

# Safe from Harm Guidance

March 2017 Revision



# **Highworth Community Church (HCC).**

## **Guidelines for working with, and the pastoral care of, Children and Young People (under 18 years old).**

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## **Highworth Community Church (HCC).**

### **Guidelines for working with, and the pastoral care of, Children and Young People (under 18 years old).**

The Home Office produced a set of recommendations and guidelines to give all voluntary groups a framework for action to promote welfare of children and young people, in particular to prevent abuse from taking place. Called 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015', the recommendations and guidelines do not have the force of law but recommend the steps that should be taken to safeguard everyone under the age of 18. These Government recommendations came as a result of the Children Act '89. The first point in the introduction to the 'Working Together' document states: 'the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play'. Also relevant to HCC is the Department for Education's National Action Plan (2012) to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief.

The leaders of HCC have signed a separate Child Protection Policy statement. The introduction paragraph of that document is repeated here:

#### **1. A policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.**

*Our commitment: as a Leadership, we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and 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 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.*

As a Christian organisation committed to presenting the reality of God to children, we affirm our belief in the God given value of each child with whom we work or have contact. In recognition of God's wholehearted commitment to them, we will also treat each individual with value and dignity. HCC is committed to support, resource and train those who work with children, as well as to provide supervision. HCC is committed to following the Home Office code of practice 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013', and has adopted guidelines and procedures that are based on it.

This guidance will be reviewed on a regular basis and applies at any event or where ministry is undertaken in the name of HCC.

All HCC staff and volunteers are expected to state whether: they have ever accepted a Police Caution; been convicted; or are currently subject to criminal charges. They will agree to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and provide two references. (However, cautions or convictions may not necessarily bar an individual from being appointed).

**2. The following section is a plan of work for the pastoral care of, and work with, children. All activities should avoid any situation where abuse could result and all children should be treated with respect and dignity.**

- 2.1 **All forms of ministry** are to take place in public; whether to or by children. Personal conversations are to include someone of the same sex and with a minimum of three people present, if at all possible. Both public ministry and personal conversations are to be within the guidelines laid out in Appendices 1, 11, 12 & 13.
- 2.2 When **giving lifts** to children, if only one is left in a four-door car, that child should normally sit in the rear seats. In the case of a staff member, lifts must only be given where the driver is insured for the use of the car for business purposes.
- 2.3 Initiating physical contact with young people is to be avoided. If **physical abuse is threatened**, then workers should seek assistance in the first instance and if physical violence is used against you then you may defend yourself using the minimum of force.
- 2.4 In **school lessons and assemblies** a member of school-staff should be present. For after school or lunchtime events, an agreement is to be negotiated with the school as to whether or not they wish a staff member to be present (although a member of staff should always be on call). The recommended minimum is that two HCC/school staff members or volunteers to be present during such events.
- 2.5 In **children and youth work** (bus, club, group etc.), ensure there are always two staff members or volunteers present. When young people need to be escorted off the premises, this should be done through verbal encouragement. If this fails then the police should be called immediately and the recognised supervisor should be made aware as soon as possible.
- 2.6 Making sexually suggestive **comments** about or to a child, even in “fun”, any scape-goating, ridiculing, rejecting, comments about a young person’s attributes, or their attractiveness, should not occur.
- 2.7 Hugging is to be discouraged among the staff and volunteers when children are present. Although **physical contact** should not be initiated by the worker it is important that children, if they initiate and choose to have any contact, are responded to appropriately, e.g. a side arm hug.
- 2.8 **Residential work**: see attached guidelines (Appendix 2.)
- 2.9 **Parental/guardian consent** must be obtained for any activity undertaken where the child is involved in extended time (in addition to the normal activities or activities) or away from the usual location. Communication of what is happening should always be made available to parents/guardians. For an example of the required information, see appendix 5.
- 2.10 A **system of recording** activities, conversations or accidents is to be implemented for each group or special activity. The system is to be agreed with the HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator. (See Appendix 9).

- 2.11 **Avoid favouritism and special friendships.** Do not develop an exclusive relationship with a group member if you are a leader, no matter how small the age gap. Do not be over eager to befriend particular children. Crushes with group-members are strongly discouraged, and an intermediary should be involved if necessary.
- 2.12 In the **Discoverers** group, the principle of two helpers always being present is to be rigorously maintained. Whilst the need is recognised that comfort or hugs are sometimes necessary, the helpers are to be alert to ensure that nothing inappropriate happens.
- 2.13 A statement is to be inserted in the *Discoverers* (pre-school) group's attendance book, which informs parents of the first point (2.12) and requests their signature to acknowledge that they have read it and to provide permission for helpers to comfort or hug their child etc. Copies of the *Discoverers* group's statement is in the Appendix 6.
- 2.14 At the end of Sunday worship, parents and carers of *Discovers* will be directed to resume care responsibility for their children and collect them from their meeting room. This is to occur prior to other adults entering the meeting room.
- 2.15 **Home visits** or invitation of children to a **worker's home**: Children's workers and leaders will need to visit children and their families at home from time to time. The parents or carers may, or may not, attend church. It is therefore important that they have been given information about the group and HCC, including contact telephone numbers. Follow detailed guidance in Appendix 8.
- 2.16 **Communication via IT**: Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are very much a part of life in the 21st century. Children and young people in particular have embraced the digital age; pen and paper have given way to email and text, and owning a mobile phone is the norm, even for younger children. ICTs have become the way in which we gather and share information, keep in touch with friends and organise social activities. It follows that those working with children and young people need to know how to make the most of these technologies but at the same time ensure they are used appropriately and responsibly.
- 2.17 The e-safety principles (Appendix 10) should help to ensure children and young people are protected and the integrity of workers safeguarded. Although many of us have adapted to, and indeed welcomed, all the advances in ICTs, it is important to remember not everyone has access to them. No child or young person should feel discriminated against simply because they don't have a mobile phone or PC. If necessary, alternative means of communication should be found.

### **3. Procedures for protecting children for all staff and volunteers.**

All new HCC workers shall be given, and have explained to them, this policy as part of HCC's safe recruiting and induction procedure. Each year, HCC SfH session(s) will be held, but alternative sessions may be arranged that deal with Child Protection (CP) material. It's expected that each worker engages in either CP or SfH training each year. However, individuals may submit evidence (such as a personal development certificate) that they have completed relevant CP training during their employment. That said, in order to sustain awareness of ongoing development to HCC policies and procedures, all workers are to attend a SfH refresher session bi-annually.

'One-off' volunteers will be subject to the same Safe from Harm guidelines as other HCC workers. However, they will not have unsupervised access to children in the course of the session or activity. It is expected that a one-off volunteer will be known to at least two church-members, who have been DBS checked and who would provide references for the volunteer, if asked. Should the individual help on more than three days in a 12-month period,

then the full volunteer induction procedure is to be implemented. (HCC's ability to complete a DBS check is determined by the Bureau's policy; either a 'regulated activity', 'enhanced' or not eligible. Eligibility depends on how regular the worker's contact is with children and the type of activity).

Timely engagement in DBS checks and SfH training is essential. As new workers start, DBS checks are to be completed within 3 months and SfH training within 6 months. Until this process is completed, new workers are to be supervised by those who have completed the process and not left alone with children. Renewal of DBS checks are to be completed within 3 months of the 3-year anniversary and, to continue the development of workers' safe-guarding practice, SfH training within 6 months of the 2-year anniversary of previous checks and training. If a worker has difficulty in complying with these expectations, they can discuss it with the HCC Children & Families Worker, a Church Leader or Safeguarding Coordinator. If the process is not completed in a timely manner, the worker's role with children will be supervised or withdrawn.

HCC is not responsible for the selection, approval or appointment of those working with children in any affiliated church or group. The other organisations are responsible for appointing people to work with children according to their own child protection policies. This is the case when HCC works with other churches to jointly run children's activities. However, when HCC takes the lead in such activities or groups, HCC will seek written confirmation from the other church(es) that a DBS has been processed for each member of staff or volunteer.

If a safe-guarding concern is identified at a jointly run activity, then the church linked to a particular child will take responsibility for any action required. If the child has no affiliation to a particular church, then the Safe-guarding Co-ordinators will determine who will take the lead role (perhaps take the role for an academic school year).

#### **4. Appointment of staff and 'gap-year' students.**

The appointment of staff and volunteers will follow the relevant HCC recruitment, selection, and probationary procedures. All staff and volunteers will have a written job description. (Nov '11, this paragraph is aspirational and to be implemented in due time).

A record of those staff and volunteers for whom DBS checks have been made will be kept securely in a lockable, non portable storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it.

#### **5. Management and supervision.**

There shall be a system of line management within HCC to provide supervision and accountability. This will include monitoring ongoing work with children and for staff, line management in accordance with HCC policies and guidelines.

Line management practice will normally involve regular meetings with the appropriate line manager in order to review and plan their work. The supervisor should be aware of each staff member's working and personal relationships with the children in their care.

It is expected that each supervisor will take time to observe the member of staff or gap-year volunteer whilst they are working with children. Ideally, supervisors should keep a brief written record of each supervision meeting and of any things of note that are observed.

It is expected that the worker, in accordance with the request by the line manager, will keep records of contact with children. These records do not need to include personal details of children, but a general account of the work.

The record should cover the number of children in attendance; the activities completed or the issues covered in conversation; any accidents or child protection issues; and unusual events such as fire alarms or children escorted off the premises.

## **6. Training.**

HCC will run training courses each year for new staff and volunteers, which will endorse the guidelines and equip individuals with a working knowledge of the guidelines described in this document.

## **7. Identifying abuse – signs, symptoms and how to respond.**

### **Procedures, if abuse is suspected, discovered or disclosed:**

The most important thing to remember is that when a child discloses that abuse of any nature is taking (or has taken) place, they are divulging a secret. It is not the place for this document to provide guidance for counselling in such a scenario. However, it is essential that the child knows that they are believed. Many situations have arisen where the first person to be told of such events failed to demonstrate that they believed the child, and this led to the abuse being covered up for years.

If a child talks about self-harming, or it is noticed by a worker (such as scratching or cutting a fore-arm); it usually indicates that the child is using self-harm as a coping strategy to deal with anxiety. The anxiety may relate to various situations, such as bullying at school or a traumatic situation at home. The child may welcome the worker's support, or they may need to be referred for professional help. However, self-harm may not be linked to abuse.

If a child starts to talk to you about some form of abuse, adhere to the following guidelines as much as is possible and is appropriate to your situation. General points are:

- Carefully listen and accept what the child tells you
- Keep calm
- Be honest
- Look directly at the child
- Do not appear shocked
- Let them know that you believe them
- Assure them that they are not to blame for the abuse
- Never ask leading questions
- Never push for information
- Do not fill words, finish their sentences or make assumptions
- Be aware that the child may have been threatened

In HCC, it is our duty to endeavour to prevent abuse and neglect taking place. There are many forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger (for example, via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. There are several forms of abuse; the definitions of abuse below are based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)'.

**Physical abuse:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse:** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); or to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; or ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Spiritual:** In addition to the above, if a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower, they abuse their authority and cause spiritual wounds to the follower. (See Ken Blue: Healing Spiritual Abuse. IVP 1993). In addition, if a child or youth is told they are, or referred to in the following terms: *evil or demonised; possessed by, or having, an evil spirit; or manifesting an evil spirit*, it is abusive and may cause significant harm to the child or youth. Please see Appendix 13 for further information.

If a child talks about past or present abuse situations, the following procedure must be followed:

1. The child must be kept informed at all times of what is being done, what is likely to happen, and should be prepared for such an eventuality before the worker discloses such information. Where abuse is current, this will need to be reported to the authorities by the HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator. However, it is also important that the child is aware that no action is likely to be taken by the authorities without the child being listened to, and all decisions reached will take into account the wishes and feelings of the child. (Children Act 1989).
2. A hand-written narrative of the conversation is to be recorded immediately after the conversation. Also complete the Safe from Harm Abuse disclosure form. (Appendix 7).

- **At this stage, it is usual that no contact is made with the child's parents or alleged perpetrator.** (This is the Police and Children Service's role; if an HCC worker does so, it could jeopardise any subsequent investigation. Children would then remain at risk of harm).
3. Contact the HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> contact.
  4. However, if they cannot be contacted and the child is at immediate risk of significant harm, then call the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team or Children Services. (Contact details in Appendix 4).

Subsequently, if the person to whom the abuse was disclosed believes that the designated person has not taken appropriate action, they may speak to the authorities themselves.

(This procedure, a Safe from Harm disclosure form, and a list of Child Protection contacts are to be kept in the Incident Book, located with each group).

When the situation is reported to the authorities then the following may occur:

- A strategy discussion involving: Children Services; the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team; other significant professionals; and the person suspecting abuse or to whom the child talked.
- A decision will be taken as to whether an investigation is warranted; if so, it will then be planned. If Children Services decide to pursue this, the investigation is likely to include: an informal talk with the child; a formal Police (+/- Children Services) video recorded interview; medical examination; and preliminary family assessment.

The authorities are likely to be proactive in situations where other children could also be at risk. If there is sufficient concern, a Child Protection Conference will be held to decide the best course of action to protect the child and to help the family. There may also be a criminal prosecution of the abuser.

**8. Accusations of abuse against HCC staff or volunteers.** If any member of staff or volunteer is accused of abuse, then HCC will co-operate with other agencies in the enquiry.

During the course of the enquiry, it is recommended that the staff or volunteer concerned is not involved in face to face children's work and that they take a period of special leave during which salary continues to be paid. If the enquiry is not concluded within a month or two, this action may need to be reassessed.

HCC staff and volunteers must report any allegation made about themselves, or others, to their supervisor or their delegated representative, and the HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator. When an allegation is made by another HCC worker, it may be considered as 'whistle-blowing'; the action will be taken with the assurance that either an HCC Leader or Trustee will be allocated to provide support (to the worker disclosing) throughout the safe-guarding process. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has: behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

It is to be noted that there is a clear distinction between an allegation of harm to a child (as detailed in Section 7), and concern about the quality of care or practice, or a complaint. Regarding quality of care or practice, these are to be discussed with the HCC Families, Children & Youth Worker. Regarding a complaint, HCC has a Complaints Policy, which is to be followed and can be accessed via the HCC Leaders, Trustees or office. (A verbal or written complaint can be accepted and the complainant assured that their complaint will be addressed by HCC Leaders or Trustees and that the complainant will be advised of the outcome. Obviously, the complaint will need to be passed on to the HCC Leaders or Trustees!)

## APPENDIX 1

### Guidelines for talking and praying with children.

These are not a set of rules just for the sake of it. There is a good reason why they are listed; for your own protection and the protection of the child you are with. If you act beyond these guides, perhaps in an emergency of some kind, discuss it with your supervisor as soon as possible afterwards and record the H5Ws in the group's incident book (H5W = how, who, where, when, what, and why).

1. Always talk and pray with someone in a group of more than two, if at all possible. One to one contact may take place only in a public place, and your supervisor must agree should this become something that needs to continue with that child.
2. Always same sex – i.e. 2 males – male; 2 females – female, when involved in praying with children. If for any reason this is not possible, then it should be agreed with your supervisor and occur in a public place.
3. Always talk and pray in an open space where others are around. Whilst privacy is a factor, don't go alone.
4. Confidentiality is vital – children will need to know that you will not go to others and talk about their problems. However, do not promise to keep a secret - you may need to tell someone in authority. If that is so, tell the child who it will be and what you will say, in order to be transparent and build trust with the child. In British law, the responsibility for any investigation is with Children Services, Police or the NSPCC. It is NOT for HCC workers to carry out these preliminary investigations.
5. Keep calm and be honest. Don't feel you have to know all the answers. If you don't know, find someone who does and ask them.
6. Don't be afraid to ask for advice – we are not out to prove anything to anyone, we want the best for the child. If you feel out of your depth or unsure, ask someone to help you.
7. Don't keep bringing the conversation round to your own experience, i.e. 'yes, I remember when that happened to me and ...'. Testimony is good, but listen.
8. Don't make promises you can't keep.
9. Don't appear shocked or appalled.
10. Be sensitive; don't say things like 'That's so sad, why didn't you tell anyone before?' or 'No, you didn't, did you?'
11. Don't laugh at the child.
12. Don't minimise or trivialise an issue, even if it may not seem important to you. If the child needs to talk about it, it **is** important.
13. Be aware of your body language, and the way you are re-acting. Always encourage and affirm, don't judge or condemn.

14. Repeat the child's statements back to them; this helps to clarify that you have heard them correctly and allows the child to expand or clarify what they have already said.
15. Don't feel you have to wrap up conversations straight away, some things need talking through more. Discuss the issues with a leader or prayer co-ordinator. Don't offer the availability of someone else without their agreement. (Avoid the possibility of the child feeling rejection, but continue to follow the previous guidance and avoid private or lone working in future conversations).
16. If you are told anything about an illegal act, you must tell your supervisor (or their delegated representative) straight away. Whilst there is no general legal duty to inform the Police of an offence, important exceptions are any committed, or intended, against children.
17. Don't take on board other people's problems as if they are your own. Remember, empathy is standing in someone else's shoes, with your feet firmly in your own.
18. Don't, under any circumstances, touch a child inappropriately when praying or talking with them. Do not initiate hugging – whether same or opposite sex. Remember that HCC needs to be above reproach.
19. Allow young people privacy when going to the toilet or changing.
20. After talking or praying with a child, follow up and check how they are during the following week.
21. Record the conversation straight away in the Incident Book and advise your supervisor. It is not necessary to know all the intricate details, rather the general issue.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Residential Work:**

**The following guidelines are based on respect for the individual and legal requirements. They are not intended to restrict the diverse opportunities presented by residential work, rather to safeguard all concerned from the potential of abuse.**

- In residential work, do not invade the privacy of children or young people unnecessarily. Leaders are to knock before entering dormitory accommodation and, except for emergencies, to enter the accommodation of children of the same sex only.
- Separate accommodation for the sexes and for leaders.
- Keep age groups together in dormitories, rooms or tents.
- In residential work, there must be same sex leaders as the children attending.
- Ensure Parental Consent is gained (Appendix 6), HCC contact details are to be provided (HCC + Group leaders), with one of them indicated as an emergency contact in Highworth.

### **Disclosures of child abuse during the residential:**

- If there is an alleged incident on site, then the HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator should be contacted immediately. The incident will then be reported to the local Police or Children Services (local to the area of where the residential is located).
- If a disclosure occurs regarding an incident that occurred in the past, not during the residential, then the HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator should be contacted immediately. The incident will then be reported to the child's local Children's Services.
- When the above occurs, neither the child's parents nor HCC leadership are to be informed of the incident, until Children Services or the Police have advised that it is appropriate. The HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator will liaise with them.
- When mini-buses are used, it is expected that all drivers and leaders will adhere to the legal (and where appropriate, Local Authority) regulations.

## APPENDIX 3

### Bridge PC user agreement: for children, youths and adults.

Highworth Community Church (HCC) is pleased to offer the use of the computers in The Bridge to all visitors. In return, we expect users to agree to use the computers in a responsible manner and within the following guidelines. Please take a few minutes and familiarise yourself with them. Failure to do so may lead to you being denied access to the computers.

We hope that you will enjoy using the computers in a variety of life-enhancing ways, which may include the following activities:

- *learn new skills on how to use computers and various programmes*
- *research the internet for school homework; travel plans; news; making purchases; etc.*
- *play games*
- *send and receive emails or use facebook to communicate with friends and relatives*
- *use photographic and document editing programmes*
- *printing of photos & documents*
- *find out what God is doing in other churches and around the world!*

If you have any queries, there is often someone in The Bridge who will be very happy to help you, or knows someone who can! We'd like to maximise the benefits of modern technology for you.

In order to protect your safety and welfare, please note and read the following:

- *Simple guidelines for children are located near the computers so that you can learn about safe use of the Internet. (BT Internet Green X Code). Look out for the laminated info sheets.*
- *Information on how to access internet safety sites, such as **CEOP** and **Childline**, is also located near the computers.*
- *Children and adults can also use such links to report web-based abuse and help maintain the safety of other children around the country.*
- *Children are discouraged from meeting up with anyone they have 'met' on the Internet, unless it is in the company of their parents.*

There are some activities on the computers that are unacceptable and from which we expect you to refrain. The following are examples of **unacceptable behaviour**:

- *Searching for, or entering, websites that contain pornography, child-abuse, racist or hate-material.*
- *Downloading, forwarding, or burning onto a CD or other recording device any music, images or movies from the Internet where permission has not been granted by the Copyright Holders.*
- *The disclosure of any personal information of under-18s by adults or by another under-18. e.g. names and addresses (postal, email or messenger), telephone numbers, bank details.*

The list is not comprehensive; any illegal act would be included in unacceptable behaviour, as well as any that would be harmful or abusive to yourself or others. If you're not sure whether what you intend to do on the computer is OK, just ask!

## APPENDIX 4

### Information:

Useful phone numbers:

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <b>Val Savill, HCC Child Protection Co-ordinator:</b>                             | <b>01793 784752</b> |
| <b>Graham Thorne, HCC CPC 2<sup>nd</sup> contact:</b>                             | <b>01793 764055</b> |
| <b>Swindon Children Services:</b><br>(Family Contact Point, M-F, 9.00am- 5.00pm). | <b>01793 466903</b> |
| <b>Swindon CS Emergency Duty Service:</b><br>(Out of office hours cover).         | <b>01793 436699</b> |
| <b>Police, Child Abuse Investigation Team:</b>                                    | <b>101</b>          |
| <b>HCC Bridge Office:</b>   | <b>01793 765060</b> |

## APPENDIX 5

**Parental or guardian consent, an example of the required information:**

See next page -

Every child or young person under the age of 18 years participating in the [**WOW event**] must have a parent or legal guardian's signature of consent to attend and give permission, in the event of an accident, for a doctor to administer necessary medication. Please complete this form and return the signed copy to [**the WOW event organizer**] and contact us if you have any queries or concerns.

Name of child or young person:..... Date of birth: .....

Address: .....

Telephone Number: ..... Mobile Number: .....

Please state any **medical conditions** or **allergies** that your child has, as well as **any medication** they may need to take during the event (continue over page, if needed):

Doctor's Name: ..... Telephone Number: .....

Surgery: .....

Does your child have any particular **dietary needs**? If so, please state them:

I confirm that I have read the details of the [**WOW event**] (which includes contact details of the organisers), and give my consent for .....to attend.

I understand that HCC youth leaders will do their utmost to ensure the safety and security of my child at all times during the event. However, if my child fails to follow guidelines and instructions, I may be contacted to make arrangements for their return home.

I consent / do not consent (delete as appropriate) to the named minor receiving any necessary medical treatment at the discretion of the qualified medial staff on duty.

If you are happy for your child's photograph to be taken, or their inclusion in a video, for use in HCC promotional materials (newsletters or encouraging other young people to get involved), please tick  this box.

**Signed:** Name: ..... Relationship ..... **Date:** .....  
Address:.....  
Telephone No:..... Mobile No: .....

**Emergency contact details for the period of the event, if different from above:**

Name: ..... Relationship .....  
Address:.....  
Telephone No:..... Mobile No: .....

**APPENDIX 6**

**Copies of this document to be kept in the *Discoverers* attendance book(s):**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

To help ensure the safety of your child, please read the notes below regarding your agreement to the way we look after children in HCC *Discoverers* (pre-school) group.

- The groups will have at least two helpers.
- Should my child .....(name) become upset,
  - I am happy for him/her to be given a cuddle to comfort him/her or to be sat on a helper's lap **or**,
  - I am not happy for my child to be physically comforted and I would rather be brought out from the church service.
- If my child has a soiled nappy,
  - I am happy for one of the helpers to change my child's nappy, **or**
  - I would like to be brought out from the church service to change the nappy myself, **or**
  - Please leave him/her until I collect at the end of the service.
- If my child needs to use the toilet:
  - I am happy for my child to have help, if needed, when using the toilet, **or**
  - I would rather be brought out from the church service.
- I am happy for my child:
  - To be given a plain biscuit and a drink **or**
  - I will provide these myself.
- I will alert helpers at the beginning of a group, if my child is in need of special attention, such as: needing a bottle feed, suffering from a cold or minor ailment, or has an allergy.

Please delete as appropriate in the bullet points above, and sign and date this form. Your preferences can be changed in the future. A separate form we will need to signed for each child.

Thank you.

.....

**For Highworth Community Church.**

Signed ..... Date: .....

(Amended January '15).

**APPENDIX 7**

**Highworth Community Church Abuse Disclosure Process Form**

Name of person to whom disclosure made..... Date.....

Name of young person..... Date of birth / age: .....

**Actions**

**1. Person to whom disclosure was made has made hand-written notes of conversation with young person named above: Yes/No**

Any Comments

Signed..... Date.....

**2. Immediate supervisor informed Yes/No**

Comments

Signed..... Date.....

**3. Supervisor informed Safe from Harm Coordinator Yes/No**

Comments

Signed..... Date.....

**4. Safe from Harm Coordinator contacted Children Services Yes/No**

Comments

Signed..... Date.....

**5. Outcome**

Comments

Signed..... Date.....

**6. Records passed to Church Administrator for confidential filing (including this form) Yes/No**

## APPENDIX 8

### Visiting children at their homes.

Children's workers and leaders will need to visit children and their families at home from time to time. Perhaps to introduce themselves or to discuss activities arranged by HCC.

The parents or carers may, or may not, attend church. It is therefore important that they have been given information about the group and HCC, including contact telephone numbers.

(If the purpose of the visit is to discuss a concern about a child, or to discuss a complaint from a parent or carer, then it is advisable for two HCC workers to be present for the visit.)

#### Guidelines for visiting:

- Inform a supervisor or another worker of the proposed visit to a **child's home**.
- Never go into a child's home if a parent or carer is absent.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
  1. Purpose.
  2. Time you arrived and left.
  3. Who was present.
  4. What was discussed.
- If the parent or carer is absent when the call is made, and if the child is home alone or with other children, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to the parent or carer when they return.

### Children visiting a worker's home

- The invitation of a child to a **worker's home** must be done with the knowledge of the team or leadership and with the permission of the parent or carer. Guidelines 'for the pastoral care of, and work with, children' (Section 2) as well as 'talking and praying with children' (Appendix 1), will apply.
- If such work (in their own home) constitutes the majority of a worker's contact with children, then the DBS needs to be informed of this particular factor.

## APPENDIX 9

### Registers, Log Books & Confidential notes/document.

Keeping a record of children's and youth activities in HCC will help protect both workers and children. Allegations of abuse may be made many years later, so back copies of Registers, Log Books & Confidential notes/documents should be kept indefinitely. (Pass old copies to HCC Administrator).

Each group should:

- Keep a **register of children** attending the activity.
  - Include a **record of helpers** present and the time of arrival / departure if not present for whole period
  - Note **who else** was present (eg maintenance person) or other activities in the building.
- Maintain a **log book**.
  - Record any **significant incidents** fights/disputes, action taken and by whom.
  - Ensure each **adult involved signs** their log entries with time and date
  - Note down any **concerns** raised eg bruising, throw-away sexual comments about workers or accusations of assault/inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure that any **sensitive information** about a child or young person is not entered in the log book but on a **separate, confidential document**. Depending on its nature, the document may be shared with the team, given to the Child Protection Coordinator or an HCC Leader with pastoral responsibility. It should be retained in a secure and confidential place (refer to HCC Administrator or Child Protection Coordinator).
- Make a brief note in the log-book that a young person spoke with (named) worker for x amount of time and that a detailed note has been recorded.
- Contact **Child Protection Coordinator** where appropriate.

## APPENDIX 10

### Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and e-safety guidance.

**ICT's** are: electronic devices such as personal computers (PC), mobile phones, Smartphones, Personal Digital Assistants, games consoles and digital cameras that allow communication via websites, email, Instant Messenger, social media, voice and texts. **It should be noted that ICTs aren't always secure.**

**Children and Young People:** Every child and young person needs to be aware of the ICT Safety Policy that the organisation and workers follow. Not only parents/carers, but also children and young people have a right to decide whether they want a worker to have their email address or mobile phone number and shouldn't be pressurised into divulging information they would rather keep to themselves. In addition, not every child or young person has the use of a mobile, it is important therefore to have alternative means of communication.

**Parents and Carers:** When a child or young person joins a group, club or activity, a rider should be included on the general consent form that the parent/carer signs, i.e. that ICTs are operating (indicate which ones) and may be used to communicate with their child. HCC's ICT Safety Policy should be attached to this consent form. However, if the parent or carer requests that their child is not communicated with via ICTs, this must be respected and an alternative found.

**Workers** will never initiate discussions about illicit and sex-related sites with young people via ICTs.

#### Communication Values:

- **Integrity:** All communications should embody the kindness, example and integrity of Jesus In keeping with the position of workers as role models for children and young people.
- **Legal:** communications should not be defamatory and ensure the good name of Highworth Community Church is maintained and advanced.
- **Positive:** Care needs to be taken with regard to language and content; not offensive or ambiguous, but rather it should be wholesome and positive.
- **Timely:** Use a curfew of no communication between 9.00 pm and 7.00 am, as well as conversations should not last longer than 10 minutes.
- **Accountable:** Its good practice to always copy someone else into sent messages, preferably another worker or other young people.
- **Responsive to children and young people's needs:** encourage young people to discuss particularly sensitive matters face to face. This is less risky and exclusive and more accountable.
- **Identifiable:** Workers will always use their real names for 'chat' purposes.

#### Text Messages

Texting can be done anywhere, any time and is therefore far more difficult to monitor. This makes it even more important for youth and children workers to be accountable for the things they say and when they are said. The benefit of text is the ability to communicate and respond immediately in a given situation, but it is important for workers to remember:

- It is advisable that a full-time worker be supplied with a work-dedicated phone. This way, all calls and texts can be accounted for via an itemised phone bill. It also protects the worker's right to a personal life outside work. Equally, the worker should make it clear that a work phone is what it says it is and not divulge their personal mobile number to the children or young people they work with.
- The phone should only be switched on during working periods, and switched off when the worker is "off", unless an event is taking place soon, when this should be agreed with the supervisor.

- Mobile phones shall only be used strictly as a means for enhancing youth work, and not for personal reason. They can be a means of communicating events.
- Text messages should be preferred over phone conversation. All texts must be recorded by the worker and checked by their supervisor. They can be deleted after a period of 6 months.
- Where appropriate, use group rather than individual texting.
- Text messages that are sent should not have an opinion.
- When texting, workers should take care with the language they use, avoiding ambiguous abbreviations such as 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and always end with their name.
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on and shown to the worker's supervisor.
- Phone conversations have the same guidance as text messages. If they cannot be recorded, then they must be logged, which can be done through the mobile itself (call logging.) This must be kept up to date for 6 months

**Email:** When using email to communicate with children and young people, workers should:

- Use clear, unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. Although it should be made clear when an email is ending, workers should never use terms such as 'luv' to round things off.
- Ensure all messages can be viewed if necessary by the worker's supervisor and this policy is explained to children and young people. Although unlikely to happen, this can help deter bullying, insulting or abusive emails.
- Children and young people can find it easier to communicate via email because nobody is physically present. This means the child or young person may be more willing to share personal and sensitive information about themselves or a given situation than they would face to face. Whilst it is entirely appropriate to offer general advice and support, counselling should only be done by those qualified to give it. In any event, it is advisable to add the rider below to the bottom of any email stating the level of confidentiality:

*Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of (insert name of HCC and organisation) unless otherwise stated.*

*If there is a concern, e.g. that the sender or someone else, particularly a child, may be at risk of serious harm, we may need to share those concerns. In such circumstances we would inform the sender giving details of who would be contacted and what information would be given.*

**Chat & Messenger Services:** Instant Messenger Services or IM (e.g. MSN Messenger, AOL, AIM, Facebook Messenger) are internet programs that allow people to write and receive messages in real time. Many young people use IM for both one-to-one (chat) and group conversations (chat rooms). Chat is a great way to engage with young people but workers should consider the following:

- Encourage children to use moderated chat-rooms (a chat-room that will block inappropriate messages). Any organisation providing messenger services should ensure it is moderated and have clear internal procedures for its use.
- To ensure accountability and safeguard integrity, workers should save significant conversation as a text file as well as keep a log of when and with whom they communicated. This should be explained to children and young people.
- Enhanced IM services using technology such as web cams (e.g. facetime) or Skype (voice & image calls over the internet) and I-phones with similar capabilities also require procedures for use by workers. At present, HCC has yet to develop and endorse such a policy and therefore advises workers to avoid using them until a policy is agreed.

**Social Media/Social Networks:** It is important that all workers who use social networking accounts (such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and Bebo), as well as the general ICT guidance, also:

**Public Conversations:** Always hold 'conversations' with young people which everyone can see.

**Private Messages:** If the need arises to send a private message, it must be with the knowledge of two members of the team, and in agreement with your supervisor.

**Statuses:** Try to avoid including the young person in a "status". Singling out young people in this way could be embarrassing for them, even if the intention is positive. Do not comment or judge an opinion on a status update about a young person or child, unless to say a short "well done" for passing an exam or "happy birthday" on their birthday, for example.

**Websites, Social Media Pages and Photographs:**

Anyone designing an HCC website or social media page will want to ensure that it reflects and promotes HCC's range of activities, but care is to be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people. Listed here are the most important principles:

**Mobile phones and digital cameras:** Workers should ensure that they only take photographs of children and young people in accordance with HCC's policy on photography e.g. ensure that consent is obtained (see Appendix 5) and all images are stored in accordance with Data Protection Act principles. Any images should be downloaded to an HCC computer and kept securely. Where images are stored using "cloud" technology (e.g. onedrive, dropbox), workers should take care to password protect these technologies, be familiar with the sharing and encryption settings and ensure that their password is secure (regularly updated). Workers should not give out their security details to anyone else.

**Protecting Children/young people's Identity:** Children should not be identified by surname or other personal details such as e-mail, postal addresses, telephone etc.

**Choosing social media platforms carefully:** Whilst each social media platform has its strengths and weaknesses, some are definitely more risky than others. Workers should avoid communicating with young people via snapchat for example, as these messages are deleted automatically within a very short space of time (unless saved). This puts the worker and young person at undue risk, so it must be avoided.

**Photos and Personal Details:** When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures. If a photograph of an individual child or young person is used, personal details are to be avoided.

**Consent:** Consent is to be obtained from parents or carers before using photographs of children or young people on a website. (It is to be noted that the office of the Data Protection Commissioner has declared that photographs posted on the internet are personal data and are subject to data protection legislation)

**Moderating sites:** Where HCC workers manage social media accounts in the name of the church or for church projects, including pages and groups, these should be moderated by more than one person and follow the communication values for working with children set out in this document. Moderating workers should be familiar with this policy and keep up to date with changes in moderation and privacy settings on the media platforms used by the church.

**Sharing:** The guidelines above around posting of photos on church websites should be taken, whilst taking additional caution due to the fact that these can be “shared” more easily. Workers should regularly moderate the content of these sites and take care that, given their two-way functionality, they are more participative and therefore may be more “risky” if not moderated correctly.

**Privacy & tagging:** Privacy settings should be regularly checked by workers and “tagging” of individual users should be disabled to protect children and young people’s identity. Workers must not “tag” young people in photos on HCC sites. Workers should take care in tagging parents on “pages” as tagging young people’s or their parents may make young people more identifiable and therefore more vulnerable to grooming and abuse.

**Transferring or sending files:** Bearing in mind files and images can be sent via email and IM, workers should ensure that only legal and non-offensive content is sent or transferred and a log kept of any significant files. It is also important that anti-virus software and a firewall are installed on the computer being used.

**The Bridge Computers:** children and young people using the computers at The Bridge, will read and sign a user-agreement which details what is acceptable and unacceptable online activity (Appendix 3). If possible, parents are to be included in this process.

**Helping children and young people to develop e-safety skills:** The benefit of ICTs, is that children and young people can communicate very easily. However, they can also be vulnerable to unscrupulous individuals who wish to harm them. Because workers are in a position of trust, they have a unique opportunity to help children develop personal safety skills. In addition, workers can involve parents/carers by offering help and advice on the use of the internet in the home and maintain on-going dialogue about emerging technologies their children may be using.

**CEOP:** have a range of age-appropriate videos (CEOP on *youtube*) to use with children, youths, parents and workers that inform of the impact of cyber-bullying, sexual exploitation and other risks associated with social network sites for children (especially regarding naïve disclosure of personal details). CEOP also provides advice and a link to report online abuse on <http://ceop.police.uk> or [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

## APPENDIX 11.

### Children, youths and vulnerable adults participation in HCC public meetings.

The following observations are not only relevant to Highworth Community Church (HCC) members, but also for those HCC members who invite visiting preachers, worship-leaders, or children's workers, who will need to ensure that the visitors are aware of this guidance and it is adhered to.

HCC recognises the need to ensure the care and safety of children and vulnerable adults in public meetings and their interactions with each other. We recognise that people of all ages attend these public meetings who are from diverse backgrounds and with various abilities to understand the Christian faith. These people may include those with poor mental health or learning difficulties. HCC wants to include *everyone* in a safe way.

The definition of a public meeting in this instance refers to a meeting that is open to members of the public, so this includes Sunday morning church services, as well as the Sunday morning groups for children. (There are other 'public' meetings and groups run by HCC where these observations may also apply).

**Regarding children and youths:** During public meetings, parents or carers of the children are responsible for their own children. We recognise that consent is difficult to obtain in public meetings because of the amount of variables. Without such consent, or indeed with, we need to be wary of placing children and youths into positions of responsibility or, perhaps in part, to use them to fulfil the expectations of adults. Whilst we want to encourage children to pray for each other or give words of encouragement to others in the congregation, we must be mindful that children are unlikely to be emotionally equipped to cope with the various responses and outcomes, immediate or long term, which may occur after ministering to individuals. Hence the following guidance is to be followed:

- If a child has something to say in a church meeting (such as a word of knowledge, prophesy or wisdom), they need to do so under the guidance of their parents or carers and with permission of the adults who are responsible for the meeting. Such words would be for the benefit of the whole congregation or a particular group of people (perhaps for an older generation, church leaders or school teachers), rather than to an individual.
- In addition, it is anticipated that children and youths will participate in worship services whilst under the guidance of their children or youth workers, as well as worship leaders. When participating in a team, they could contribute through a wide range of additional roles, such as: teaching; preaching; drama; reading scripture; worship-leading; singing; musician; introducing multi-media material; etc. Thereby, the whole church (children, youths and adults) will benefit from the children's ministry.
- However, children are not to minister to *individual* adults in public meetings; not to lay hands on adults, or take on any spiritual or emotional role over adults or other children in public meetings (the exception would be if the child's parent or carer is ministering with them). HCC's Prayer Ministry Team (PMT) model of working implies the same, but not exclusive, expectation for adults in the congregation. Whilst adults may choose to receive ministry from those who are not in the PMT, this guidance for children recognises their emotional immaturity and vulnerability.

- If a child requests prayer for their self during a church service, it is best that their children's or youth worker prays with the child, rather than a member of the Prayer Ministry Team. Alternatively, another HCC children's or youth worker could do so. (It would be propitious to appoint such a worker for the role when all-age worships services are arranged and prayer may be offered). The adult should only pray with the child having previously gained the permission of the child's parents or carers, and in compliance with the HCC Safe-guarding guidance.
- If an adult has a prophetic word for, or wishes to pray with, a child during a public meeting, they should only do so with the permission of the child's parents or carers, as well as with permission from the adults who are responsible for the meeting. It is also to be done in compliance with the HCC Safe-guarding guidance for praying with children (Appendix 1). Ideally, in a public meeting, the parent or carer is to be present whilst the child receives such ministry. However, if the safeguarding criteria cannot be met at that time, then alternative arrangements could be sought so that the criteria can be met.
- During their Sunday morning groups, the children are supervised by the teachers. As with the worship services, these groups are also public and the children's parents/carers are still in the place of responsibility. However, we recognise that parents and carers have given permission for their children to attend these groups for teaching and participation in order to learn about the Christian faith. Thus, parents have given assent for their child to receive Christian teaching and practice of the faith.
- In Sunday morning groups, the teachers support and direct the children in prayer and Christian teaching. Importantly, the teachers are to guide and support the children to be able to make their own choices on how they participate in such activities as prayer.

Children and youths can attend closed groups (not public) provided by HCC where information is available for the children and their parents/carers about the group and their consent is given. These groups can develop and support the children within the guidelines of that group in order to disciple, nurture, and develop their faith and various gifts.

It is recommended that the teachers or leaders of each children's or youth group have written information available for the children and their parents/carers, which include the following details: purpose of the group and contact details of leaders & HCC. This will help to ensure that the group-members and their parents/carers can make informed consent about their participation and, if they have any queries or concerns, will know who to contact.

**Regarding vulnerable adults:** The leaders of public meetings are to be mindful that vulnerable adults may not be able to 'test' what is said to them through such means as teaching, prophetic words or prayer (generically from the leader or personal, direct to them). Information may be taken literally or misunderstood, which can lead to the person experiencing confusion. If such misinterpreted information were to be given by a child, or relates to a child, the adult's response may have significant consequences to the child (or children), as well as for the vulnerable adult.

## APPENDIX 12: Mentoring children or young people.

Although HCC does not offer a universal mentoring programme, from time to time, HCC will offer mentoring to young people in certain circumstances. This will usually be when there is an identified need, when there is appetite and support from the young person and family and when mentoring is considered both a practical and appropriate means of meeting the desired outcomes. This appendix focuses on safe-guarding factors when such mentoring occurs with children and young people. Whilst it mostly compliments HCC's SfH guidance, it also refers to wider good practice related to mentoring.

Mentoring has been described as *'a process by which a more experienced, trusted guide forms a relationship with a young person to offer support, guidance and encouragement, to assist young people to realise their potential as they transition into adulthood'*. Mentoring usually takes place one-to-one. By its very nature, this incurs increased risk from a safeguarding perspective. Such relationships conflict with HCC's general safeguarding principals, which broadly discourage lone-working with children or young people. However, mentoring has significant value that justifies its use. This guidance seeks to mitigate these risks both for the mentee and mentor. It assumes that mentors have already completed HCC's safe-recruiting process and envisages one-to-one meetings which take place on a face-to-face basis rather than via technology (e.g. video conferencing on Skype, Facebook etc.), the latter is considered too risky for one to one work.

The general principles for safeguarding in mentoring are openness, accountability and awareness:

1. **Mentors** are to be stable, motivated, trustworthy, flexible, empathetic, sensitive & authentic, and can demonstrate that their attitudes, temperament, personality & skills fit the relationship objectives. Self-awareness is key to success.
2. The aim should be to find a reasonable match between the interpersonal capabilities, cultural backgrounds and social circumstances of both **mentor and mentee**. Mentors should be capable of managing any cultural differences between them and the mentee.
3. **Mentors** should have completed training covering: expectations of the mentor; the relationship structure and boundaries including when to signpost other agencies; safety and security; how to be an effective mentor; and how to close the relationship. The onus is on the mentoring coordinator to provide such training though methods may vary.
4. Prospective **mentees** go through an initial assessment process ("setup meeting") to check their suitability for mentoring sessions. This should consider factors that could jeopardise the relationship such as mental health issues, violence, high level of dishonesty, or the involvement of other services etc. At the setup meeting, information for the matching process can be gathered.
5. The **mentee** is to be provided with information so that they have a clear understanding of what they can expect from the mentoring relationship and what is expected of them. This includes: how to engage with the mentor (and HCC); what to do if there are any problems; what to do if the mentee wishes to end the relationship; and how the mentee or their parent/carers may raise any questions, concerns or make a complaint.

6. The **mentor and mentee** are to agree the expectations and timescales of the mentoring relationship including the amount of contact time at their first meeting, (e.g. 60 minutes, once a week, for 9 months. At which time, it could be mutually agreed to extend the relationship). Whilst this should be communicated with both the young person and their parent/carer(s), mentoring works on the basis of a trust relationship and therefore it would be inappropriate to share the young person's development goals if these are personal, especially without their consent. Trust is critical to success and it is vital that the mentor recognises this responsibility.
7. Both **mentor and mentee** can have their say regarding with whom they are matched, within the constraints of what HCC is able to offer. These will be made clear to the mentee at the setup meeting.
8. **Parents or carers** are to be consulted about where and when mentoring takes place, with clear boundaries. Ongoing parental involvement is beneficial in achieving the goals of the relationship.
9. Mentoring should take place in public\* e.g. library, coffee shop, etc. at a time agreed with the young person. Whilst having space to talk is important, transparency and openness are critical to the safety of mentors and mentees. Agreement of parents and the mentor's supervisor is to be sought if giving lifts in private cars. (\*Appx 8 re home visits).
10. Records should be kept by the **Mentor** for monitoring the progress of the relationship and development of the young person, as well as times, dates and location of the meetings (as required in Safe from Harm Appendix 9).
11. The **Mentor's supervisor** is to undertake routine contact with the mentee to ensure the relationship is tracking well, and to keep communication channels open with HCC. Regular supervision should be carried out to help the mentor to learn from their experiences and ensure their mentoring skills develop and improve.

\* *What is mentoring and befriending?* Manchester: Mentoring and Befriending Foundation, July 2014. *Safe Practice Guidelines for Youth Mentoring Programmes*. Wellington: Ministry of Health, New Zealand. 2013. Both publications provide the basis for much of HCC's guidance, above.

## **APPENDIX 13: Godparents Scheme.**

In April 2017, HCC will be launching a “Godparents” scheme. This scheme is aimed at encouraging ordinary church members to welcome, encourage and pray for young people, and help develop relationships beyond the existing team of youth and children’s workers.

The purpose of this short policy is to set out some simple guidelines for church members who join the scheme (“God parents”), children who sign up to be involved (“God children”) and parents of children who want to be involved (God children and parents of children who want to be involved are referred to as “prospective families”). The scheme will be launched at a vision and information evening. At this event, the commitment of God-parenting will be explained to families of interested children/young people and prospective godparents. The aim of this session is to inspire participation in the scheme and ensure everyone involved is clear about the expectations of being a “Godparent”. Prospective families and godparents will then have a chance to go away and consider their involvement.

A second meeting will be organised where they have an opportunity to commit and participate in some training, to promote good practice. This workshop will include child protection awareness and explain the boundaries of the relationship. Training notes and an information flyer will be given out including contact information. Godparents and families will be matched as they come forward and the scheme begins.

At around 3 months, a “check-in” will occur with families and Godparents who opt in (separately) to see how things are going and identify any concerns. An “open door policy” with the families worker will be maintained at all times so families and Godparents can say if things are not working out or to flag up any issues.

## Recruitment obligations for HCC in relation to Godparents

Whilst the God-parenting scheme has these general commitments, God-parenting itself may be expressed in a variety of different ways, each of which gives HCC a different set of obligations under its *Safe from Harm Policy*.

| Scenario/How it looks  | HCC's Specific Safeguarding Steps   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Firstly, <b>praying for children in their absence</b>. The classic example is that a particular adult is given a child's name and commits to praying for that child regularly.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If children are being prayed "for" rather than "with" (i.e. the child or young person is absent), the DBS do not require a check to be carried out in these circumstances.</li> <li>• There is no reference check requirement.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>2. <b>Meeting with children in a public place when the parents are present</b> e.g. at The Bridge on a Saturday morning, or after church in the café area. The parents should be present in each of these situations. If not it is considered a mentoring relationship, see category 3.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordinarily, there is no requirement for a DBS check to be carried out for someone interacting with a young person in a public place where the young person's parents are present.</li> <li>• Godparents in this group should undergo mentoring training with the mentoring co-ordinator (HCC Families worker).</li> <li>• Reference checks must be carried out if the person has not been known to the leadership or trustees for a period of 12 months or more.</li> <li>• The church leadership should be consulted to check if they have any concerns about the person involved.</li> <li>• If the relationship intensifies i.e. it becomes a mentoring relationship, the full ordinary recruitment process should take place (see group 3).</li> </ul> |
| <p>3. <b>Mentoring relationships:</b> these may include meeting a young person in a local café after school on a regular or ad hoc basis for a catch up or visiting a young person at home to chat and pray with them.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The full ordinary recruitment process must be carried out in accordance with the person's eligibility for a DBS check and HCC's <i>Child Protection Policy</i> and <i>Safe from Harm Guide</i>.</li> <li>• Godparents in this group should undergo mentoring training with the mentoring co-ordinator (HCC Families worker).</li> </ul>  |

## **APPENDIX 14: Children and youths' participation in HCC public meetings, regarding the Holy Spirit.**

HCC has hope and expectation that God's Holy Spirit will be active during the meetings of the church; expressing His desire to develop His church as the effective body of Christ, via both the fruits and **gifts of the Holy Spirit**. In addition, the Holy Spirit may also wish to **free individuals from the influence and bonds of evil**. (To discover more information about the Holy Spirit, please consult the HCC leaders).

Regarding the **gifts of the Holy Spirit**, during church meetings, there are likely to be invitations given to attendees to ask for prayer to receive the Holy Spirit and His gifts. This could occur when children and youths are present; who may respond to the invitation. Please refer to Appendices 1 and 11 of this document, which provide detailed guidance regarding prayer with children and youths. Prior teaching, to develop understanding and faith, as well as planned, post-meeting opportunities for questions and discussions about the Holy Spirit (for all parties), would be beneficial.

Regarding prayer for **release from the influence and bonds of evil**, HCC concurs with the guidance provided by CCPAS and the Department for Education's National Action Plan (2012) to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief.

**CCPAS** gives the following guidance:

*Any religious, traditional or cultural practice that causes significant harm to a child is a criminal offence and cannot be justified. One example of this is when children have been subjected to horrific abuse following accusations they are witches or possessed by evil spirits. When practices such as these come to light, the statutory authorities may investigate and take appropriate action to protect the children involved.*

*Some places of worship believe that a child can have an evil spirit or is possessed when they display behavioural problems or are different in some way. The child may have learning difficulties, mental health issues, copied or unconventional behaviours, or be experiencing some kind of trauma such as culture shock at coming to live in a different country.*

*Children are easily frightened and very susceptible to suggestion. They may also be upset by shouting and will easily believe they are bad, wicked etc. A child should never be told they are demonised, possessed or oppressed by the devil or evil spirits.*

The **National Action Plan** to tackle child abuse linked to faith or belief is summarised in the following:

### **Key Principles: child abuse linked to faith or belief.**

*Child abuse is never acceptable wherever it occurs and whatever form it takes. Abuse linked to belief, including belief in witchcraft or possession, is a horrific crime which is condemned by people of all cultures, communities and faiths. The Government applauds the work being done in communities to tackle this form of abuse and to stand up to the perpetrators.*

### **Key Messages:**

• **Child abuse is condemned by people of all cultures, communities and faiths, and is never acceptable under any circumstances.** *Child abuse related to belief includes inflicting physical violence or emotional harm on a child by stigmatising or labeling them as evil or as a witch. Where this type of abuse occurs it causes great distress and suffering to the child.*

- **Everyone working or in contact with children has a responsibility to recognise and know how to act on evidence, concerns and signs** that a child's health, development and safety is being or may be threatened, especially when they suffer or are likely to suffer significant harm.
- **Standard child safeguarding procedures apply and must always be followed** in all cases where abuse or neglect is suspected including those that may be related to particular belief systems.
- **The number of cases of child abuse linked to a belief in spirits, possession and witchcraft is small**, but where it occurs, the impact on the child is great, causing much distress and suffering to the child. It is likely that a proportion of this type of abuse remains unreported.

*(Research commissioned by the Department for Education in 2006 reviewed child abuse cases that had occurred between 2000 and 2005 to identify any cases where the abuse was linked to accusations of possession or witchcraft. 38 cases involving 47 children were found to be relevant and sufficiently well documented. The children came from a variety of backgrounds including African, South Asian and European).*

- **Child abuse linked to faith or belief may occur where a child is treated as a scapegoat for perceived failure.** Whilst specific beliefs, practices, terms or forms of abuse may exist, the underlying reasons for the abuse are often similar to other contexts in which children become at risk. These reasons can include family stress, deprivation, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health problems. Children who are different in some way, perhaps because they have a disability or learning difficulty, an illness or are exceptionally bright, can also be targeted in this kind of abuse.

The National Action Plan can be viewed in full at this web-site:

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00094-2012>

With the CCPAS guidance and National Action Plan in mind, it is imperative that no child or youth involved in HCC activities should be told they are, or referred to, in the following terms: *evil* or *demonised*; *possessed by*, or *having, an evil spirit*; or *manifesting an evil spirit*. Should this occur, the procedures detailed in Section 7 of the HCC SfH guidance; 'Identifying abuse – signs, symptoms and how to respond', should be followed.

However, should a parent or carer present a child and use such terms, we or HCC leaders or the prayer team are to respond positively to the situation. Jesus showed us how we can do this when he ministered to a young boy (Matthew 17, Mark 9 and Luke 9) and we can draw wisdom from His example, which included the following factors:

- the child's parent was involved;
- being a spectacle was avoided;
- the child was not told they were possessed;
- a simple prayer was used; and, after the prayer,
- compassion was shown to the child.

With the child's parents' or carers' permission, HCC's response to similar situations may include some of the following actions: if the child is distressed, to comfort them; to listen to the child and to hear their story; to pray God's blessing for them; to assure the parent or carer that the child is not possessed; to provide information and advice to the parent or carer that address behavioural needs which the child may exhibit (such as emotional, learning, or physical needs, as well as nightmares) and, if appropriate, to sign-post the parent or carer to professional services; or to discuss the issues should the parent or carer appear to be scape-goating the child for the family's difficulties.

