

# RUSHMERE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

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**POLICY STATEMENT**

Rushmere Christian Fellowship takes the safety of children\* very seriously. It recognises its responsibilities for the safeguarding of all children under the age of 18 (regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability) as set out in The Children Act 1989 and 2004, Safe from Harm (HM Government 1994) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2010).

As members of this church we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of all children associated with the church and will pray for them regularly. In pursuit of this, we commit ourselves to the development and implementation of the following procedures.

It is the duty of all, as a church member or part of the wider church family, to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children. It is everyone’s duty to respond to concerns about the wellbeing of children and to report any abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, whether on a paid or voluntary basis. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.

The church will adopt the safe behaviour guidelines outlined in this document for all who are appointed to work with children so that they are shown the respect that is due to them. The church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children.

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and will adopt ways of working with children that promote their safety and wellbeing.

The church will ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

The church is committed to the safeguarding of adults at risk, ensuring their wellbeing in the life of this church.

The church has appointed Marilyn Coates as the Designated Person for Safeguarding to oversee and monitor implementation of this policy and procedures on behalf of the church. Marilyn will advise the church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected. Marilyn is supported in this role by the RCF Safeguarding Elder and RCF Safeguarding Trustee (see [Contact Details](#)).

The Safeguarding Policy Statement will be affirmed at the RCF Annual General Meeting.

\*Please note: The words “children” or “child” used throughout this document apply to children and young people up to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, unless it is expressly defined otherwise.

## TYPES OF ABUSE & RECOGNISING POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

It is the duty of all, as a church member or part of the wider church family, to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children. It is everyone's duty to respond to concerns about the wellbeing of children and to report any abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the church.

Abuse	Definition	Includes ... (this is not an exhaustive list)	Possible signs of abuse
Physical	To inflict pain, physical injury or suffering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting, slapping and beating;</li> <li>• Shaking, pinching and pushing;</li> <li>• Kicking, burning and hair pulling;</li> <li>• Poisoning, burning, scalding and suffocating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained or hidden injuries;</li> <li>• Lack of medical attention.</li> </ul>
Emotional	Any act which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity or self-worth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mocking, coercing, threatening or controlling behaviour.</li> <li>• Bullying, intimidation, harassment or humiliation.</li> <li>• Making someone feel worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverting to younger behaviour;</li> <li>• Nervousness;</li> <li>• Sudden under-achievement;</li> <li>• Attention-seeking;</li> <li>• Running away;</li> <li>• Stealing or lying.</li> </ul>
Sexual	Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indecent assault, incest, being forced to touch another person in a sexual manner without consent;</li> <li>• Making sexual remarks, suggestions and teasing;</li> <li>• Indecent exposure, being forced to watch pornographic material or sexual acts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preoccupation with sexual matters evident in words, play, drawings;</li> <li>• Being sexually provocative with adults or children;</li> <li>• Stomach pains with no apparent cause.</li> </ul>
Neglect	A child's wellbeing is impaired and their care needs are not met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignoring medical or physical care needs, including not giving someone proper food or assistance with eating or drinking;</li> <li>• Failing to provide a warm, safe and comfortable environment;</li> <li>• Leaving alone or unsupervised;</li> <li>• Failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks uncared for and unhappy;</li> <li>• Withdrawn or aggressive;</li> <li>• Lingering injuries or health problems.</li> </ul>

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, by another child or children.

These are only possible signs. The same symptoms may have perfectly innocent reasons. **DON'T JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS** but **DON'T IGNORE THE OBVIOUS**. If in doubt, talk to the Group Leader, the Designated Person for Safeguarding or the Designated Elder for Safeguarding.

## RESPONDING TO CONCERN

How to respond when a child wants to talk to you about harm or abuse:

- Listen without making comments or asking any leading questions.
- Focus your attention on the child.
- Accept what they say.
- Keep calm.
- Be honest.
- Tell the child you will need to let someone else know - don't promise confidentiality.
- Never push for information.
- Never meet in a private place and always let someone know that you are meeting with a child.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next. Tell them who you are passing it on to.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

The next steps:

- As soon as possible after the child has talked to you, write down what you were told (Not while the child is talking):
  - If relevant, include a description of any injury, its size and a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body.
  - Write down exactly what the child has said and when s/he said it, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand e.g. a description of the activity.
  - Write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made.
  - Write down any action taken and keep all handwritten notes even if subsequently typed up.
- Contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding - or, in their absence, the Designated Elder for Safeguarding or the Designated Trustee for Safeguarding. If none of these people are available and you have serious concerns, go directly to the Children's Social Care Team or the Police.
- Do not pass the information on to anyone else. Only those mentioned above and NOT the parents/carers. If the parent needs to be contacted that should be done by the Designated Elder or Trustee for Safeguarding or the Children's Social Care Team.
- Should the Designated Person for Safeguarding not feel it necessary to refer the matter to the Children's Social Care Team, but you have serious concerns for the child's safety, then contact the relevant authorities directly. Similarly, if you are unhappy with the course of action taken, you should contact the relevant authorities directly. This may be in one of the following three ways:
  - Telephone the Children's Social Care Team and ask for their advice.
  - Make a referral directly to the Social Care Team or the Police.
  - Contact Churches Child Protection Advisory Service for their advice.
- The safety of the child over-rides all other considerations and it is important to remember that sexual abuse of children is a serious crime.
- If the allegation is against a church leader who has responsibility for implementing the Policy, refer this directly to the Children's Social Care Team or seek appropriate professional advice e.g. from Churches Child Protection Advisory Service.
- Seek pastoral support for yourself if you need to (bearing in mind the confidentiality of the situation).

## Procedures for Responding to Concerns

### STAGE 1

*A worker/church attendee has a concern about the welfare of a child or the behaviour of an adult.*

*The person who has the concern has a duty to*

#### RECORD AND REPORT

*A written record must be made of the concern using the incident report form (see [Appendix 1](#)) and the concern should be reported to the Designated Person for Safeguarding within 24 hours.*

*If a child is in imminent danger of harm a referral should be made to the Police on 999 or Customer First/Emergency Duty Service (Children's Social Care Team) on 0808 800 4005 without delay.*



### STAGE 2

*The Designated Person for Safeguarding receives the report of concern and then has a duty to*

#### REVIEW AND REFER

*The report will be reviewed by the Designated Person with any other relevant information and a decision will be taken (often in liaison with others) as to what action should follow.*

*Any formal referral to Social Services should normally be made within 24 hours of receiving the report.*



### STAGE 3

*After the decision has been made as to what action should be taken, the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the Safeguarding Elder and the Safeguarding Trustee may have a duty to*

#### SUPPORT AND REPORT

*Support should be offered to all parties affected by any safeguarding concerns and, where formal referrals are made, reports may need to be made to the Children's Social Care Team the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Charity Commission.*

If the Designated Person for Safeguarding is not available, any reports or concerns should be passed to the Safeguarding Elder or Safeguarding Trustee.

If the Designated Person for Safeguarding does not feel it necessary to refer the matter to the Children's Social Care Team, but you have serious concerns for the child's safety, then contact the relevant authorities directly.

If you are unhappy with the course of action taken, you should contact the relevant authorities directly.

## SAFE RECRUITMENT, SUPPORT & SUPERVISION

The church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children, whether on a paid or voluntary basis. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.

- It is the responsibility of the children's group leader to initiate and liaise with the Designated Person for Safeguarding regarding the correct procedures for the recruitment and supervision of all their helpers/workers.
- Every person wanting to work with our children (whether on a paid or voluntary basis), will be given an application pack containing: a link to the DBS website and an application form asking for background, experience and two references. These references will only be required for people who have been attending (or well-known to) RCF for less than five years. All applicants will be asked to have the form signed off by an RCF Elder.
- Each person will be asked to complete the forms and return them as soon as possible to the RCF Designated Person for Safeguarding. They will need to go online and fill in the DBS check form.
- The Designated Person for Safeguarding will process the DBS form online. The disclosure will normally be returned within a few days. The applicant should show their Disclosure Certificate to the Designated Person for Safeguarding as we only receive an online notification of completion.
- References will be followed-up as soon as possible. All references will be made available to the Elders if they wish to view them.
- The Designated Person for Safeguarding will inform the Group Leader once all the checks have been satisfactorily completed and they have been shown the Disclosure Certificate by the applicant. The Group Leader will inform the applicant that they can start to work with children, in accordance with these guidelines.
- If these checks show up any concerns, the information will be passed to the Elders and Trustees who will decide whether the concerns (from the DBS or references) are relevant to the post. They will then decide if further action is needed.
- Ideally all children's workers should be members of the church. When on occasion this is not appropriate or necessary, all other checks should be carried out with great care and the applicant will be expected to follow all guidelines as set out in this document. They must also be made fully aware of the beliefs of Rushmere Christian Fellowship and agree to support the spiritual nature of our work.
- All workers will be given a copy of the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures and will be required to follow the procedures contained in this document. If a worker fails to adhere to the set procedures, the Elders or Trustees reserve the right to stop them from working with children immediately. If this applies to a paid children's or youth worker this may lead to disciplinary action or a charge of gross misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the action or omission.
- As part of the appointment process, training will be offered on a periodic basis and all workers will be expected to attend.

### Young Helpers

- Under 18s may help in crèche or in the children's work but they should always be supervised and never left alone with children.
- Under 16s should not be counted as adults when working out the ratio of workers to children.
- When a young helper reaches the age of 18, the full recruitment process will be applied.

## Workers from Overseas

- If an adult has recently come from overseas, it is not always possible to carry out the necessary checks. Care should be taken when looking at references as standards are not always consistent with those we adhere to here. If there is any doubt, the adult worker from overseas should be treated in the same way as a helper who is under 16.
- Where applicable, an applicant's UK residency status and/or right to work in the UK will be checked.

## Rehabilitation of Offenders

The following policy will apply:

- No person who has been convicted of any sexual offence, an offence of abuse against a child or named in civil proceedings should be allowed to work with children.
- Any such person wishing to attend the church must be subject to a frank discussion with the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the Safeguarding Elder and the Safeguarding Trustee, as witnesses, with a view to establishing open communication and establishing clear boundaries.
- Such a person will agree to appropriate officials, e.g. Probation Officers, and the offender's family, if attending the church, being contacted with a view to assistance in the formulation of an agreement.
- Such a person will make an agreement/contract with the church, in writing to ensure the protection of all children attending the church.
- Consideration will be given to the extent to which significant people in the church will be made aware of the person's background and the details of the agreement. This will always include the Elders (new Elders must be given the information within the first month of service), leaders of the children's groups and the leader of any house group the person is going to attend. If the offender's family members attend the church they also shall be made aware of any specific arrangements.
- Any offender not agreeing to this process will be advised that their attendance will be closely monitored and any further action will be considered at the next Elders' meeting. The Elders and Trustees reserve the right to prevent the immediate attendance of the person at the church and to pass any information on to another church or official Probation Officer if the welfare of children requires it.
- Any person who has received a suspension as the result of an allegation for a safeguarding issue will also be subject to a frank discussion with the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the Safeguarding Elder and the Safeguarding Trustee, as witnesses, in order to establish appropriate boundaries during the suspension period.

## Equal Opportunities

- Rushmere Christian Fellowship is a Christian organisation committed to social justice and resolutely opposed to discrimination in society. We are committed to providing services on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, life-style, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor. No person requiring services from Rushmere Christian Fellowship will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds.
- In employment we actively seek to recruit with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation.
- As an organisation seeking to deliver services within a Christian context, some posts can only be filled by Christians. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented under Employment and Race Directives issued by the government and ACAS guidance.



- As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Rushmere Christian Fellowship undertakes to comply fully with the [DBS Code of Practice](#) and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- A disclosure is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.
- Where a disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential, cover to the recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.
- Unless the nature of the position allows Rushmere Christian Fellowship to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions, as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- We ensure that all those in the organisation who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
- We make every subject of a DBS disclosure aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

## SAFE BEHAVIOUR

The aim of these general guidelines is to ensure quality childcare, protection of children from possible abuse and protection of workers from false accusation:

- Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding for the children in your care.
- Work on each individual child's positives. Do not compare a child with another, but encourage and affirm them, giving them responsibility for simple tasks.
- Build healthy relationships with children and be a good role model by setting an example. You can't expect children to observe the ground rules if you break them yourself.
- Take care to give quieter and well behaved children attention and resist allowing demanding children to take all your time and energy.
- Be consistent in what you say and ensure that other team members know what you have said. This avoids manipulation.
- If children are bored they often misbehave, so review your programme regularly.
- Use age-appropriate language and tone of voice. NEVER smack or hit a child person and don't shout.
- When it is necessary to control and discipline children, this should be done without using physical punishment. Discipline out of love, NEVER in anger. (Call on support from other leaders if you feel so angry you may deal with the situation unwisely.)



- Lay down ground rules e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names, respect for property, and make sure the children understand what action will be taken if these rules are not kept.
- Every child is unique and will respond in different ways to different forms of discipline. It follows therefore, each child should be dealt with on an individual basis.
- Some children have a tendency to be disruptive in a group. Give them a chance, warn them and only separate if they are disruptive as a last resort.
- Have a disruptive child sit right in front of you or get a helper to sit next to them.
- Be pro-active and encourage helpers to be pro-active rather than waiting to be told to deal with a situation.
- Take a disruptive child to one side and engage with them, challenging them to change, whilst encouraging their strengths (see guidelines below).
- Remedial action can be taken against a constantly disruptive child. They can be warned that you may speak to their parent/carers about their behaviour, they may be sent outside the room (under supervision), back into the church service, or, after consultation with a church leader and advising the parent/carer, be banned from attending the group for a period of time.
- If a child's behaviour continues to be disruptive despite measures taken above, seek advice and guidance from a leader.
- Pray with other workers before the session and take time to debrief before you leave.
- Consideration should be given to how many workers should be involved with the group and whether they should be male or female workers or both. Below are suggested ratios of adults to children, recommended for all activities with children:

Age Group	Adult Helpers	Number of Children
2 years and under	1	3
3 years	1	4
4 to 7 years	1	8
8 years or older	1	10

### Working with Disruptive Children

Sometimes children become angry, upset and disruptive. Occasionally their behaviour may endanger themselves and others. The Government has developed national standards in relation to early years and day care:

- If a child is being disruptive:
  - Ask them to stop.
  - Speak to the child to establish the cause(s) of upset.
  - Inform the child that they will be asked to leave if the behaviour continues.
  - Warn the child that if they continue to be disruptive, this may result in longer term exclusion from the group.
- Attempt to ensure that you are not alone in a group where this is likely to happen.
- If a child is harming him/herself, another person or property, then other children present should be escorted away from the area where the disruption is occurring. At the same time, and with a second worker present, request the child to stop. If your request is ignored, you might need to warn the individual that you will consider calling for additional help (e.g. Police) if they do not stop. In exceptional circumstances and with assistance, you may need to prevent the child from harming themselves, others or property whilst you wait for the Police.
- The workers involved should always record what happened as soon as possible after the incident, including the following:
  - What activity was taking place?
  - What might have caused the disruptive behaviour?
  - The child's behaviour.
  - What you said and how you and others responded.

- A list of others present who witnessed the incident.
- A copy should be given to the leader and a copy retained by the worker.

### **Children with Special Needs**

- Children with special needs or disability can be at greater risk of abuse.
- Work with the parents to find out how the child's needs can best be met.
- Ensure that a worker of the same gender assists if a child needs help with toileting.
- Make sure that there are enough helpers to cope with all the child's needs.

### **Touching**

We want our children to feel loved and cared for. We shouldn't be afraid to use touch to communicate this but we need to exercise great care in how we do this.

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating, to the adult or the child.
- Children are entitled to privacy to ensure personal dignity.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, apart from in exceptional circumstances e.g. when they need medical attention.
- When giving first aid (or applying sun cream, etc.), encourage children to do what they can manage themselves, but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

### **Harassment and Bullying**

The church is committed to ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, free from harassment or other forms of bullying.

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. It may include any of the following:

- Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay"
- Unwelcome sexual behaviour
- Inappropriate behaviour whether in the form of offensive or intimidating comments or gestures or insensitive jokes or pranks
- The sending or displaying of material that is pornographic or obscene or that some individuals or groups may find offensive or
- Ignoring or shunning someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation or an activity

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour which, through the abuse or misuse of power, makes the recipient feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated and threatened. It can be verbal or physical and may include any of the following:

- Name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking, shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others
- Physical or psychological threats
- Kicking, hitting, pushing, intimidating
- Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature or sexually abusive comments

- Taking belongings
- Inappropriate text-messaging and emailing
- Sending offensive or degrading images by phone or over the internet
- Gossiping, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- Excluding people from groups, meetings or communications
- 'Unofficial' activities such as initiation ceremonies or practical jokes which may cause physical or emotional harm
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
- In appropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance
- Abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority

Bullies will often pick on a particular feature of a person's appearance or character as a supposed 'reason' for bullying e.g. racial difference, disability, sexuality, hair colour or gender. Bullies can be children bullying others in their peer group, or other children either older or younger, adults bullying children, children bullying adults or adults bullying adults.

Bullying will always cause a great deal of pain and harm for those on the receiving end. The effect of bullying on the victim can be profound, both emotionally and physically. Many children affected by bullying believe they have nowhere to turn. They are scared to speak out and often blame themselves. They can become fearful and reclusive. Other signs that may indicate that a child is being bullied are: withdrawal, lack of desire to join activities with certain individuals, drop in school marks, torn clothing, loss of friends, avoidance of groups and other activities, bruises or the need for extra money or supplies.

Within the children's groups, in order to prevent harassment or bullying the following procedures will be adopted:

- The children themselves will be involved in agreeing a code of behaviour which makes it clear that bullying is unacceptable.
- Children should know how they can report any incidents of harassment or bullying.
- All allegations of bullying will be treated seriously.
- Details will be checked carefully before action is taken.
- The behaviour will be investigated and the harassment or bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible
- The parents of the bully and of the bullied will be informed.
- An attempt will be made to help bullies change their behaviour.
- All allegations and incidents of bullying will be recorded, together with the actions that are taken.

For adults who consider that they are being bullied or harassed, we encourage you to initially attempt to resolve the problem informally with the person responsible, if you feel able, clearly explaining to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing to do on your own, you should seek support from another person. If informal steps have not been successful or would not be appropriate, you should consult with the Elders.

Any instances of harassment or bullying should be brought to the attention of the Elders.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

These procedures and guidelines are to help you and to ensure the interests of the children you are working with are always paramount.

However, there may be an occasional circumstance where following the guidelines would actually be against the interests of a child. In this situation:

- If possible, seek advice from the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the Safeguarding Elder or the Safeguarding Trustee.

- If appropriate to do so, contact the child's parent (although be aware of disclosures of abuse covered under the section: [Responding to Concern](#)).
- If you are unable to do either of the above, do what you feel to be the safest and best for the child.
- Immediately following the incident, make contact with the Designated Person for Safeguarding, the Safeguarding Elder or the Safeguarding Trustee and explain what happened. Then, complete and submit an incident report form ([Appendix 1](#)) within two days.

## SAFE PRACTICE & SAFE PREMISES

The church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and will adopt ways of working with children that promote their safety and wellbeing.

### Health and Safety and Fire Safety

It is the responsibility of all group leaders/responsible persons within any building being used to ensure the safety of themselves and those who are in their control. In addition, it is a legal requirement that all group leaders/responsible persons are familiar with the emergency procedures in the event of fire.

### Home visits

Children's workers and leaders will need to visit children and their families at home from time to time. The parents/carers may or may not attend church and it is important therefore they have been given information about the group including contact telephone numbers.

#### Guidelines for visiting

- Inform a supervisor or another worker of the proposed visit.
- Never go into a child's home if the parent/carer is absent.
- Keep a written record of the visit detailing the following:
  - Purpose
  - Time you arrived.
  - Who was present?
  - What was discussed?
- If this is a formal meeting, take another person along to take minutes of the meeting.
- If the parent/carer is absent when the call is made, leave some means of identification and explanation for the visit that can be given to them if the child is home alone or with other children.

### Unaccompanied children at church activities

- Sometimes children playing outside or wandering in the streets with no adult supervision will want to join in with church activities without the knowledge of their parents.
- It should be recognised that many of our meetings are not aimed at children and it may not be advisable to include them in these meetings. We do have many activities that are aimed specifically at their age group and they should be encouraged to attend those with their parent's permission.
- Any child wanting to attend a church activity should only be allowed to attend with the permission of a parent/guardian. This should be gained by a member of the children's work team speaking to the parent in person or by phone. The parent should be asked to fill in a form giving their contact details for any emergency situation and includes any special needs that they have e.g. medication.
- If this permission has been obtained, a member of the children's team, selected in accordance with our agreed recruitment procedures, should be given responsibility

for the child at all times during any service/activity they attend. This should particularly apply during times when the whole church is together. This will ensure that the child is behaving appropriately and also that they are not vulnerable to anyone attending church in order to approach children for the wrong reasons.

- We do not want to exclude children from our services but their safety is of prime importance.

### **Peer Group Activities**

All children's activities will be overseen by named workers who have been selected in accordance with our agreed recruitment procedures. It is accepted that groups aged 16+ may benefit from being led and run by peers. In this situation, the adult worker will contribute to programme planning and reviews and will always be readily available on the premises when peer-led activities are taking place.

### **Safe Communication**

The internet is a useful tool that most of us use. However, there are dangers when using it to communicate with children. Transparency and accountability are the most important things to remember when using the internet to communicate with young people.

You should only obtain a child's email address/mobile phone number with the express permission of the child's parent/guardian. You must make it clear to the parent why you need this information. The contact details should only be used for communicating information with the child. A child's email address and mobile phone number will not be included in the RCF Directory. With the parent's permission, a child's email address may be included in a distribution list to receive information from RCF regarding events/groups or general prayer requests e.g. weekly bulletin or monthly "What's On".

- All communication must be in a format that can be monitored by parents, if they wish.
- Treat the internet as if you were speaking to the child in reality. You would not be alone with a teenager in a private room. You should therefore not be alone with that teenager in a private chat on the internet.
- If required, you should be able to produce copies of all communication sent to any child e.g. sent folder for emails. Therefore, do not use a means of communication that cannot be saved afterwards e.g. instant messaging without a facility to save chats.
- Remember that internet messages can be easily misinterpreted. LOL can mean "laughs out loud" or "lots of love".
- It is better not to use webcams when communicating with young people on the internet.
- Requests for friendship on sites such as Facebook should be initiated by the child not the adult and agreed by the parent.
- If a "closed group" is set up on social media sites as a means of communicating regularly with the youth (remember they must all be over 13 years of age and have parental permission), the group must include more than one of the youth workers and also the Safeguarding Elder.

### **Video and Photographs**

- Parental permission must be obtained before using any picture of a child/group of children on a website. This should also apply to photographs posted onto Facebook by any leader of a group.
- Avoid using photos of individual children. If there is any way that the child can be identified by their name or location - DO NOT USE IT.

## SAFE COMMUNITY

The church will ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children in the community of the church is managed appropriately.

### Other Adults in Children's Groups

There may be occasions when parents ask to stay and watch their child. It may be that the child needs help to settle or the parent is unsure about what happens in the group and needs reassurance that their child is safe and happy. We want to encourage parental involvement but we also need to remember that we are protecting our children by using safe recruitment practices for all adults who work with them.

The following guidelines may help in handling this situation:

- The only adults allowed to participate in children's activities are those appointed and trained as children's/youth workers/volunteers.
- The leader of the activity should be aware of any other adults in the room and manage the activity accordingly.
- Any guest speakers or other adults taking part in one-off activities should be supervised at all times.
- Parents should be encouraged to observe groups but not take part. If they would like to come into the group on a regular basis, then they will need to go through the normal recruitment process. Always be aware of the needs of the child in this situation as it may be better to discourage the parent from staying in the group for longer periods.
- For some children with special needs it may be appropriate for their parent/carer to stay with the child for an extended period. This should be considered on an individual basis. It may, however, be better to recruit another adult to support this child so that the parent/carer has a break from this responsibility.

### Lone Working

As far as possible a worker should not be alone with a child or children, where the activity cannot be seen. This may mean leaving doors open or two groups working in one room. Glass panels in doors will help with this.

Don't invite a child to your home alone. It is acceptable to invite a group of children if you ensure that another adult, who has been selected in accordance with our agreed recruitment procedures, is also in the house. Establish that each parent/carer knows where their child is and at what time they should return home.

In a counselling situation with a young person, where privacy and confidentiality is important, ensure that another person knows they are there. Whenever possible another adult should be in the building and the young person should know they are there. It is good practice to set an agreed time limit prior to the counselling session and to stick to it! It is your responsibility as the adult involved to set this ground rule and to end the session at the designated time. Make another appointment time to continue, if necessary.

If you or the young person just wants an informal chat, it would be better to hold the meeting in a public place e.g. coffee shop.

Your overall group leader should know if you are doing any one-to-one work with a child and should be aware of all meetings that you are arranging.

It is not ideal for a worker of one gender to work alone with a group of children predominately of the opposite gender. It is not always possible for this not to happen but the worker should be aware of the problems and consider the dangers.

## Community Activities Involving Unaccompanied Children

Outreach to families is an important part of the work of RCF. However, it is important that this work is carried out with due care for the children we are working with. There is much legislation surrounding work like this, particularly in relation to children under the age of eight years. All activities need to take into account any legislation. We also need to show the parents of these children that we have considered the safety of their children.

Any planned activity should first be discussed with the Elders. They will agree the event in principle providing the following are carried out prior to the event:

- A risk assessment must be carried out. An outline risk assessment (provided in [Appendix 2](#)) can be adapted to suit most events. This must be reviewed with the Designated Person for Safeguarding to take into account the specific activities planned.
- All workers who are involved in the event must be selected in accordance with our agreed recruitment procedures in advance of the event. Please allow enough time for this to happen.
- The event must take account of appropriate staff/child ratios and be staffed accordingly.
- No event shall run for more than two hours in order to comply with regulations.
- All children must be registered, including details of parent/guardian.

## Babysitting

Babysitting should normally be organised solely between the parents and the babysitter, and RCF leadership should not be involved. It is advisable that church leaders should not be seen to endorse particular babysitters or to link parents and sitters, as this would imply that they believe the babysitter to be trustworthy and safe. If this were ever to happen the babysitter should be recruited and checked as if they were to be working with children in any other area. If a person is already checked as a children's worker they could be suggested to parents who need a babysitter.

## OUTINGS & OVERNIGHT EVENTS

### Transport arrangements

These guidelines will apply to all drivers involved in the transportation of children (other than their own children) to a church-run activity or any trips organised by or on behalf of the church. They do not apply to informal, private arrangements for transportation made, e.g. between parents/guardians.

- At least one adult in a car being used to transport children should have gone through the church recruitment procedures for workers/volunteers.
- All drivers should have read the RCF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and agree to abide by them.
- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the leadership of the church.
- Special rules apply to carrying children in a minibus and this should not happen unless these rules have been checked. These are available from the RCF Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- The driver should hold a full driving licence, have fully comprehensive insurance which covers voluntary work (or, in the case of a paid church worker, insurance that covers them for transporting others in the course of their employment) and the vehicle should be road worthy. Seat belts should always be worn and the proper child seats and child restraints should be used for young children, in accordance with the law.
- It is reasonable to expect that the driver may be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Consideration should be given to dropping off the



least vulnerable child last, making sure they are seated in the rear seat and planning routes accordingly.

- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in a car with a child. If a child wants to talk to a driver about something and has waited until other children have been dropped off, the driver should explain that it isn't convenient to talk there and then, but arrange to meet at a location where there are other adults around.
- When travelling in groups with more than one vehicle it is good practice to insist that children stay in the same groups on the outgoing and return journey, avoiding confusion as to whether a child has been left behind.
- At collection or dropping off points, do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that children are collected by an appropriate adult.
- Be aware that there may be situations where it would be unwise for a particular driver to transport a particular child e.g. where the child has a crush on the adult or there has been a previous disagreement.

## Overnight Events

Before undertaking any outing or overnight activity, take care to plan this carefully, liaising with the Designated Person for Safeguarding and obtaining approval from the Safeguarding Elder. Parents will be informed in writing of all the arrangements and consent forms will be obtained for each overnight activity. The following are of particular note:

- Sleeping arrangements for residential activities will be carefully considered. Workers will not share sleeping accommodation with fewer than three children. Arrangements will be age-appropriate, provide security for the child and be safe for children and the workers. The leader will ensure that the parents understand what the arrangements will be.
- All staff engaged in adventure/camp activities will be properly trained and qualified and the correct ratio of staff to children will be met. If appropriate, the premises must adhere to the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996.
- All workers will be familiar with the fire safety procedure and this will be explained to the children on arrival at the activity/camp.
- At all times, it is the responsibility of the workers to know the whereabouts of every child participating in a residential activity/camp and this may include monitoring access on and off the site.
- There will be an increased adult to child ratio for all swimming trips and, prior to the trip, the swimming ability of a child will be established. A swimming consent form for each child will be taken by the group leader on the trip.

## WORKING WITH ADULTS AT RISK

An "adult at risk" is defined as any adult aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age or illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation. This may be a short-term or long-term condition.

Some adults might be more at risk than others, and there are some times in life where risks may increase. Some of these circumstances may include:

- Learning, sensory or physical disability
- Old age and frailty (especially if it creates a dependency on or needing help from others)
- Mental health problems
- Dementia or confusion
- Illness
- Addiction or dependence on alcohol, drugs or medication
- Bereavement

- Past abuse or trauma
- English is not their first language

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The church is particularly called by God to support those at the margins, those less powerful and those without a voice in our society. The church can work towards creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the particular situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers. A person who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity;
- have their privacy respected;
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible;
- be able to choose how to lead their life;
- have the protection of the law;
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background;
- be able to use their chosen language or method of communication;
- be heard.

It is the responsibility of each of us to do our best to prevent the abuse of adults at risk and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

Types of abuse may include, but are not limited to the following:

- |                              |                                   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Physical                   | • Cyber                           |
| • Emotional or psychological | • Self-harm/self-neglect          |
| • Sexual                     | • Mate crime                      |
| • Neglect or omission        | • Modern slavery                  |
| • Financial or material      | • Human trafficking               |
| • Spiritual                  | • Radicalisation                  |
| • Discriminatory             | • Honour marriage/forced marriage |
| • Institutional              | • Historic abuse                  |
| • Domestic                   |                                   |

The DBS definition of “Regulated Activity with Vulnerable Adults” is very limited and it is unlikely that anyone employed by the church as a volunteer or paid worker will be undertaking regulated activity with a vulnerable adult according to that definition. However everyone should be aware that an adult they are working with may be vulnerable in many ways as shown above. We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with adults at risk. The church is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.

All the same procedures that apply to the safeguarding of children will also apply to anyone working with adults at risk. Even if you are not working directly with adults at risk but you have concerns, witness the abuse of someone, or have seen changes in behaviour or living patterns that make you suspect that someone is being abused, it is important to speak to the RCF Designated Person for Safeguarding.

The RCF Designated Person for Safeguarding is responsible for representing the concerns and views of adults at risk at our meetings. For any concerns or questions regarding protecting adults at risk, please speak to the RCF Designated Person for Safeguarding.

## PASTORAL VISITING

These guidelines are appropriate for anyone at Rushmere Christian Fellowship involved in pastoral visits, including visits in conjunction with our Christians Against Poverty (CAP) ministry.

### General Principles

Those involved in pastoral visits should:

- Uphold and enhance the name of Jesus and His Church, as the Body of Christ.
- Be aware of the amount of time committed to pastoral visits and balance this commitment with the needs of their own family.
- Care for people by being punctual for agreed appointments.
- Be accountable for advice given and decisions taken.
- Be aware of relevant support agencies or ministries.
- Be alert to situations which may expose members of their family to risk, including receiving difficult phone calls.

They should not:

- Undertake visits whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or when medically advised not to.
- Undertake visits or go into situations without appropriate training or relevant expertise.
- Undertake visits or go into situations where there is potential for violence or risk to yourself or others.
- Confuse pastoral relationships with personal friendships.
- Feel the need to meet every pastoral situation alone.
- Spend time with a child in a place separate from others.
- Visit or offer pastoral care to a member of another church without consulting with the leadership of the church concerned.

### Practical Aspects

These aspects need to be considered when visiting people:

- The timing and venue for meetings.
- Ensuring others are aware of the meeting taking place.
- Whether meetings are to be formal or informal.
- The setting of the meeting and ensuring other things e.g. lighting, furnishings and atmosphere are appropriate.
- Inappropriate touching or gestures of affection.
- Being sensitive about the use of terms of endearment.
- The appropriateness of either visiting or being visited alone.
- Ensure the person's care worker or care agency is aware of your role and the nature of the visit.

The following specific situations should be avoided:

- Visiting someone alone in their home late at night.
- Arranging for someone to visit when you are alone at home late at night.
- Long-term pastoral relationships with a married person, especially if pastoral care focuses on difficulties in the marriage, when the couple should either be seen together or referred to a suitably qualified couple counsellor.
- Visiting young people of the opposite gender with nobody else present in the house.

### Confidentiality

Everything in pastoral ministry is confidential unless it is agreed it can be shared or when an individual's behaviour or situation threatens the wellbeing of themselves or others. In

this case, the individual concerned should be told that disclosure to a relevant authority may be a necessity and in some cases, a legal requirement, particularly with regard to the safety of children or adults at risk and information about terrorism.

Please note that Rushmere Christian Fellowship practises shared leadership via an eldership structure. Details of pastoral needs would normally be shared with the Eldership Team, unless the individual has explicitly requested that this doesn't happen. This expectation should be made very clear to the individual at the start of any pastoral visit.

With regard to confidentiality, you should:

- Assume all personal information is confidential.
- Divulge information to agreed third parties only with the individual's consent.
- Be aware that when informed consent cannot be obtained and, in your judgment certain information needs to be disclosed, the individual should be informed that such disclosure needs to take place and will take place.
- Be aware of the importance of adhering to safeguarding regulations and to initiate the processes outlined in this document, if appropriate. (See Section: [Responding to Concern](#) for the confidentiality rules that apply in this situation.)
- Develop the capacity to distinguish between unhealthy secrecy and appropriate confidentiality.

### Records and Reports

Details of pastoral contacts and visits should be kept securely. Summaries of pastoral visits should be made and kept in a secure manner, but also available for the individual to read if they wish to do so. All records containing personal information come under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be held in accordance with this Act.

## POLICY DETAILS

The Safeguarding Policy & Procedures was updated in line with current legislation in June 2016.

A full copy of the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures is available on the RCF website and will be made available, on request, to any member of the church, the parents or carers of any child from the church, or any other person associated with the church.

The Safeguarding Policy & Procedures will be monitored and reviewed at least every five years.

If any worker or parent feels that there are things missing from this document, or things that need changing they should speak to the RCF Designated Person for Safeguarding, the Safeguarding Elder or Safeguarding Trustee.

## CONTACT DETAILS

RCF Designated Person for Safeguarding:	Marilyn Coates 07758 555775
RCF Safeguarding Elder:	Stephen French 01473 431701 07910 733431
RCF Safeguarding Trustee:	David Yaroslaw 01473 272793 07553 925125
Customer First/Emergency Duty Service: (Children's Social Care Team)	0808 800 4005
Churches Child Protection Advisory Service:	0845 1204550 (24 hour Helpline) 01322 517817
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline:	0808 800 5000

*Updated: 12 September 2016*

**APPENDIX 1**

**INCIDENT FORM**

<b>Activity/Event</b>	
<b>Date and Time</b>	
<b>Leaders Present</b>	
<b>Any other activities or people in the building or at the event?</b>	
<b>DETAILS OF INCIDENT (i.e. what happened; when did it happen; who was involved; who witnessed it?)</b>	
<b>RESPONSE TO INCIDENT (i.e. what did you do; who did you tell; how else did you or will you follow up?)</b>	
<b>Sign and print name:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**APPENDIX 2**

**RCF YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORK - RISK ASSESSMENT**

**Group Name:**

**Age Group:**

**Main Leader(s):**

**Other Leader(s):**

**When:**

**Where:**

**Type of activity:**

**Annual / one-off:**

ASPECTS TO CONSIDER		RISK RATING		MEASURES TO DECREASE RISK		
		Low Medium or High		What?	Who?	Completed?
Hazards		Likelihood	Severity			
P E O P L E	• Emotional Wellbeing			•		
	• Not enough leaders			•		
	• Leaders not gone through child safeguarding procedures			• In line with the RCF Safeguarding Policy, all adult leaders working with the children have completed DBS checks.		Ongoing



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No First Aiders</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First aid kit will be taken.</li> <li></li> </ul>		Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abuse</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All leaders made aware of best practice safeguarding principles and potential signs of abuse, through the RCF Safeguarding Policy.</li> <li>Any concerns or suspicions of abuse to be reported to Principal Leaders following the reporting and recording guidelines in RCF Safeguarding Policy.</li> <li></li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food allergies</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>		
E N V I R O N M E N T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct ratio of adults to children.</li> <li></li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional needs</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders aware of any children with additional needs and action plan to deal with condition.</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stranger Danger</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people or adults to report any suspicious or threatening behaviour from strangers to the leaders.</li> <li></li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stick to speed limits, ensure that drivers take due care. Passengers to wear seatbelts and follow instructions of drivers.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting lost</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refreshments / kitchen (scalds, burns, cuts)</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of injury</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power Cut</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders are aware of medical conditions and allergies.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
O R G A N I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children not properly supervised or controlled</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		

S A T I O N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities are not fully explained or are run in a way which puts people in danger</li> </ul>			•		
	•			•		

**OTHER NOTES:**

**Last Reviewed:**

**Next Review:**

**Primary:** ... ..

**Signed:** .....

**Secondary:** .....

**Signed:** .....

**Copied to:** .....