

Hailsham Free Church



Safeguarding Policy

Children and adults at risk

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Church Commitment to Safeguarding

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord” –
Colossians 3 :23

Hailsham Free Church recognises the importance of the church’s ministry with children, young people and vulnerable adults. We need to provide a safe and caring environment for all people. We are committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of those entrusted to our care and those who we encounter through our ministries in the community.

We acknowledge that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. 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 acknowledge that vulnerable adults can also be the victims of neglect or abuse. Such abuse may be discriminatory, physical, emotional, financial, sexual or institutional in nature.

We are committed to:

- following all legal requirements in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and good practice recommendations;
- exercising proper care in the appointment and selection of all those who will work with children and vulnerable adults, and ensuring the workers adhere to the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy; and
- supporting the designated safeguarding leads and their deputies in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and vulnerable adults.

We recognise that:

- social services have the lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child or adult;
- where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency; and
- safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

Safeguarding Policy

Summary

This policy applies to all members of Hailsham Free Church.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- help protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who are, in any capacity, part of the community at HFC; and
- provide HFC's staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and adults.

HFC has three Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) with overall responsibility for safeguarding children and adults. The DSLs are to ensure this policy is implemented and engage with external agencies about any safeguarding matters.

In addition to the DSLs, each regular group HFC runs will have a Deputy DSL responsible for it. The Deputy DSLs will deal with any safeguarding concerns in their groups and liaise with the DSLs as appropriate. The key contacts list (Appendix 1) contains details of the DSLs, the Deputy DSLs and East Sussex Social Services.

We recognise that:

- all children and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of abuse and harm;
- some children and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues;
- reasonable adjustments may be required to ensure appropriate access to and engagement with HFC's organised activities for some children and adults; and
- working in partnership with other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children and adults.

Training

We will provide training for all DSL's, Deputy DSL's plus interested others. (This was planned for 2020 but due to Covid 19 Pandemic had to be postponed. Training will be in place as soon as possible during 2021 subject to Covid precautions).

Safeguarding Procedures

Church practises – children's and youth work

HFC takes the following steps in its children's and youth work to ensure the protection of those in its care:

- all regular leaders (ages 16+) are DBS checked every 3 years;
- guest leaders or other non-DBS checked volunteers will not be left alone with children at any point;
- a gender balance of leadership is sought for all groups;
- the DSLs will arrange safeguarding refresher training on an annual basis;
- all new leaders are made aware of this policy and given guidance on its use;
- the use of mobile phones by children during organised groups is restricted;
- Wi-Fi in the church building is password protected and has parental controls enabled;
- leaders will not correspond with children in private messages or via social media without specific parental consent;
- leaders will not meet with children outside of organised groups or public gatherings without specific parental consent;
- copies of the key contacts and the cause for concern form are kept in the Church office for ease of reference;
- parental consent must be obtained for taking photographs and these must not be stored on personal devices for longer than strictly necessary;
- wherever possible, two leaders should be in any vehicle being used to transport children. If two leaders are not available, the front passenger seat(s) must be left empty. A leader, on their own, must not provide transport to only one child without specific parental request; and
- all youth workers are required to sign and return a copy of the volunteers' covenant (Appendix 5).

Church practises – adults’ work

HFC takes the following steps in its adults’ work to ensure the protection of those in its care:

- all regular volunteers (ages 16+) are DBS checked at least every 3 years;
- gifts beyond small tokens of appreciation (max £20 value) are not to be accepted without first consulting a DSL and being recorded. All monetary gifts must be refused except for reimbursement of actual expenses. If in doubt, a DSL must be consulted;
- groups attended by persons with mobility challenges will be held on the ground floor; (unless suitable provisions exist on site e.g. the Lift)
- volunteers should generally avoid being alone with a person who is of the opposite sex, including in the provision of transport;
- volunteers must not provide any personal care (dressing, feeding, washing and toileting);
- safeguarding refresher training is provided on an annual basis; (provision will be included in the annual budget)
- all new volunteers are made aware of this policy and given guidance on its use;
- copies of the key contacts and the cause for concern form are kept in the church office for ease of reference; and
- all volunteers are required to sign and return a copy of the volunteers’ covenant (Appendix 5).

Church practises – children and adults with learning disabilities

HFC takes the following additional steps in its work with children and adults with learning disabilities to ensure their protection and full participation:

- Wherever possible, additional support will be provided for those that need it;
- reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate specific needs; and
- the DSLs will arrange and make available to all members the opportunity to attend disability awareness training from time to time.

Ways that safeguarding concerns may be brought to your attention

Abuse can be discovered through a number of ways, such as:

- a person might make a direct disclosure about themselves;
- a person might make a direct disclosure about another person;
- a person might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure;
- a volunteer might be concerned about a person's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards someone in their care;
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a person in their care is suffering or at risk of suffering; or a parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

Key points to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child or adult, for example, call 999;
- in non-emergency situations, follow the 'how to report concerns' flow chart (Appendix 3);
- complete a cause for concern form (Appendix 4);
- do not start your own investigation;
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family; and
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed, your Deputy DSL can help you.

Talking to someone who has told you they or another person is being abused

It takes a lot of courage for someone to disclose that they are being neglected and or abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in others, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If someone talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for your judgement. If you jump in immediately, the person may think that you do not want to listen. If you leave it until the very end of the conversation, the person may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation

A conversation about abuse or neglect will be difficult for everyone involved. To avoid making a situation worse, be aware of the following:

- **Do not offer to keep conversations secret** or “between ourselves”
- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and do not overreact – the person may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’.
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the person.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to others too, or what the person’s relatives think about all this.
- At an appropriate time tell the person that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to someone who has been abused.
- Avoid telling the person off for not disclosing earlier. Saying ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be your way of being supportive but the person may interpret it that they have done something wrong.
- Tell the person what will happen next. The person may agree to go with you to see the Deputy DSL. Otherwise, let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day/group.
- Report verbally to the Deputy DSL.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible on the cause for concern form and hand it to the Deputy DSL.

Appendix 1: Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

The DSLs for the church are:

- Steve Somerville (Co-ordinator)
- Karen Tyler
- Alan Thompson

Deputy DSLs for each regular group

	Mid-week work	Sunday work	Adult
Group	Mums & Toddlers		Sunday Services
Name	Jeanette Lockey		Jamie Campbell
Group	Samson group		
Name	Pat Webb		
Group			
Name			
Group			
Name			
Group			
Name			

(many of these groups have been suspended during Covid pandemic)

East Sussex Social Services Contacts

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Local Authority Designated Officer safeguarding
Unit 4th Floor St Mark's House
Tel: 01323 466606 Mob: 07825 782793

The local East Sussex Family and Children Services

Office telephone number between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm is 0345 6080192 and the out of hours, weekend and bank holiday emergency number is 01273 335906

If you need to contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for new referrals or Duty and Assessment Team (DAT) when there is a named social worker you need to contact 01323 747373

The Police telephone number is 999 in an emergency and 101 for non-emergency calls.

Appendix 2: Definitions

What makes an adult 'vulnerable'?

Under the Care Act 2014 a vulnerable adult is someone who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs);
- is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Different types of abuse

Abuse can be broadly classified into four types: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Abuse can affect both adults and children and the examples given below reflect generic situations, although some child specific examples are also given. The lists are not exhaustive. If you are not sure if something constitutes abuse, speak to your Deputy DSL.

Physical abuse is violence causing injury or occurring regularly. It can affect an adult or a child. It happens when:

- a person is hurt or injured by being hit, shaken, squeezed, thrown, burned, scalded, bitten or cut
- someone tries to drown or suffocate someone else
- someone gives poison or inappropriate drugs or alcohol to a child
- someone fabricates the symptoms or, deliberately induces, illness in someone else.

In some cases the injuries will be caused deliberately. In others they may be accidental but caused by the person being knowingly put at risk.

Sexual abuse occurs when someone uses power or control to involve another person in sexual activity in order to gratify the abuser's own sexual, emotional or financial needs or desires. It can happen to an adult or a child. It may include:

- forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening
- encouraging children or adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- showing someone, especially a child, pornographic material or involving them in the production of such materials
- involving someone, especially a child, in watching other people's sexual activity or in inappropriate discussions about sexual matters.

Emotional Abuse is persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a person that is likely to cause serious harm to their mental wellbeing or development. It can happen to an adult or a child. It may include:

- persistently denying someone love and affection
- regularly making the person feel frightened by shouts, threats or any other means
- hurting another person or a pet in order to distress someone
- being so overprotective towards someone that they are unable to develop or lead a normal life
- exploiting or corrupting a someone, e.g. by involving them in illegal behaviour
- conveying to someone the message that they are worthless, unlovable, inadequate, or their only value is to meet the needs of another person. This may or may not include racist, homophobic or other forms of abuse.

Neglect involves persistently failing to meet someone's physical, psychological or emotional needs. It can happen to an adult or a child. It may include:

- failing to ensure that a person's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, hygiene and education are met.
- failing to provide appropriate supervision to keep a person out of danger. This includes lack of supervision of particular activities or leaving a child alone in the house.

Financial involves the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions belonging to the adult at risk

Discriminatory abuse is the inappropriate treatment of an adult at risk because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability, etc.

Appendix 3: How to reports concerns

Flowchart of how to report safeguarding concerns at HFC

Stage 1: Concern

Suspicion/allegation of abuse raised by: direct disclosure, observation, report by another person, anonymous communication, etc.

Stage 2: Assess

In an emergency situation involving significant risk of harm call 999 immediately.

Stage 3: Consult

Speak to the relevant Deputy DSL as soon as possible. If the Deputy DSL is not available or the concern relates to the Deputy DSL, contact one of the DSLs directly.

Stage 4: Action

Together with the Deputy DSL or a DSL, as appropriate, determine what steps are needed. A referral to social services or discussion with parents/carers may be made.

Stage 5: Confirm

Complete a cause for concern form (Appendix 4) and send it to the DSLs within 24 hours.

Appendix 4: Cause for concern form

Details of person

Initials:	Additional needs:
Gender:	Age
If for a child, initials of parent(s)/carer(s):	

Your details

Your name:	Your position:	Date and time of incident:
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Are you: (delete as appropriate)

Reporting your own concerns

Responding to concerns raised by someone else (if so, record their name and position below)

Please provide details of the incident or concerns you have, including times, date description of any injuries, whether information is first hand or the accounts of others, including any other relevant detail. **Only write factual information.**
(Use additional sheets if necessary)

The person's account/perspective:

Details of anyone alleged to have caused the incident or to be a source of concern:

Details of anyone who has witnessed the incident or who shares the concerns:

Concerns should be discussed with the family UNLESS:

- The view is that a family member might be responsible for the abuse
- Someone may be put in danger by the family being informed
- Informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation

In any of the circumstance above, consult with the Local Authority's social care department to decide whether or not discussions with the family should take place.

If a child, have you spoken to the child's parents/carers? If so, provide details of what was said, if not, state why this is:

Are you aware of previous incidents or concerns relating to this person and of any current risk management or support plan? If so, provide details.

Has the situation been discussed with the Deputy DSL

YES/NO (delete as appropriate).

If so, summarise the discussion below.

After this discussion with the Deputy DSL, do you still have a safeguarding concern?

YES/NO (delete as appropriate).

Signed	
Date and time	

Send this form to the relevant Deputy DSL and Safeguarding co-ordinator immediately after completion and within 24 hours of the incident being reported

Appendix 5: Volunteers' covenant

All who work among our children, youth and adults at HFC are required to sign this covenant:

1. I confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour and it is my intention to obey His word in all things and to put Him first in my life.
2. I acknowledge my fellowship with the elders, deacons and members at HFC and determine to express this by making a high priority of my commitment to the church's teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer.
3. I commit myself to the work of teaching and leading children, young people and adults, to win them for Christ and present them mature in Him. With God's help I will strive to live and talk in a way that will attract them to Christ; pray for them regularly, care for them by giving them time to share their joys and problems and taking an interest in their whole lives.
4. I understand that the work of being a volunteer can be demanding and draining both personally and spiritually. I am aware that I can access support for my own wellbeing and I know who I should turn to if I am in need.
5. I confirm that I have had access to a copy of the HFC Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. I have read and understood this covenant and with the Lord's strength and the support of HFC will wholeheartedly comply with its terms:

.....
Name

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Please return the duplicate copy of this signed covenant to one of the DSLs.