

## **1. Details of the place of worship / organisation**

Name of Place of Worship: Beech Hill Church, Otley

Address: 20-24 Westgate, Otley, LS21 3AS

Telephone Number: 01943 468876

General Email Address: [hello@beechhillchurch.org.uk](mailto:hello@beechhillchurch.org.uk)

The Church is a member of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches:

<https://fiec.org.uk/>

Trustee and Elder Responsible for Safeguarding Name: Richard Hughes

Responsible Trustee and Elder Contact Telephone: 07885219520

Email: [hughes.richardb62@gmail.com](mailto:hughes.richardb62@gmail.com)

Safeguarding Coordinator Name: Caroline Haley

Safeguarding Coordinator Contact Telephone: 07762778714

Email: [caroline.l.haley@gmail.com](mailto:caroline.l.haley@gmail.com)

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator Name: Laura Wood

Deputy Coordinator Contact Telephone: 07747816503

Email: [msmyth.is@gmail.com](mailto:msmyth.is@gmail.com)

Charity Number: 1184784 (As Bethel Church)

Regulators: The Charity Commission for England and Wales

Insurance Company: Congregational. <https://www.congregational.co.uk>

## **Activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs**

The Church teaches children about the bible as part of its Sunday activities (Heroes and Miniature Heroes); it runs a group for parents and carers to bring their pre-school age children (Tots and Toys).

## Our commitments

As a Church, we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We:

- Acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.
- Accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.
- Agree with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

We have adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten **Safe and Secure** safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight.

The Church Trustees and Leaders undertake to:

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and regularly review the operational guidelines attached.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is welcoming, safe and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) in their work and any actions they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs.
- Ensure that activities with children organised with external organisations (such as the Pastor's work in schools) will adhere to that organisation's policy/code of conduct.
- Only use external organisations to work with children in our care which have robust safeguarding procedures.

## 2. Prevention

### Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

To safeguard those in our church we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point the definition of abuse, in Article 19:

*1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.*

*2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.*

For adults, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights is relevant, and, in particular, Article 5:

*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are appended.

### Safer recruitment

The Church will ensure all workers are appointed, trained, supported, and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed

- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with the DBS Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- Suitable induction training is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

### **Safeguarding training**

The Church is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers will undertake recognised safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Church will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

### **Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct**

As a Church we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers have been issued with the Church Code of Conduct towards children, young people and/or adults with care and support needs.

### **3. Practice Guidelines**

As a place of worship working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusations.

#### **Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and assure ourselves that their safeguarding policy and procedures meets our expectations. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, which works with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults will, as part of the letting agreement, have their own policy that meets thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

## 4. Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a volunteer or worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Procedures will be followed as below:

Reporting a concern should be a first thought.

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

**Name:** (hereafter the "Safeguarding Co-ordinator") Caroline Haley

**Tel:** 07762778714

**Email:** caroline.l.haley@gmail.com

The above is nominated by the Church leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities where there is a significant concern of possible harm.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, then the report should be made to:

**Name:** (hereafter the "Deputy") Laura Wood

**Tel:** 07747816503

**Email:** lmsmyth.ls@gmail.com

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Deputy, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

**thirtyone:eight** PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ.

Tel: 0303 003 1111.

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact Social Services in the area the child or adult lives.

**Name of local authority:** Leeds City Council

**Children's Social Services**

**Tel:** 0113 376 0336

**Out of hours Tel:** 0113 535 0600

**Website Address:** <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/children-and-families/keeping-children-safe/report-a-child-protection-concern>

## **Adult Social Services**

**Tel:** 0113 222 4401

**Out of hours Tel:** 0113 378 0644

**Website Address:** <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/adult-social-care/worried-about-someone/report-neglect-or-abuse-of-an-adult>

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern

- Trustee/Elder responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
- Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.

The Trustees/Elders will support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

## **Whistleblowing and unresolved concerns**

Although the Church leaders hope that members of the Church will use the procedure above it is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from thirtyone:eight. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct.

We hope by making this statement that the Church demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and their Deputy is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

## **Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:**

### **Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.**

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

### **Allegations of sexual abuse**

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.



### **Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult is in need of protection:**

**Suspensions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse.**

If there is concern about any of the above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator/Deputy will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

### **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

## **Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs**

The safeguarding co-ordinator will:

- Ensure that the individual is suspended from work with vulnerable adults
- Liaise with Adult Social Services
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide not the church.

## **5. Pastoral Care**

### **Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Church is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the Church.

### **Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk**

When someone attending the Church is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs; the Trustees/Elders will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

## **6. Preventing and Responding to Bullying**

The Oxford English Dictionary defines bullying as: "when individuals or groups seek to harm, intimidate or coerce someone who is perceived to be vulnerable". Bullying can occur in any group of children or young people, and sometimes between adults. It can take many forms and may be perpetrated online or using mobile devices (cyberbullying).

**Beech Hill Church 2021**

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We will endeavour to ensure that everyone in our Church and its groups will feel that they belong, and that no-one feels left out.

We will:

- Actively encourage people with different backgrounds and abilities to participate
- Encourage respect of the varied perspectives and experiences of individual members
- Avoid language that belittles or differentiates in an unhelpful way
- Challenge unpleasant, disrespectful, discriminatory, and demeaning language and action

Where necessary, and with the support of parents we will encourage mediation or apply sanctions that support the restoration of relationships and appropriate behaviour.

## **7. Health and Safety**

### **Ensuring the premises and activities are suitable for children and those for special requirements**

The church takes health and safety seriously, including the health and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The building and all unusual or off-premises activities will be subject to risk assessments. The building is subject to a fire policy and regular fire risk assessments. The church health and safety and fire policies are available on request and are posted on the church website.

## **8. Recording and Storing of Information**

To look after the children, young people, and vulnerable adults in our care, it will be necessary to obtain certain information about them from their parent/guardian. This may include name, date of birth, parents' contact details, any medical issues, or allergies and whether workers and helpers are permitted to change nappies or help the individual go to the toilet. All information will be collected and stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, a copy which is available on our website at [www.beechhillchurch.org.uk/resources](http://www.beechhillchurch.org.uk/resources).

## **Taking of photographs and videos**

We recognise that sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of Church. The Church commits to explaining to those present if photographs or video will be taken. The Church will also ensure that if children or young people can be individually recognised in the photographs or videos that written parental consent has been obtained. We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with our safeguarding policy and data protection law.

We will keep electronic images and videos in a protected folder with restricted access.

## **9. Adoption of the policy**

This policy was agreed by the trustees/elders and then by the Church on and will be reviewed annually.

Signed by:

Position: Trustee/Elder

Signed by:

Position: Safeguarding Coordinator

A copy of this policy is available on the church website.

## **Appendix 1. Code of Conduct**

This behaviour code outlines the conduct Beech Hill Church (hereafter ‘the Church’) expects from all our workers and volunteers. The behaviour code aims to help us protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made. It is based on the Code of Conduct created by NSPCC.

The Church is responsible for making sure all workers and volunteers have seen, understood and agreed to follow this code of conduct, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

In your role at the Church, you are acting in a position of authority and have a duty of care towards the children, young people and vulnerable adults we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model and are expected to act appropriately.

### **Responsibility**

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- providing a safe environment for children and young people
- ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures including our policies and procedures for child protection/safeguarding and whistleblowing
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for children and young people to follow
- challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## **Rights**

You should:

- treat children, young people and vulnerable adults fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that children and young people are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage children, young people and vulnerable adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that make them uncomfortable.

## **Relationships**

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- ensure your contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults is appropriate and relevant to the work of the project you are involved in
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people. If a situation arises where you are alone with a child or young person, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults.
- if a child specifically asks for or needs some individual time with you, ensure other workers or volunteers know where you and the child are.

- only provide personal care (for instance changing nappies or helping a child go to the toilet) if it has been agreed by the parent or carer in writing in advance.

## **Respect**

You should:

- listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy as far as possible.
- if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.

## **Unacceptable behaviour**

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

## **Upholding this Code of Conduct**

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You should always follow this code of conduct and never rely on your reputation or that of the Church to protect you.

If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to the Safeguarding Coordinator. If necessary, you should follow our whistleblowing procedure and safeguarding and child protection procedures.

### **Breaches of the Code of Conduct or Safeguarding Policy**

The safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults must always be a priority. The Church, and the Safeguarding and Deputy Coordinators on its behalf, reserve the right to take appropriate action against any individual working for the Church with children or vulnerable adults.

This action may include, but may not be restricted to:

- A word of advice or warning
- Mentoring, supervision and/or training
- A formal warning
- Removal from working with children and/or vulnerable adults
- Referral to the Local Authority Child Protection/Adult Social Care team and/or the police.



## **Appendix 2. Signs of Abuse**

The following signs may or may not be indicators that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

### **Physical signs of possible abuse**

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse

### **Indicators of possible sexual abuse**

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home

- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia

### **Emotional signs of possible abuse**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Depression/aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying