



Reigate Baptist Church

SAFEGUARDING

Policy & Procedures

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Reigate Baptist Church

Our vision

Loving GOD, Loving People

We are His **people**, seeking His **presence**, to carry out His **purpose**.

We are a diverse, friendly community of people, prioritising relationship with God – through His son Jesus – and with one another, working together in His mission to see lives transformed.

Our Policy Statement

Everybody is made in the image of God. Because of this we know that we all have value and dignity. Jesus calls us to a love like no other. A love that seeks others first and a love that has no boundaries. We commit to care for, protect and safeguard all visitors, members and staff, particularly children, young people and adults at risk. This is the responsibility of the whole church. We will follow a safer recruitment process in the appointment, training and support of those working with children, young people or adults at risk. We will respond without delay to allegations or fears that a child or adult at risk may have been harmed in any way, assisting in any investigation. We will challenge abuse of power by those in a position of trust. We will offer pastoral care to anyone who has suffered, is suffering or is a survivor of abuse in any form. We will offer pastoral care and support, including referral to appropriate authorities, to any member of our church community known to have committed any offence against a child, young person or adult at risk. If you have any concerns about the welfare of yourself, a child, young person or adult at risk please speak to a member of our safeguarding team.

In fulfilling this policy and vision, we:

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

Our safeguarding responsibilities

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

- **Prevention and reporting of abuse**
It is the duty of each church member to help prevent the abuse of children and adults at risk, and the duty of each church member to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and adults at risk. Any abuse disclosed, discovered, or suspected will be reported in accordance with our procedures.
- **Safer recruitment, support and supervision of workers**
The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and adults at risk, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safekeeping of children and adults at risk.
- **Respecting children and adults at risk**
The church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and adults at risk so that all children and adults are shown the respect that is due to them.
- **Safer working practices**
The church is committed to providing an environment that is as safe as possible for children and adults at risk and will adopt ways of working with them that promote their safety and well-being.
- **A safer community**
The church is committed to the prevention of bullying. The church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any individuals who may pose a risk to children, young people and adults at risk in the community of the church is managed appropriately.



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

NAME: JEN SMART - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered, or suspected.

Phone number: 07933 116 000

Email address: safeguarding@reigatebaptistchurch.org.uk

NAME: JOHN EGLINGTON – Safeguarding Trustee

The Safeguarding Trustee will raise the profile of safeguarding within the church and oversee and monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policy and procedures on behalf of the church trustees.

Phone number: 01737 210 126/07884 267 038

Email address: trustees@reigatebaptistchurch.org.uk

NAME: JESS SENNETT – Safeguarding Team Member

Members of the safeguarding team will assist the DSL in advising the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk and take appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered, or suspected. They will stand in for the DSL when necessary.

Phone number: 01737 248258

Email address: safeguarding@reigatebaptistchurch.org.uk

Putting our policy into practice

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

Introduction

Reigate Baptist Church Safeguarding procedures will set out how our safeguarding policy is implemented in all the services, groups and meetings that are part of the life of our church.

Each trustee, church leader and worker (paid or voluntary) needs to be familiar with these procedures. ANYONE who is employed/volunteers to work with children, youth or adults at risk will be required to complete relevant safeguarding training to ensure that they have the knowledge and confidence needed to deal with safeguarding issues as they arise.

ALL church workers (paid and voluntary) will be required to read the church safeguarding policy every year. **ALL** church workers (paid and voluntary) will be required to have a DBS carried out before they join their relevant teams.

Over the following pages you will find clear, specific information on how to recognise and report abuse and how to respond to concerns raised within our church. It is vitally important that these procedures are well known and that we as a church understand that we are all required to carry out excellent safeguarding practices.



PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING ABUSE

What to do if Abuse is Suspected or Disclosed

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

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

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

WHAT TO DO	WHAT NOT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to and acknowledge what is being said. • Try to be reassuring & remain calm. • Explain clearly what you will do and what will happen next. • Try to give them a timescale for when and how you / the DSL will contact them again. • Take action – don't ignore the situation. • Be supportive and open • Tell them that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They were right to tell you You take what they have said seriously It was not their fault That you would like to pass this information on to the DSL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not promise confidentiality. • Do not show shock, alarm, disbelief or disapproval. • Do not minimise what is being said. • Do not ask probing or leading questions, or push for more information. • Do not offer false reassurance. • Do not delay in contacting the DSL. • Do not contact the alleged abuser. • Do not investigate the incident any further. • Never leave a child or adult at risk waiting to hear from someone without any idea of when or where that may be. • Do not pass on information to those who don't need to know; not even for prayer ministry.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS RAISED ABOUT CHILDREN, YOUTH OR ADULTS AT RISK

When there are concerns that a child, young person or adult is being abused, the following process must be followed.

STAGE 1 – The Worker

A worker/church attendee has a concern about the welfare of a child, youth, adult at risk, or the behaviour of an individual.

The person who has the concern has a duty to:

RECOGNISE, RESPOND AND RECORD

Write down and record your concern. Where possible a record must be made of the concern using a standard incident or disclosure report form (these forms can be found in the children's ministry cupboard under the information desk). Please pass this directly to the DSL. If the DSL is not on site or cannot be contacted immediately, please speak to another member of the safeguarding team. If no one is available to speak to, please place the completed form in a sealed envelope, labelled 'urgent safeguarding' and post into the information desk and contact the DSL to inform them you have done so. Any concerns must be passed on to the DSL within 24 hours.

The written record should: be made as soon as possible after the event; be legible; include the name, date of birth and address of the child, youth or adult at risk and it is to include the nature of any concerns. Do not add or take away from anything that is disclosed.

STAGE 2 – The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL receives the report of concern and then has a duty to:

REVIEW AND REPORT

The report will be reviewed by the DSL with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken as to what action should follow. Any formal referral to the police or Social Services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report.

The Local Baptist Association Safeguarding Contact should be made aware of any referrals to the statutory authorities.

STAGE 3 – The Next Steps

After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken, the DSL, Safeguarding Trustee and the Minister may have a duty to:

SUPPORT AND REPORT

Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns (this could be victims; alleged perpetrators; children; adults at risk; other family members; church workers; the DSL; Pastor; members of the leadership team.

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

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

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



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RESPONDING TO CONCERNS RAISED ABOUT ADULTS AT RISK

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

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

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

The Care Act 2014 provides helpful guidance on these situations:

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

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

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST WORKERS

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

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

- 1) When an allegation of abuse has been made do not approach the alleged perpetrator about it
- 2) Follow the usual safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report**
- 3) Once the allegation has been reported to the DSL they can liaise with the relevant statutory authority if necessary
- 4) Whilst waiting for an outcome from the statutory authorities, the worker about whom concerns have been raised will be supervised as closely as possible, by an appropriate team leader, without raising suspicion.
- 5) Once the statutory authorities are involved, the church will follow their advice with regard to the next steps to take (for example, suspension of worker, putting a contract in place)
- 6) A written record of all discussions with statutory authorities or other parties should be maintained by the DSL and stored securely and confidentially, where only those directly involved in safeguarding (DSL, Safeguarding Trustee, Pastor) can access them.
- 7) No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding, not even for prayer purposes.

Following an allegation, a worker, paid or volunteer, may be suspended. This is a neutral act and will remain while the allegation is investigated. Our priority as a church is to protect children and adults at risk from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged perpetrator.



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

When concerns are expressed about the Pastor

Any safeguarding concerns involving a Pastor should always be reported immediately to the local Baptist Association Safeguarding Contact in addition to following the church's usual procedures. Do not tell the Pastor that a concern has been raised about them.

When concerns are expressed about the church DSL / Safeguarding Trustee or Team Members

Any safeguarding concerns involving the DSL or Safeguarding Trustee should be raised with the Pastor, who should consult with the Safeguarding lead at SEBA. (safeguarding@seba-baptist.org.uk, 07545686143). Do not tell the DSL / Safeguarding Trustee that a concern has been raised about them.

ABUSE OF TRUST

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

While by no means restricted to young leaders, those who are in their early adult years will need to be particularly aware of the need not to abuse their position of trust in their relationships with other young people who are not much younger than themselves.

ALLEGATIONS MADE AGAINST CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS AT RISK

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

When such an instance occurs, they are investigated by the statutory authorities in the same way as if an adult were involved, though it is likely that the perpetrator would also be regarded as a victim in their own right, as they may have also been abused.

It cannot be assumed that young people will grow out of this type of behaviour, as most adult sex offenders started abusing in their teens or even younger.

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



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

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

PASTORAL CARE TO THE VICTIM/S AND THEIR FAMILY

Following an allegation/suspicion

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

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

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

Supporting those who have experienced abuse.

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

- Are accepted for who they are, without being made to forgive or being put into a position of feeling guilty and responsible for what happened to them.
- Know that God loves them unconditionally, and that nothing can or will change this truth.
- Can be confident that those in the church community who know about the abuse are with them on their journey – no matter how long or difficult that journey may be.

It may be necessary to signpost individuals to specialist support. The DSL has a list of relevant local information and contacts.



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SAFE RECRUITMENT FOR WORKERS PAID OR VOLUNTARY

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

All people offering themselves to work with children should be asked to:

- 1) Express interest in serving to church staff member or ministry lead. They will then be put in contact with the relevant ministry leader.
- 2) Read the safeguarding policy and procedures and complete any necessary safeguarding training.
- 3) If necessary, the worker will complete the volunteer application form (including the name and address of a referee who should have experience of the applicant's work and/or attitude, ideally but not necessarily a current member of RBC).
- 4) Agree to a DBS check being carried out, if applicable.

Note: Volunteers who are already members of RBC will not normally be asked to formally apply on paper or to submit references. Their membership interview and acceptance into membership shall be considered sufficient evidence of their character and commitment. It is nevertheless important that they speak with the ministry lead to ascertain suitability and mutual understanding of the role and commitment.

All those appointed to a role of group leadership should previously have served for a period of at least 6 months within the context of said ministry team and should also be a member of the church. Their appointment may be discussed with the Elders prior to them taking up the post. An external reference may be requested if deemed appropriate. Once a decision has been made to appoint the person, a DBS check must be completed, they should sign a volunteer agreement and arrangements must be made for them to receive safeguarding training if required.

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

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

Training

It is important that all workers paid or voluntary understand our church's agreed safeguarding procedures and policy. At Reigate Baptist church we require all workers paid or volunteer to complete relevant Safeguarding training at least once every four years. Where a worker is successfully recruited but has not yet been able to attend training, they should be given a copy of the Baptist Union of Great Britain's Gateway to Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding booklet and asked to complete the relevant sections. Additional specialist training will also be arranged where needed, for example, in first aid or food hygiene. All workers paid or voluntary will be required to read the Reigate Baptist Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. This will need to be completed yearly. We would also require that all workers paid or voluntary would be required to work in line with the church code of conduct and vision.

Young leaders under 18 years of age

In law, young leaders under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that they are helped to develop and hone their skills, attitudes and experience. Young leaders must always be closely supervised by an adult leader and never given sole responsibility. When considering ratios of staff to children, young leaders need to be counted as children, not leaders. The safeguarding procedures apply to a young leader just as they do to any other person. Parent/carer permission needs to be sought for young leaders just as you would for any other person under 18 years of age.



SAFER BEHAVIOUR

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

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Use age and ability appropriate language and tone of voice. Be aware of your body language and the effect you are having on the child or adult at risk.
- Listen well to everyone. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or adult at risk is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is being spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the individual's body language to better understand what is being said.
- Be aware of any physical contact you may have with a child or adult at risk and record it when necessary. For instance, if you need to stop a fight, administer First Aid, give a hug to someone in distress, or protect yourself or others from danger.
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, youth or adult at risk, even in 'fun'.
- Do not scapegoat, belittle, ridicule or reject a child, youth or adult at risk.
- Keep a record of any significant incidents or concerns on a Safeguarding Incident Form. Enter the names of all those present and anything of note which you observe, e.g. details of any fights broken up by the workers, allegations made, etc. All workers who witnessed the incident, overheard it or responded in any way should record the details and sign and date the form.

Specific considerations for safer behaviour with children and youth:

- Do not invade the privacy of children when they are using the toilet or showering
- The level of assistance with personal care (eg. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Avoid rough games involving physical contact between a worker and a child
- No sexually provocative games
- When it is necessary to discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment. There may, however, on the rare occasion be circumstances where a child needs to be restrained in order to protect them or a third person.
- Only invite children and young people to your home or on trips in groups and always make sure that another worker is present.
- Notify the DSL of any children's trips which take place in the name of the church. Parental permission must always be sought.
- Do not give lifts to children or young people on your own. Ensure that if transporting children as part of your church role, you have the correct insurance cover in place as well as parental permission. (See page 14).
- No person under 18 years of age should be left in sole charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.

No one should normally be left working alone with children, young people or adults at risk, but should instead work as part of a team. If there are insufficient leaders for groups:

- Internal doors should be left open.
- At least two people should be present before external doors are opened for an event.
- Consider whether you could combine groups together or rearrange planned activities.
- Reconsider whether you can run the group safely, carrying out a Risk Assessment to record your findings.

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

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



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

- You try to hold the conversation in a corner of a room where other people are present.
- You leave the door open if you are in a room on your own.
- Another team member knows where you are.
- Take notes from the conversation

The only adults allowed to participate in children's and adult at risk activities are those safely appointed and appropriately trained. The leader of the activity should be aware of any other adults who are in the building whilst the activity is running.



BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

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

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Ratios

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

Group/Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
Little Sparks 0 – 2 years	1:3 (minimum 2)	1:3 (minimum 2)
Sparklers 3 – 5 years	1:5 (minimum 2)	1:5 (minimum 2)
Flames 5 – 7 years	1:8 (minimum 2)	1:6 (minimum 2)
Blaze & Wildfires 7 – 11 years	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 8 additional children
11 years and over	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children 1:6 (for overnight stays)	2 adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children
Additional needs	1:1 Support may be arranged on an individual case basis for children with additional needs.	

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Children and young people who have a disability can be at greater risk of abuse. They will often require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility, etc. Some children may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age-appropriate way. Where possible, the leader of the team is required to meet with the parents/carers of children/young people with special needs and find out from them how best to assist and care for the child or young person.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

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



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- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream, etc), workers should encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.

VISITING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE AT HOME, OR IN A PUBLIC PLACE

It is unlikely that workers will need to make pastoral visits to children and their families at home or in a public place. If a situation occurs where it is needed then it should be done in pairs, and with the prior agreement of the Pastor.

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-18

PEER GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

CHILDREN WITH NO ADULT SUPERVISION

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

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

MENTORING

If a worker is working with a young person as part of the recognised church mentoring programme:

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



Transport

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

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

Our practice specifically for transporting children is as follows:

- Parental consent will be given for all journeys.
- All children and young people should be returned to an agreed drop off point. At collection or drop off points, children should never be left on their own. 2 DBS checked adults must wait with them until they are collected by an appropriate adult.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS – PHOTOS & VIDEO

Modern Technologies and Safe Communication

A worker's role description will include an acknowledgement and approval of technologies such as email, social networking and mobile phone communications as a legitimate means of communicating with young people. It should also include the expectations of the church in relation to their use. On the general consent form, (can be obtained from the DSL) parents/carers sign to agree that the young person can receive such communications. At Reigate Baptist church we will continue to monitor and adhere to safe practices when communicating with young adults/youth.

Young people also need to be aware of the protocols that workers follow in relation to electronic communications. It is important to remember that as well as the parent/carer, young people have a right to decide whether they want a worker to have their contact details and should not be pressurised otherwise. We will store their contact details, as part of our data protection policy, on ChurchSuite.

It is not appropriate to use these communication methods with children aged 18 years and younger (unless parental consent is obtained). For more information on cyber safety, please refer to the Baptist Union of Great Britain Cyber Safety Guide, which can be found on their website.

Email

Email should be limited to sharing generic information, for example, to remind young people about meetings. Emails should only be sent from a Reigate Baptist Church email address. It is important workers use clear and unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation, for example, avoiding inappropriate terms such as 'love' when ending an email.



Mobile Phones

Workers need to take care in using mobile phones to communicate with young people:

- Mobile phone use should primarily be for the purposes of information sharing.
- Instant messaging should be kept to an absolute minimum. Workers should save significant conversations and keep a log stating with whom and when they communicated.
- Messages must only be sent via WhatsApp.
- Workers should keep a log of all conversations/texts sent and received.
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be passed on to the worker's Team Leader
- Workers should use clear language and should not use abbreviations like 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love'.
- Workers should not take photos of children, young people or adults at risk unless permission is sought in advance and should not store such photos on personal phones. We have a permission form for photographs, if you require one please contact the DSL

Social Networking

- Workers should have a site that is used solely for children's / youth work communications and is totally separate from their own personal site. This is to ensure that all communication with children and young people is kept within public domains.
- Workers should not send private messages to children on social networks. Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Workers should not accept 'friend' or 'following' requests from children on their personal site, nor seek to be 'friends' or a 'follower' of any child known to them in a church context, without parental knowledge and consent.

Zoom

- When having zoom calls with children, youth or adults at risk, always ensure that you have one other helper or leader on the call with you
- Treat the zoom call as if the meeting or event was face to face and carry out good safeguarding practice
- Note any risks or concerns that could arise before the session

Taking Videos and Photographs of Children

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, churches must be very careful if they use still or moving images of clearly identifiable people. There are several issues to be aware of:

- Permission must be obtained, via the consent form, of all children who will appear in a photograph or video before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- It must be made clear why that person's image is being used, what you will be using it for, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- If images are being taken at an event attended by large crowds, such as a sports event, this is regarded as a public area and permission from a crowd is not necessary.
- Many uses of photographs are not covered by the Data Protection Act 1998, including all photographs and video recordings made for personal use, such as a parent/carer taking photographs at school sports days or videoing a church nativity play.
- Children and young people under the age of 18 should not be identified by surname or other personal details, including email, postal address or telephone number.
- When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.



Computers and Laptops

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

WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK

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

Premises

The church building will be made as accessible as possible to all people. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating will be addressed wherever possible, and where necessary, aids and adaptations put in place. We have one wheelchair and one walker kept onsite. We have a lift used to access the 1st floor, which is regularly serviced. We have a disabled toilet downstairs and upstairs. We have a hearing loop in the main hall

Financial Integrity

Arrangements are in place for dealing with money, financial transactions and gifts, as outlined below:

- Those who work with adults at risk may become involved in some aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping or banking, etc. If handling money for someone else, always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done.
- Workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond any salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts received should be reported to the church trustees, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated church workers (not people from the same family)
- Care should be taken not to canvas for church donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the trustees. Workers should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.
- Expert legal advice should be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and Appointment to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.



Language

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

Photographs

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

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

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

- Workers should be aware of the power imbalance within pastoral relationships and the potential for abuse of trust.
- Behaviour that suggests favouritism or gives the impression of a special relationship should be avoided.
- Workers should be aware of the dangers of dependency within a pastoral relationship.
- Workers should never take advantage of their role and engage in sexual activity with someone with whom they have a pastoral relationship.
- All people receiving pastoral ministry should be treated with respect and should be encouraged to make their own decisions about any actions or outcomes.
- Workers should not pastorally minister to anyone whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Workers need to recognise the limits of their own abilities and competencies and get further help when working with situations outside of their expertise or role.

Record Keeping

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



HEALTH AND SAFETY - SAFE PRACTICE AND SAFE PREMISES

Consent forms

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

Health and Safety

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

Buildings being used for children's, youth and adult at risk groups will be properly maintained. A representative from the teams involved will take part in an annual health and safety review in order to consider all aspects of safety for everyone involved in using the premises. This will be carried out yearly by our health and safety officer Charlotte Trumper.

Fire

It is the responsibility of all group leaders/responsible persons within the building to ensure the safety of themselves and those who are in their care. In addition, it is a legal requirement that all group leaders/responsible persons are familiar with the emergency procedures in the event of a fire. Any external bookings will need to be made aware of the fire policy. In the event of a fire or fire drill, please take all children and youth to the designated fire point (during the week: by the large outdoor Bins, on a Sunday: through the gate onto the school field). On a Sunday morning, please take the registration tablet for each group, line the group up on the school field and take the register to ensure everyone is safely out of the building.

First Aid

Our church has a number of trained First Aiders. All church groups will ensure that they have sufficient trained first aiders on their regular team so that there is always a first aider present at events and activities. We will have a list of the named first aiders on display by the information desk, as well as being stored on ChurchSuite. We have a number of first aid kits as well as an incident reporting book, which must be completed in the event of any accidents, injuries or incidents. There is also an additional first aid kit for external events. A nominated individual will ensure that the contents of the first aid kits are checked regularly. Completed accident forms should be passed on to the team leader who will then pass it on to the Operations Manager.

Supervision of Groups

The person responsible for a group/activity must sign in at the start and end of that activity so that it is apparent who the 'responsible person' for that activity is – even if you were already in the building or are staying on afterwards. You also need to make sure that you keep a register so that you know who is on the premises at all time.



Food Hygiene

The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 state that anyone who handles food or whose actions could affect its safety must comply with the regulations. It therefore follows that those with responsibility for food will need to possess the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and be aware of food safety (preparation, handling and storage, disposal of waste, etc).

Risk Assessment

Before undertaking any activity with children or adults at risk, the leader will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out. This needs to be carried out by the ministry lead or team leader

OUTINGS AND OVERNIGHT EVENTS INVOLVING CHILDREN

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

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

Sleeping Arrangements

Sleeping arrangements for overnight events will be carefully considered. It may be acceptable for workers to share sleeping accommodation with children/young people in a large dormitory or on an activity such as youth hostelling, where there is more than one worker per room. Workers will not share sleeping accommodation with fewer than three children. Arrangements will be age-appropriate, provide security for the child/young person and be safe for everyone involved. The event leader will ensure that parents understand what the arrangements will be and are happy with them. Sleeping arrangements will need to be split into same sex groups

Adventurous Activities

No child will participate in adventurous activities without the written consent of the parent /carer. The activity leader will ensure that the staff engaged in such activities are properly trained and qualified and that the correct ratio of staff to children is met. At an activity centre or for an organisation whose own staff undertake such activities, if the activities come within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004, the activity leader needs to ensure that the premises are licensed.

Safety

It is the responsibility of the team leader to carry out an off site risk assessment prior to going. It is the responsibility of the workers to always know the whereabouts of every child/young person participating in an overnight event, and this may include monitoring access on and off the site. General safety rules will be applied as appropriate.



Holding and Dispensing of Medication

Team leaders can agree to hold or dispense medication for children or youth on an event. If someone is unable to manage their own medication then parents will need to sign a consent form allowing the team leader to dispense the medication.

Outings and overnight events involving adults at risk

Please see Appendices.

SAFER COMMUNITY

Bullying

Bullying is another form of abuse, and it can be verbal or physical. Bullying doesn't just happen to children, often adults can be victims too. There is no legal definition of bullying, but it is usually defined as a repeated pattern of behaviour intended to cause emotional or physical harm to another person, or exert power over them. The effect of bullying on the victim can be profound, both emotionally and physically, regardless of their age, ability or status. It is important to recognise that bullying happens within churches, and it is not isolated to the children and young people. Anyone in the church can be a victim of bullying, just as anyone in the church can be the bully, including those in leadership. Some examples of bullying that could arise in the church context are:

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

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

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

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



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

- Everyone in the church, whether children or adults, should know how they can report any incidents of bullying.
- All allegations of bullying will be treated seriously and details will be carefully checked before action is taken.
- The bullying behaviour will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible.
- An attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour. This will be carried out by the pastoral team, parents (where appropriate) and ministry leaders.
- All allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with the actions that are taken.
- Where an allegation of bullying is made against a church or group leader, advice will be sought from the local Baptist Association Safeguarding Contact as this should be addressed.
- Incidents of bullying may be reported to the statutory authorities in line with the church safeguarding procedures.

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

Working with Alleged or Known Offenders

When someone attending the church is known to have abused children or adults at risk, or a serious allegation has been made, the church safeguarding team will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its commitment to protect vulnerable groups, will set boundaries for that person which they shall be expected to keep. These will be set out in what is known as a Safeguarding Contract. This contract will be bespoke according to the individuals circumstances. When it is known that a person who has been convicted of abusing children, young people or adults is attending our church, it is important that their behaviour within the church community is properly managed and that a contract is put in place. There are also times when it will be appropriate to take such measures with a person who has faced allegations of abuse, but hasn't been convicted.

In determining the details of the contract:

- The DSL will inform and take advice from the local Baptist Association Safeguarding Contact and complete a Risk Assessment (available from the Baptist Union website) in order to determine the details of the contract.
- There will be a discussion about who should be informed about the nature of the offence and the details of the contract.
- The rights of the offender to re-build their life without people knowing the details of their past offence should be balanced against the need to protect children, young people and adults at risk.
- The safeguarding team will always be informed about the contract and will be asked to keep it confidential
- The DSL should determine whether the person is subject to supervision or is on the Sex Offenders' Register. If so, the DSL should make contact with the offender's Specialist



Probation Officer (SPO) who will inform the church of any relevant information or restrictions that they should be aware of.

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

Alleged or known offenders who are themselves adults at risk

A formal contract may be quite a daunting process for someone with learning difficulties or a young person, yet having safeguards in place is still necessary. Therefore, an alternative may be to arrange a meeting with the individual in question where they can be taken through the main elements of a formal contract in a way that is non-threatening and easy to understand. Notes would be taken and the individual would need to verbally agree to the requirements laid out in the meeting. Rather than signing a formal 'contract', the individual would instead sign to say that they agree with the minutes or meeting notes, and that they will stick to what has been agreed during the meeting. This will result in the same outcome as a contract, but is a more informal and appropriate approach for an adult at risk. The agreed requirements will need to be reviewed regularly to make sure that the individual is complying, exactly as a formal contract would be.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Definitions of Abuse

Type of abuse	Child	Adult at risk
Physical	Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury to a child.	To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering to an adult at risk.
Emotional	The persistent, emotional, ill treatment of a child that affects their emotional and behavioural development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or that they are given responsibilities beyond their years.	The use of threats, fear or power gained by another adult's position, to invalidate the person's independent wishes. Such behaviour can create very real emotional and psychological distress. All forms of abuse have an emotional component.
Sexual	Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.	Any non-consenting sexual act or behaviour. No one should enter into a sexual relationship with someone for whom they have pastoral responsibility or hold a position of trust.
Neglect	Where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development.	A person's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs are not met. Neglect can be deliberate or can occur as a result of not understanding what someone's needs are.
Type of Abuse	Additional Definitions	
Financial	The inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions.	
Spiritual	The inappropriate use of religious belief or practice; coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context; the abuse of trust by someone in a position of spiritual authority (e.g. minister). The person experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack.	
Discrimination	The inappropriate treatment of a person because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality or disability.	
Institutional	The mistreatment or abuse of a person by a regime or individuals within an institution. It can occur through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and	



	neglect, or poor professional practice or ill-treatment. The church as an institution is not exempt from perpetrating institutional abuse.
Domestic Abuse	Domestic abuse is any threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been in a relationship, or between family members. It can affect anybody regardless of their age, gender, sexuality or social status. Domestic abuse can be physical, sexual or psychological, and whatever form it takes, it is rarely a one-off incident. Usually there is a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour where an abuser seeks to exert power over their family member or partner.
Cyber Abuse	The use of information technology (email, mobile phones, websites, social media, instant messaging, chatrooms, etc.) to repeatedly harm or harass other people in a deliberate manner.
Self-harm	Self-Harm is the intentional damage or injury to a person's own body. It is used as a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. An individual may also be neglecting themselves, which can result in harm to themselves.
Mate crime	'Mate crime' is when people (particularly those with learning disabilities) are befriended by members of the community, who go on to exploit and take advantage of them.
Modern Slavery	Modern slavery is the practice of treating people as property; it includes bonded labour, child labour, sex slavery and trafficking. It is illegal in every country of the world.

Radicalisation	The radicalisation of individuals is the process by which people come to support any form of extremism and, in some cases, join terrorist groups. Some individuals are more vulnerable to the risk of being groomed into terrorism than others.
Honour / Forced Marriage	An honour marriage / forced marriage is when one or both of the spouses do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage. There may be physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure exerted in order to make the marriage go ahead. The motivation may include the desire to control unwanted behaviour or sexuality.
Female Genital Mutilation	Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO). FGM is a cultural practice common around the world and is largely performed on girls aged between 10 and 18. Performing acts of FGM is illegal in the UK as is arranging for a child to travel abroad for FGM to be carried out.

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

- unexplained injuries on areas of the body not usually prone to such injuries
- an injury that has not been treated/received medical attention
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- a child or adult at risk discloses behaviour that is harmful to them



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- unexplained changes in behaviour or mood (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness in children
- signs of neglect, such as under-nourished, untreated illnesses, inadequate care.

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



APPENDIX B: Outings and Overnight Events involving Adults at Risk

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

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

Sleeping Arrangements

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

Personal Care

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

Activities

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

Safety

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

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



Consent and Medical Information

The guidelines clearly state that an adult at risk should have a say in their care and any arrangements made for them, however, there may be occasions when you need to involve others in decision making. In these situations, seek advice from the DSL with regard to who should be involved. A medical consent form should be completed by each member of the group and held by the leader. This will include any health concerns, emergency contact information and contact details for their GP. This will allow emergency medical personnel to have access to information should the need arise.

Holding and Dispensing of Medication

Church workers can hold or dispense medication for those children attending an event or on a Sunday, however, you will need parental consent. Please ensure the team know about the child and the medication and how to dispense it.



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APPENDIX C: Electronic Communications Safeguarding Summary (for ministry teams with adults and young people)

This document is a summary of key points particularly related to electronic communications for teams where adults and young people (under 18s) serve alongside each other. This summary does not replace the full safeguarding policy and procedures document. All team members should still read the full policy and procedures document annually for a full knowledge of safeguarding at Reigate Baptist Church.

Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones should be primarily for the purpose of information sharing.
- Instant messaging should be kept to an absolute minimum and ideally kept to group messages.
- Messages must only be sent via WhatsApp.
- All conversations/texts sent and received must be saved.
- Clear, unambiguous language must be used and abbreviations should be avoided, e.g. lol which could mean laugh out loud or lots of love.
- Photos of young people should not be taken or shared on personal phones or WhatsApp groups.
- Be mindful of sharing memes, gifs, jokes etc. Keep content appropriate for under 18s.
- Do not save young people's mobile numbers on personal phones or contact them privately outside of WhatsApp groups. (Worship leaders and administrators who need to save numbers in order to add young people to groups related to serving on a team are exempt.) - Instant and private messages should be avoided on all social networks.

Emails

- Emails should be limited to sharing generic information, for example, to remind young people about meetings or rehearsals.
- Where possible, emails should be sent from a Reigate Baptist Church email address. (Volunteer leaders and administrators without access to a Reigate Baptist Church email address may use their home email address.)
- Where possible, emails should be sent to groups rather than individuals.
- It is important to use clear and unambiguous language to reduce risk of misinterpretation, for example, avoiding inappropriate terms such as 'love from' when ending an email.

