



Hope Church Network Safeguarding Procedure

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Introduction

Hope Church Network is committed to providing a safe environment and culture for those using our church. To meet this, we have drawn up our Safeguarding Policy. This procedure should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Changes in v1.1 (2 October 2025) – update to the team that manages DBS Applications.

Checking

DBS Checks

DBS checks (enhanced) will be undertaken for all volunteers and staff who are in one or more of the following roles:

- Safeguarding Team member;
- Sunday Class teacher or helper;
- Creche helper;
- Youth Group Leader/Worker;
- Providing transport for under 18s or 'at risk adults';¹
- As part of a scheduled activity.
- Host for a youth group;
- Trustee;
- Elder (this may be limited to a Basic DBS check);
- Deacons in relevant roles;
- Other roles identified by the DBS Lead Recruiter or Safeguarding Team.

For other activities (e.g. offsite activities on a Sunday Morning) at least 1 of the leaders must have an enhanced DBS certificate (relevant to those taking part in the activity).

As an exception, new Sunday class teachers and helpers can take part in Sunday class and creche work before their DBS certificate is received, under the following restrictions:

- The minimum ratios for supervision are met with existing DBS-cleared volunteers;
- The volunteer is sitting in to find out if they wish to take on the role;
- Once they have expressed a wish to undertake the role, they progress their DBS checks in a prompt and timely manner (and the DBS Lead Recruiter is content that this is the case).

The same restrictions apply to new Youth Group Workers.

New Trustees and Elders will be asked to apply for DBS clearance when they are put forward for affirmation; this must be progressed in a timely manner to the satisfaction of the DBS Lead Recruiter.

DBS applications are managed by the DBS Recruiters. The process is overseen by the DBS Lead Recruiter, who is Kerrie Elsom (kerrie@hopechurch.life).

DBS checks are undertaken by the DBS Recruiting Team:

- For Hope Greatham – Clare Shaw (clares@hopechurch.life);

¹ As part of a scheduled activity.



- For Petersfield - Duncan Burchell (duncanb@hopechurch.life).

Children's Work

Appointment of Teachers and Helpers, Youth workers

- All teachers, helpers and youth workers will be DBS-checked before they are allowed to work in our Sunday classes, youth groups or any other activities involving those under the age of 18.
- A parent or guardian may sit in on classes if their child requires additional support. The adult/child ratios must be met without taking these additional people into account.

Recording Attendance

- Attendance at Sunday classes, creche, youth groups and offsite activities must be recorded on ChurchSuite within 48 hours of the event taking place finishing. All attendees, including leaders, parents/guardians etc must be recorded.

Offsite and trips (forms and signatures, guidelines)

If an activity takes place offsite (including Church trips), then the Offsite Activity Forms must be filled in for all under 18 or 'at risk adult' attendees and by Group Leaders. These forms are available on ChurchSuite. For Under 18s, a parent or guardian must either fill in or sign the form (for those without access to ChurchSuite a hard copy of the form must be provided). Any hard-copy forms will be scanned and stored in the Church filing system (currently Box).

Guidelines for Working with children

We will make sure that all our meetings and activities are carefully organised, that the premises are safe and that there is sufficient help, according to the following guideline ratios:

0-2 years. 1 adult for every 3 children (minimum of 2 adults)

3-5 years 1 adult for every 4 children (minimum of 2 adults)

6-8 years 1 adult for every 8 children

over 8 years 1 adult for the first 8 children, then 1 extra adult for every extra 12 children

Under certain circumstances such as at church on Sunday mornings when parents are nearby, there can be flexibility on these ratios. Where Hope Kids groups span two age ranges above, common sense should be used to determine appropriate and safe ratios.

We will try to ensure a mix of male and female leaders.

We will plan our meetings and activities in such a way as to minimise situations where the possibility of abuse of young people and/or children may occur.

Training

Training will be provided by the Safeguarding Team for:



- a) Teachers & Helpers
- b) Youth Group Workers;
- c) Elders/Deacons/Trustees;
- d) Others, as deemed appropriate by the Safeguarding Team.

Training will include outlining the code of conduct for working with each age group (including 'adults at risk').

'Adults at Risk'

Where appropriate, the same principles apply when working with adults at risk.

General Principles

Events, e.g. Youth groups, may take place in private homes. As stated above any hosts must have at least a Basic DBS check. The standard rules for ratios apply to activities involving under 18s.

More Information

The Appendix gives some guidance on handling a concern.

Access to ChurchSuite is managed by the Church administrator, Alison Godfrey (alison@hopechurch.life).

A laminated Sheet will be made available on the Welcome table at all services of Hope Church Greatham and Hope Church Petersfield. This will provide basic details for the Safeguarding Team.

A safeguarding slide will be displayed as part of the service projection at each service.

Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Identifying a Concern

- You are concerned a child, or adult is at risk, or has been abused because:
- You have seen something
- A child, or adult says they have been abused, or wishes to harm themselves
- Somebody else has told you they are concerned
- An adult has disclosed they are abusing a child, or adult at risk
- There has been an allegation against a member of staff

Guidelines

Under no circumstances should a church worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. It is the role of the Safeguarding Coordinator (SC) or Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator (DSC) to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to Children's Services. It is the task of Children's Services to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Team – their details can be found in the Safeguarding Policy.

If, following a disclosure by or concerning a member or attender of Hope Church, an investigation is begun, unless otherwise advised, the SC will inform the Trustees of this fact. The Trustees will support the SC / DSC in their role, and accept that any information the SC / DSC may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way only with those who need to know.

It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the Safeguarding agencies. The Trustees hope that members of the church will use the above procedure. However, in the interests of effective Safeguarding, if the individual with the concern feels that the SC / DSC has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the SC / DSC as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency direct.