



TAKE HOLD CHURCH

Safeguarding Policy

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Section 1 Contact Details

1.1 Church contact

Take Hold Church

Physical Address:
St. Stephens Church
105 Saint Stephen Street
Edinburgh
EH3 5AB

Mailing Address (Office):
121 George Street
Rm 313-315, 3rd Floor South
Edinburgh
EH2 4YN

Lead Pastor: Paul Richardson

Safeguarding Email: safeguarding@takeholdchurch.com

Safeguarding Lead: Paul Richardson

Safeguarding Support: Jillian Johnson

Charity Number: Scottish Charity SC052537

Insurance Company: Ansvar Insurances

Insurance Broker: WRS Insurance Brokers

1.2 Authorities and other resources contact

The Safeguarding Lead should contact the relevant authority, or first contact thirtyone:eight for advisement. Social care is organized on a regional basis, based on where a person lives. Based on this information, the appropriate Social Care office should be contacted.

Police

24 Hours	999 Emergency 101 Non-emergency
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Ambulance

24 Hours	999 Emergency 111 Non-emergency
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thirtyone:eight

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm	0303 003 1111 After hours available
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<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator

Monday to Thursday Primary: info@oscr.org.uk

9:30am to 3:30pm Secondary: 0138 222 0446

Friday

9:30am to 3:00pm

<https://www.oscr.org.uk/managing-a-charity/notifiable-events/notifiable-events-form/>

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)

24 Hours 0800 1111

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

Report Remove

Helps young people under 18 in the UK confidentially report sexual images and videos of themselves and remove them from the internet.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/>

Section 2 Introduction

2.1 Culture

At Take Hold Church, our community is a place where people are loved, people belong, where we believe in whole-hearted living, and a place where we add value to one another.¹ In order for all of these important values to be experienced, the church's environments and events must be safe places.

- We believe when you encounter Take Hold Church, it will be an encouraging, uplifting, joyful, and compassionate atmosphere because God perfectly embodies all these attributes.
- We believe when you encounter Take Hold Church, it will be a place of safety, trust, justice, protection, and dignity because these are values intertwined with the very heart of God.

These standards, behaviors, and codes of conduct have been developed to promote an environment that reflects who God is and to inspire a culture in the church that is attentive to the safety and wellbeing of anyone who interacts with our church. Our safeguarding culture is one that always evaluates current and new environments for vulnerabilities and takes proactive action.

This document has been created to be used by staff and volunteers of all teams who have care or leadership among Kids, Youth, or Adults at Risk.

¹ Take Hold Church, 2023 Values, <https://takeholdchurch.com/>.

The standards and behaviors may be referred to as the culture of the organization or “the way we do things around here.” Culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

“The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object.”²

2.2 Definitions

Kid – A person 0-12 years of age (‘Child’ is also used interchangeably. ‘Kids’ or ‘Children’ refers to a group of people in this age range)

Youth – A person 12-18 years of age (‘Young person’ is also used interchangeably. ‘Youth’ also refers to a group of people in this age range)

Adult at Risk – An adult person who is unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests, is at risk of harm, and because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity.³ Adults in Scotland are generally considered to be over 18, however, depending on the legal circumstances there are some cases where an adult is considered to be over 16. (‘Adults at Risk’ refers to a group of people whom each meet this definition as an individual)

Safeguarding – Actions taken to protect people from harm. The safeguarding question asks, “Is someone at risk of harm?”

2.3 Abuse

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. Perpetrators can be men, women, or children. Anyone can be a perpetrator, regardless of gender, age, or race. **The following categories of abuse and possible signs and indicators are intended to help detect if abuse or an abuse concern is present.**

² ICSA: The Governance Institute, 2017

³ Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/10/section/3>

All disclosures or allegations of abuse are to be taken seriously. Included in this policy are guidelines and steps required to respond to disclosures and allegations of abuse (see Section 4 Responding to allegations of abuse).

Abuse can include the following categories, as defined by thirtyone:eight:⁴

Physical abuse or injury is the deliberate use of physical force by one person against another to cause harm.

Possible signs and indicators may include visible injuries and bruising, unexplained cuts, marks, or scars. Injuries that don't match the explanation given or that do not fit within normal injuries or body locations for a person of that age. Getting injured often, unexplained falls, subdued or changed behaviour, changes in weight, being excessively under or overweight or malnourished, failing to get medical treatment or changing Doctors often.

Emotional abuse (or Psychological abuse) involves harming a person emotionally and includes any persistent emotional ill-treatment. This can be a person being consistently told that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. Often involves acts of intimidation, coercion, and harassment, and bullying (including online).

Possible signs and indicators may include low self-esteem, attachment issues, depression, self-harm, and eating disorders. Signs of distress, tearfulness or anger. Reluctance to be alone with a particular person.

Neglect (or acts of omission) is the failure to meet a person's basic physical or emotional needs. This can include not providing adequate food, clothing, or assistance with personal hygiene.

Possible signs and indicators may include a poor appearance or hygiene (e.g. being smelly or dirty), living in an unsuitable home environment (e.g. having no heating), inappropriate or inadequate clothing, signs of malnutrition or not being given enough food, poor language or social skills, being left alone for a long time, and poor school attendance or performance.

Sexual abuse (or Sexual violence) is any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted or takes place without consent or understanding. The abuse may involve physical contact and touching or non-contact activities. It can be perpetrated by family or non-family members, women, men and other children.

⁴ <https://thirtyoneeight.org/dashboard/knowledge-hub/responding-to-concerns/recognise/types-of-abuse/>

Possible signs and indicators may include bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area or when walking or sitting. Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sex. Uncharacteristic or age-inappropriate use of sexual language or significant changes in sexual behavior or attitude. Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships or being alone with a particular person.

Spiritual abuse⁵ is coercion and control of a person by another in a spiritual context and can be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves.

Possible signs and indicators may include a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. The leader may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or God's) acceptance and approval. May include requirements for secrecy and silence and suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position.

2.4 Board of Trustees Governance

Good governance helps an organisation prevent abuse and allows it to respond quickly and with integrity when concerns arise. Central to this, is our Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility for Take Hold Church and have a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards, and behaviours of the organisation. The Trustees have ultimate responsibility for safeguarding at Take Hold Church.

Lead Trustee designated over safeguarding: **To be named in 2026**

Lead Trustee Email: **To be added in 2026**

2.5 Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

⁵ <https://thirtyoneeight.org/dashboard/knowledge-hub/definitions/spiritual-abuse/>

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022 it is illegal (England and Wales)(Northern Ireland) for those in positions of trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a child/youth in their care, even if that child/youth is over the age of consent (16 or over).⁶

The following Safeguarding Policy aims, to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in our organisation but to also build an open culture where:

- Those who lead do so by example.
- Those who lead are committed to the safeguarding of all.
- Those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- There are accountability structures.
- There is a clear code of conduct for those who work or volunteer.
- The values of the organisation are embedded in its day-to-day actions and behaviours of its people.
- There is open communication and clear ways to contact the appropriate persons with safeguarding concerns.

2.6 Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that anyone can be the victim of physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual abuse or neglect.

We 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”.

We also concur 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

⁶ [https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/preventing-abuse-positions-of-trust#:~:text=Key%20legislation,\(Scotland\)%20Act%202009](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/preventing-abuse-positions-of-trust#:~:text=Key%20legislation,(Scotland)%20Act%202009).

care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight,⁷ an independent, expert organization that exists to equip organizations and churches with safeguarding tools, advice, and assistance to help protect vulnerable people. Take Hold Church is a thirtyone:eight member.

Section 3 Prevention

3.1 Understanding abuse and neglect

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

1. States 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.

Also for adults, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with particular reference to Article 5:

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

⁷ <https://thirtyoneeight.org/ten-standards>

Detailed definitions, signs and indicators of abuse (see section 2.3 Abuse), as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse (see Section 4 Responding to allegations of abuse) are included here in our policy.

3.2 Safer recruitment

Take Hold Church leadership will ensure all staff and volunteers will be appointed, trained, supported, and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description specification for the post.
- Those applying have completed an application form in ChurchSuite.
- Written references via ChurchSuite have been obtained and followed up where appropriate.
- A self-declaration form and disclosure check (PVG Scheme Record) has been completed (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Those short listed have been interviewed and safeguarding has been discussed at interview.
- Qualifications, where relevant, have been verified.
- A suitable training program is provided for the successful applicant.
- The applicant has completed a probationary period of 90 days.
- The applicant has been given a copy of Take Hold Church's Safeguarding Policy and knows how to report concerns.

3.3 Safeguarding training

Take Hold Church leadership is committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development opportunities for all staff and volunteers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All staff and volunteers will receive induction training and undertake recognized safeguarding training on a regular basis.

Safeguarding training will be provided virtually by thirtyone:eight and paid for by Take Hold Church. Induction training will be thirtyone:eight's Safeguarding Children & Young People training, which is offered frequently throughout the year and can be conveniently accessed online without travel. Safeguarding best practice is for staff and volunteers to repeat training every three years, which the church will prioritize to keep safeguarding training and awareness current and central to all that we do.

Take Hold Church leadership 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.

3.4 Practice Guidelines

As a church working with kids, youth, 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 accusation.

We have specific good practice guidelines for every activity we are involved in and these are attached or in the appendices.

For some activities you will need specific forms, e.g. consent forms, risk assessments etc. The relevant forms are maintained and securely stored on ChurchSuite, our church database.

3.5 Management of Staff and Volunteers – Code of Conduct

Take Hold Church leadership is committed to supporting all staff and volunteers, ensuring they receive support and supervision.

All staff and volunteers have been issued with a code of conduct detailing appropriate behaviour towards kids, youth, and adults with care and support needs, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their job role and out.

Take Hold Church's Code of Conduct can be found in Appendix 1.

Section 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.

4.1 Documenting a concern

The following actions should be taken in the event of a disclosure or allegation:

1. Listen carefully.
2. Reassure them that they have made the right choice to tell someone.
3. Do not promise that it will be kept a secret, but try to keep confidentiality as much as is appropriate. When someone says, "Can I share something with you?" it's best to immediately state, "You can

tell me anything, but depending on what you tell me, I may be required to share it with someone else.” Don’t ever promise to “not tell,” because you may be obligated to disclose this information according to law.

4. “Who else know this?” is an important question to ask.
5. Share with the person what the next step is and reassure them that the information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
6. **Important: Write down what has been shared as soon as possible, using the person’s own words to describe what has happened. Refer to Appendix 2 Cause for Concern Form.**
 - a. Don’t decide if it’s true or what to do with the information at this time, just make sure it’s all written down during the “golden hour.”
 - b. Avoid opinions and keep to the facts. Avoid using generalizations like “untidy” or “messy” without being more detailed to explain those.
 - c. It’s helpful to document as much detail as possible, thinking through the questions of the 4 W’s and 1 H: When, where, what, why and how. Also add date/time and injury details, such as injury size/location.
 - d. Sign and date this record.
7. Immediately report the concern to the appropriate Safeguarding person at Take Hold Church (see section 4.2 Reporting a concern below).

4.2 Reporting a concern

A staff member or volunteer should make a report of the concern and the person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

Paul Richardson (hereafter the “Safeguarding Lead”)

Email: paul@takeholdchurch.com

Telephone: 0757 298 6540

The above is nominated by the 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.

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

Jillian Johnson (hereafter the "Safeguarding Support")

Email: jillian@takeholdchurch.com

Telephone: 0738 300 2006

If the suspicions implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Support, then the report should be made in the first instance to thirtyone:eight, telephone 0303 003 1111, Option 2.

Alternatively contact Social Care or the Police.

4.3 Action to take with a concern

The Safeguarding Lead should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice. They should then contact Social Care in the area the child or adult lives (see Section 1.2 Authorities and other resources contact. This section will be helpful to determine which authority/Social Care office to contact and the relevant contact information and out of hours telephone number to use).

A referral may be made to the Police or Social Care and the first person told may have to make a statement to the police. The notes made at the time may form part of this and that is why it is so important to use the actual words used to describe the abuse (see section 4.1 Documenting a concern).

The Safeguarding Lead may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern.

The Lead Trustee designated over safeguarding (see Section 2.4 Board of Trustees Governance) may need to liaise with the insurance company or the OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator to report a serious incident.

Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a staff member or volunteer working with someone under 18.

Suspicions 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 Lead, the absence of the Safeguarding Lead or the Safeguarding Support should not delay referral to Social Care, the Police or taking advice from thirtyone:eight.

The Leadership will support the Safeguarding Lead/the Safeguarding Support 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.

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, although the Leadership hope that members of the church will use this

procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Lead/the Safeguarding Support has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Team members as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the Safeguarding Lead/the Safeguarding Support 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.

4.4 Detailed procedures for 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 Lead/the Safeguarding Support will:

- Contact Children's Social Care (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 Care.
- 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 Care 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 Care.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead/the Safeguarding Support will:

- Contact the Children's Social Care 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

Care/Police. thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

4.5 Detailed procedures for a concern about an adult

Suspicious 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 Lead/the Safeguarding Support will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014/Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) 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.

Concern regarding spiritual abuse.

If there is a concern, the Safeguarding Lead 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 Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Care 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 Scotland⁸ for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or

⁸ <https://www.mygov.scot/pvg-referrals>

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 Lead will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Care in regards the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to Disclosure Scotland following the advice of Adult Social Care.

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.

Section 5 Pastoral Care

5.1 Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care and counselling, 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.

5.2 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 Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and bring oversight. However, in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, the Leadership will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on a risk assessment and thorough consultation with appropriate parties. These boundaries may be put in writing and signed in agreement between the church and the individual under supervision.

Latest Version and Signature

The latest version of Take Hold Church's Safeguarding Policy can be viewed online at www.takeholdchurch.com and provided upon request by email at safeguarding@takeholdchurch.com.

Signed approval and adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the Leadership and will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. With these signatures, we approve and adopt the most recent version of Take Hold Church's Safeguarding Policy.

Signed by: **To be named** Position: Lead Trustee over Safeguarding

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(representing the Board of Trustees, Leadership)

Signed by: Paul Richardson Position: Safeguarding Lead

Signed: Paul A. Richardson Date: 2026-01-16

Signed by: Jillian Johnson Position: Safeguarding Support

Signed: Jillian Johnson Date: 2026-01-17

Appendix 1 Code of Conduct

The following is Take Hold Church's behavior code, detailing appropriate behavior working with kids, youth, and adults at risk of harm.

These standards are in place for all staff and volunteers working with vulnerable groups. As people in positions of trust, these standards are intended to protect kids, youth, and adults at risk from abuse and inappropriate behavior and to reduce unsubstantiated allegations of abuse. Safeguarding actions are taken to protect people from harm. These directives are in place to reduce the risk of harm to those in our community.

For any staff or volunteers working with vulnerable groups at Take Hold Church, you are expected to always adhere to this code of conduct and to be an example of appropriate safeguarding behavior, which creates a standard and culture of acceptable behavior at every level of the church.

- Everyone is to be treated with respect and kindness in all environments of Take Hold Church.
- Always maintain and take initiative to create a safe environment for everyone.
- Continually ask the safeguarding question "Is someone at risk of harm?"
- Inappropriate behavior will be directly addressed and challenged immediately.
- If the behavior persists to the point that the group or meeting cannot function, the leader of the team will need to talk with the parent, guardian, or carer for further steps of action.
- Anyone whose behavior is harmful to the group and who is not responding to immediate requests to change action, will be asked to leave the group and/or be returned to care of the parent, guardian, or carer. Further discussion with the group leader is encouraged.
- Anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or who is carrying a weapon will be asked to stop participation at that time and leave the group with an explanation of why.
- Any significant event that impacts the safety or wellbeing of the group is to be documented in writing by the group leader and provided to the Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff or volunteers will never be alone with a kid, youth, or an adult at risk, and everyone should work in pairs when with these groups. Pursue work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations.

- Take Hold Church maintains a standard ratio of 1 leader to every 8 children (age range 5 – 17 years) and 1 leader to every 4 children (age range 2 – 5 years).
- It is ideal on any teams working with kids or youth that there is at least 1 female and 1 male leader in each team.
- If a leader is out due to illness or unforeseen event, the group leader should seek to arrange cover to ensure the current ratio of leaders is available. If insufficient numbers of leaders are available, a Take Hold Church staff member should be notified.
- If sufficient leader numbers aren't available and operating a safe group setting isn't possible, then the group should be cancelled, and Take Hold Church staff should be notified.
- When kids or youth need to use the toilet, staff or volunteers must remain outside of the toilet room. If an issue arises that the child or youth needs assistance, then the parent or guardian should be requested to come help. All staff and volunteers must remain in sight and hearing distance of another staff or volunteer and must never be alone with a kid or youth.
- Physical touch. Touch is usually seen as a normal and helpful demonstration of care. As a church we do not want to stifle this but are aware that physical touch must be appropriately considered by anyone working with kids or youth. Best practice is everything must be kept public, as a hug in a group setting is very different than a hug behind closed doors. Touch should be initiated by the child or youth and not the staff or volunteer. A fist bump or high five is a more welcomed approach for a worker to initiate. When laying of hands for prayer, it's always best to ask permission. These are a few examples, but the overarching principle is that the child or youth should decide how much physical contact to have with others.
- It is the policy of Take Hold Church that staff or volunteers should not provide transportation or rides home for any kids, youth or adults at risk. If transportation needs to be arranged, communication and consent of the parent and guardian must be achieved. If it's an emergency and there's no time or opportunity to care for these details of communication and consent, then a taxi should be called, especially in situations that would alternatively place a child or youth in a one-on-one situation with a staff or volunteer.
- When locking up, staff and volunteers should leave in a group of 2 at minimum. This is for the personal safety of the persons departing, often at night hours, and for the rare case that a member of a group at risk is still present at the event location and would be alone with another individual.

- Photos are not to be taken of children without written consent. Kids, youth or adults at risk should not be identifiable on any photos shared publicly.

Appendix 2 Cause for Concern Form⁹

For use by any staff/volunteers– This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible)^{1,2,3}

Child/Adult's name (subject of concern):	Date of birth/age: Child or Adult?	Address:
Date & time of incident:	Date & time (of writing):	
Your Name (print): Signature:		Role/Job title:
Other members of the household ⁴ :		
<p>Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. <i>(please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)</i></p>		

⁹ Adapted from thirtyone:eight, UK's only Independent Christian Safeguarding Charity. As a member organisation of thirtyone:eight, permission is granted to the church for internal use only and not for distribution.

How did the concern come to light?	
What is the child/adult saying about what has happened ⁵ ?	
Any other relevant information. Previous concerns etc.	
Date and time of discussion with Safeguarding Lead ⁶ :	

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.
Please pass this form to your Safeguarding Lead without delay

Guidance notes for the Cause for Concern Form (volunteers/staff only):

Following are some helpful pointers in completing the above form:

1. As a registered body the church is required to ensure that its duty of care towards its beneficiaries is carried out in line with the principles enshrined within the Working together to safeguard children and young people, 2018 and the Care Act, 2014. Refer to Take Hold Church's Safeguarding Policy at this point too.
2. Essential principles of recording the information received, disclosed, and observed:
 - a. Remember: do not investigate or ask any leading questions.
 - b. Make notes within the first one hour of receiving the disclosure or observing the incident.
 - c. Be clear and factual in your recording of the incident or disclosure.
 - d. Avoid giving your opinion or feelings on the matter.

- e. Aim to record using the 4 W's and 1 H: When, where, what, why and how.
 - f. Do not share this information with anyone else except your safeguarding Lead in the first instance and they will advise on who else will need to be informed, how and when.
 - g. Make use of the additional information section to add any other relevant information regarding the child/adult/ family that you may be aware of. This can include any historic concerns or observations.
3. **What constitutes a safeguarding concern?** Any incident that has caused or likely to cause significant harm to a child can be classed as a safeguarding concern. Abuse is classified under four different categories (with regards to children) as already stated within the Safeguarding Policy (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect). With regards to adults there are 6 further categorisations. Whilst it may be helpful to record a specific category in the above form, if possible, this may not always be the case. Therefore, it is important to seek advice from your Safeguarding Lead or thirtyone:eight at this stage.
 4. **Why do you need information regarding 'other household members'?** It has been demonstrated as important to include information about significant adults in the household especially when concerns relate to children as this has been a recurrent risk factor in several serious case reviews.
 5. **Why is the view of the child/adult significant?** It is important to give whatever detail is available of the child or adult's explanation (or verbatim) of the matter to help ascertain if it is plausible and to help offer a context to the concern identified.
 6. **Passing information to the Safeguarding Lead.** Your Safeguarding Lead holds ultimate responsibility in responding to any safeguarding concerns within the church and therefore it is important that they have oversight of the actions being taken and make relevant and appropriate contact with statutory agencies if required. They will remain the most appropriate link between the church and external agencies.

Audit trail

Details

FILE NAME 260114 Safeguarding Policy.pdf - 1/14/26, 1:57 PM

STATUS ● Signed

STATUS TIMESTAMP 2026/01/17
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daniel@takeholdchurch.com **sent** a signature request to:

- Jillian Johnson (jillian@takeholdchurch.com)
- Paul A. Richardson (paul@takeholdchurch.com)

2026/01/14
13:59:37 UTC



SIGNED

Signed by Jillian Johnson (jillian@takeholdchurch.com)

2026/01/17
16:00:24 UTC



SIGNED

Signed by Paul A. Richardson (paul@takeholdchurch.com)

2026/01/16
17:00:41 UTC



COMPLETED

This document has been signed by all signers and is **complete**

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