or over must be accommodated separately, as legally they are adults.
2. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator or a designated deputy must be aware of the residential activity and should provide a contact telephone number to the Leader-in-charge.

## POSSIBLE ABUSE

Children and vulnerable adults may be harmed in a number of ways. Categories are defined in the Children Act 1989, and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 which include

- Physical - with signs such as bruises, other marks, fractures
- Emotional - such as lack of affection, intimidation, threats, humiliating or abusive language
- Sexual - where adults use children for sexual satisfaction (children occasionally abuse other children if they themselves are exposed to abuse)
- Neglect - when dependency needs are not met or they are not protected.

Often there may be a combination of the above.

Suspicion of abuse **may** arise in a worker's mind where a child or vulnerable adult has excessive bruising or other trauma displays disturbed behaviour (for which however there may be many other reasons) is thought to have significant change in demeanour or behaviour e.g. withdrawn or aggressive uses language inappropriate to age draws sexually explicit pictures.

However, caution must be exercised and ANY suspicion must be voiced only to the Paid Worker/Club Leader/Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Trustee as outlined in the next section.

## CONCERNS/SUSPECTED ABUSE

1. If a worker is concerned by reason of a child's or vulnerable adult's appearance, behaviour or language that they may be being abused in any way **he/she must first speak to the Paid Worker/Club Leader or Site Nominated Person**. They must also record any conversation with the Child / Young Person or vulnerable adult and the reasons for their suspicion. This record should be signed and dated. If this is thought inappropriate then the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be approached.  
**The concern should not be shared with anyone else and not with the parents, guardians or carers at this point.**
2. The Paid Worker/Club Leader should speak to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as convenient and a course of action will be agreed. The worker concerned may be asked to keep a confidential log regarding that child or vulnerable adult and to report any future concern. Depending on the circumstances there may be a meeting between the worker, Paid Worker/Club Leader and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
3. Whilst there may be a pressing need for pastoral support **it is imperative that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator is informed first** in order to decide whether any formal action should precede pastoral care. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) will decide this in discussion with the Trustee(s).

## **SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

- 1.** Workers should at all times avoid situations in which they may be compromised or misunderstood. Leaders-in-charge must use common sense - for example a worker should not be alone more than momentarily with a child, whether boy or girl or vulnerable adult.
- 2.** Workers should not see / counsel a child or vulnerable adult alone in a room without the knowledge of another worker and the door should remain at least partly open onto a public area.
- 3.** Where events include boys and girls there will normally be a male and female worker involved in the overall activity.
- 4.** Physical contact between adults and children is acceptable when appropriate eg. contact sports and games, but not if the worker is alone with the child except in certain circumstances such as illness.

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility and all workers must respond to concerns they may have about a child's or vulnerable adult's well-being. However, strict confidentiality must be maintained and the following are guidelines to help in the process of dealing with suspected abuse or a disclosure on the part of a child young person or vulnerable adult.

Concerns need to be shared with a limited number of people and workers must not attempt to deal with a problem on their own.

## **IN THE EVENT OF A DISCLOSURE / ALLEGATION**

### **1. A worker should:**

- Remain calm, listen well and show acceptance
- Be more ready to hear than to speak
- Allow time for the child or vulnerable adult to speak
- Be non-judgmental
- Be neutral and non-committal in responses
- Reassure the young person or vulnerable adult they are right to share their concern
- Tell the child or vulnerable adult that the information will be shared with a limited number of other people who will be asked to help

### **2. A worker should not:**

- React with outrage or disbelief
- Ask any questions with the possible exception of "have you told anyone else about this?"
- Ask the child or vulnerable adult to repeat the account
- Promise to keep a secret
- Speak to anyone other than the Paid Worker/Club Leader

### **3. The worker should then:**

- Record in writing their account of the conversation as near verbatim as possible and sign it with the date and time. He/she may include their observation of the child's or vulnerable adult's behaviour if appropriate.
- Speak as soon as possible to the Paid Worker/Club Leader who should then countersign the record and date and time their signature. Confidentiality is paramount throughout.

### **4. The Paid Worker/Club Leader should:**

- Contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as convenient to discuss action required if any. Keep the worker informed of the outcome of the discussions.

### **Cardiff Social Services Child Protection Contacts:**

- concern over a child at risk, not looked after properly or welfare issues **029 2053 6490**
- out of hours **Emergency Duty Team 029 2078 8570**

**Highfields Out-of-hours Emergency Safeguarding Contact Andrew 07503 182530**

## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATOR

If consulted by a leader regarding suspicion or allegation of a safeguarding issue or child abuse the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- elicit from the Leader reasons for concern and discuss confidentially the details
- ensure a detailed statement will be written by the Leader
- add to the statement if necessary
- take advice as necessary from the **thirtyoneeight.org** Helpline **0303 003 11 11**, without identifying the young person
- decide, in discussion with the Trustee, a response and a course of action if necessary
- advise the Leader of any plans

In the event of a serious allegation the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will immediately discuss with the Trustee and then seek advice from **thirtyoneeight.org** if necessary. If there is cause to suspect an adult or child is at risk, this **MUST** be reported to the local authority. There is a **LEGAL DUTY** to report every disclosure of a safeguarding nature as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2016).

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may then make an appointment with the appropriate officer in Children's Services for a face to face discussion. If it is advised that a formal referral should be made the Safeguarding Co-ordinator will come back to the Trustee before identities are disclosed. No approach will be made to the family unless Social Services (Children's Services) agree (in accordance with **thirtyoneeight.org** guidelines, "Working Together to Safeguard Children (1998), and The All Wales Child Protection Procedures). **For Cardiff Social Services Child Protection Contacts see page 12.**

The Trustees will be informed of the nature of the incident and action taken, but names and specific details will not be shared, unless it is necessary to do so for legal reasons.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will keep a record of all discussions including those with Social Services.

### WHISTLEBLOWING CODE OF PRACTICE

As a place of worship, Highfields will follow the principles for reporting issues as contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Therefore, we expect that all employees (paid or voluntary) will report improper actions and omissions. Whilst all malpractice and acts of discrimination will be investigated, it is especially important that suspicions of abuse are reported immediately to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

All workers have a duty to be made aware that they can approach social services or police, independently, to discuss any worries they have about abuse, neglect or harm and that they should do so if:

- they have concerns that their manager or other may be implicated;
- they have concerns that the manager or other will not take the matter seriously and/or act appropriately to protect the adult; or
- they fear intimidation and/or have immediate concerns for their own or for that of other workers' safety.

References: thirtyoneeight.org online manual 4.11; Protect (Public Concern at Work) website **www.pcaw.org.uk**.

## **AFFILIATION AND REGISTERED BODY**

Highfields Church is affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches and a member of Evangelical Alliance. For the purposes of safeguarding it is registered with **[thirtyoneeight.org](http://thirtyoneeight.org)**.