



SEPTEMBER 2022

# Strandtown Baptist Church *'Safe & Secure'*

## Our Safeguarding Policy Guidelines & Procedures

The Trustees of Strandtown Baptist Church require that all Leaders & Staff, as well as all volunteer workers involved in Regulated Activity with children, read and accept the contents of this document. They must also sign a statement that they have read it in full and that they are happy to work within these constraints

# Version History

EACH TIME THERE IS AN AMENDMENT OR CHANGE, IT SHOULD BE RECORDED HERE

<b>AUGUST 2022</b> DOCUMENT CREATED. LYNN COLES	
<b>SEPTEMBER 2022</b> MINOR CORRECTIONS	
<b>JANUARY 2023</b> HANNAH GERVAIS BECOMES SC	

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# Our details



## Strandtown Baptist Church

1 Clonallon Court, Belmont Road, BELFAST, BT4 2AB

T: 02890 808380 E: [info@sbchurch.co.uk](mailto:info@sbchurch.co.uk) website: [sbchurch.co.uk](http://sbchurch.co.uk)



@strandtownbaptist



@sbcbelfast

## Denomination:

Baptist

## Members of:

The Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland

## Registered Charity No:

107388 (Registered 11/05/2020)

## Our Public Liability Insurance:

This can be viewed in our Church Office

## Our Pastors:

Lee Campbell E: [lee@sbchurch.co.uk](mailto:lee@sbchurch.co.uk) 02890 808380

Michael Shaw E: [michael.shaw@sbchurch.co.uk](mailto:michael.shaw@sbchurch.co.uk) 02890 808380



# Key Safeguarding Contacts



DESIGNATED TRUSTEE RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFEGUARDING  
**WILLIAM PRIESTLEY**

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR & CHILD LEAD  
**HANNAH GERVAIS**

DESIGNATED DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR  
**LYNN COLES**

DESIGNATED ADULT LEAD & PASTORAL CARE WORKER  
**JOANNE SCOTT**

ACCESSNI CHECKS & RECRUITER  
**LYNN COLES**

## SAFEGUARDING MOBILE:



**0 7 7 4 5** CALL RATHER  
**5 7 2 6 4 8** THAN TEXT

IF YOU CAN NOT GET A RESPONSE, YOU CAN ALSO FIND OUR NUMBERS IN CHURCH SUITE

## SAFEGUARDING EMAIL:



**SAFEGUARDING@  
SBCHURCH.CO.UK**

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES GATEWAY TEAM  
OFFICE: 028 9050 7000 (OFFICE HOURS)  
THE OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY NUMBER IS:  
028 9504 9999.

 Belfast Health and  
Social Care Trust  
caring supporting improving together

THIRTYONE:EIGHT  
CHRISTIAN ADVISORY SAFEGUARDING  
ORGANISATION (SBC ARE MEMBERS)  
PO BOX 133, SWANLEY, KENT, BR8 7UQ.  
TELEPHONE HELPLINE: 0303 003 111



POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND  
CALL: 101 OR 02890 650222  
ASK TO BE PUT THROUGH TO  
THE CHILD ABUSE PROTECTION UNIT



# Introduction

## What is Safeguarding?

### Safeguarding encompasses:

- Protecting children and adults at risk of harm from abuse and maltreatment.
- Creation of a safe and caring environment for children and adults through:
  - Treating children & adults fairly and equally
  - Building trust and good communication
  - An awareness of individual needs (health, allergies, disabilities)
  - Setting appropriate discipline and boundaries



## Who is responsible for Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and where abuse is discovered or suspected, it *must* be reported. The safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk of harm is a high priority for us as a Church.

## Who oversees Safeguarding?

Our Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy are responsible for overseeing our safeguarding. We have a Trustee for oversight and Adult and Child Leads also. This ensures all workers\*:

- Are AccessNI Enhanced Checked and are suitable to work with children.
- Have received Safeguarding training, have been given a copy of this Policy and know what to do if they have concerns.
- Are properly supervised and that the Safeguarding Policy guidelines and procedures detailed in this booklet are followed.

Safeguarding is at the heart of God's will for everyone and while it is sometimes challenging to incorporate its requirements into the life of the congregation, its foundations assure us that God's love requires us to place the most vulnerable at the heart of what we do and who we are. This ensures that in the Body of Christ, we encourage everyone to live fully, radically and in God's love and safekeeping.

## Who do I contact for further information?

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the Safeguarding Coordinator on our Safeguarding Mobile: 07745 572648 or email: [safeguarding@sbchurch.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@sbchurch.co.uk). You can also contact the Church Office on 02890 808380.

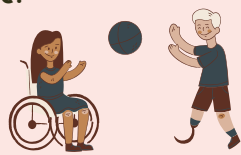


\*a worker is an employed member of Staff or a volunteer

# Note for Parents and Carers

At Strandtown Baptist Church, we work hard to provide a safe and secure environment for all children and young people so that any parent or carer can be confident that their child is well supported and looked after at any of our events or programmes.

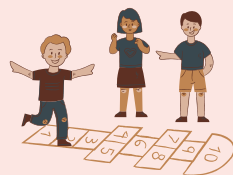
We follow Safeguarding advice from advisory, statutory and regulatory bodies and are obliged to report any disclosure of abuse or neglect made by a child or young person in our care.



As you can see through the pages of this Policy, we are very strict about those workers serving in the area of children's or youth work, having AccessNI Enhanced Checks, ongoing Safeguarding training as well as some of our workers being trained in First Aid, the use of EpiPens and Defibrillators.

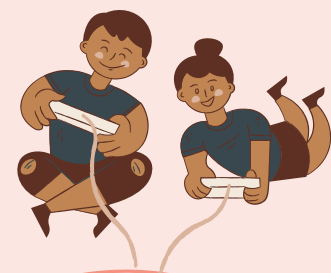


We welcome your input and desire to work with us, in communicating any concerns or suggestions you may have, to your child's or young person's Group Leader or speak to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

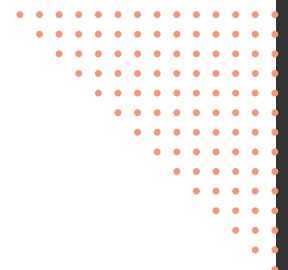


We are committed to constantly reviewing our Safeguarding guidelines and we seek to keep up with changes in best practice and the legislation surrounding Safeguarding.

Please see our Resources (page 29) for more information on how you can be proactive in protecting your child.



OUR  
SAFEGUARDING  
POLICY  
IS REQUIRED READING  
FOR ALL OUR  
WORKERS & CAN BE  
VIEWED IN THE  
CHURCH OFFICE IN  
A HARD COPY  
FORMAT



# Our Trustees' Commitment

"Why bother with a Safeguarding Policy? If we are Christians, aren't we supposed to live by grace, and not by legalism and rules? Absolutely! Paul makes it clear in Romans 6:1-2 that grace will triumph over sin. The law, however, plays an important role in the Christian life. It cannot be discarded. To do so would be to oversimplify Christianity.

The great theologian, John Calvin, taught that one of the functions of the law was its role in restraining sin. We adopted a Safeguarding Policy because we recognise there is sin in the world, because there are people who want to do evil against children, and because we have a responsibility to protect the children in our care. Our Safeguarding Policy is not just a set of rules, it is a set of guidelines to restrain sin and to keep child abusers from our kids." \*

We know that sexual predators typically target settings that provide lots of access to children. Some offenders target Churches because, in their own words, Christians are easier to fool than most folks because we are perceived to be too trusting and offenders know that most Churches are desperate for volunteers. We cannot ever completely eliminate abuse from this world but we will be **deliberate** and **proactive**, rather than **reactive**, in our safeguarding of children at Strandtown so that we lower the risk of it happening in our Church.

We encourage our Staff and workers, that a degree of '**healthy scepticism**' is necessary to keep sexual predators at bay. In protecting our kids, we want to strike that balance between a genuine hope in God and a realistic outlook on the depravity of human beings. A '**healthy scepticism**' is not being paranoid that there is a sexual predator lurking in every corner, but we do not want to make false assumptions that just because someone is a self-professing Christian, that it is safe to give him or her access to our children.



As the Trustees, we take seriously our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to the Church's care as well as adults who may be at risk of harm.

We aim to provide a safe environment protecting them from physical, sexual, and emotional harm. We recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for everyone. We acknowledge that children and young people can be the victims of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and neglect.

The Trustees have a particular responsibility to provide and to protect, by looking out for individuals who may seek to gain access to children in our care by attending our Church and who may exploit and harm people for their own personal gratification. We will be proactive and intentional in our approach to deal with such individuals should they become known to us.

- Extract from 'On Guard': Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse at Church, Author Deepak Reju

Continued overleaf/...

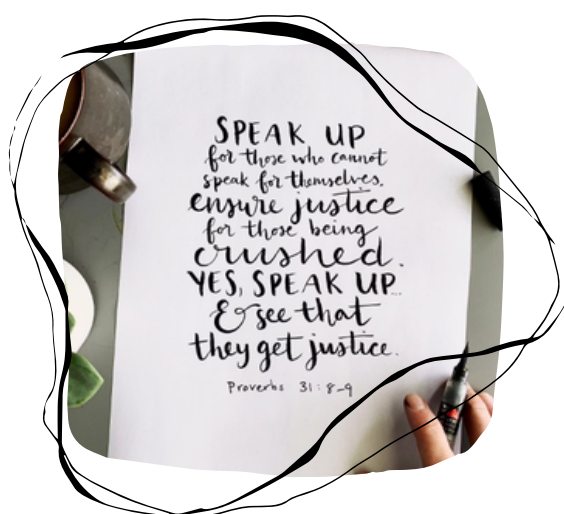


.../Continued



**We have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this Safeguarding Policy in accordance with statutory guidance and advice.**

- We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary Agencies involved in Safeguarding such as the PSNI, Social Services, AccessNI and other Safeguarding organisations.
- We will show that we love our workers by ensuring that they know how to do their work honourably and well. Keeping each other accountable and watching out for one another is a way of showing love.
- We will show that we love children and adults at risk by taking pride in our care for them. We want them to know they are safe and to feel safe when in our care.
- We will undergo Safeguarding relevant training with ThirtyOne:Eight and attend annual training at the Church, organised by our Safeguarding Coordinator.
- We will care for and support survivors of child abuse and will prioritise their needs.



**The Trustees undertake to:**

- Endorse and follow all national and local Safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions including 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".
- Be determined to always strive for best practice in our Children's & Youth programmes.
- Ensure all persons wishing to work with children and young people will be vetted/interviewed and undergo an Enhanced Check through AccessNI, to determine their suitability for this important work. If successful and, prior to taking up position, they will then undertake basic initial Safeguarding training with additional compulsory, ongoing Safeguarding training in topical areas as available and is relevant.
- Regularly review the operational guidelines herein.
- Ensure that our premises are welcoming and inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Officers in their work and in any action, they may need to take to protect children, young people, and adults at risk of harm.

**signed on behalf of the Trustees of Strandtown Baptist Church**

*William Priestley*

Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding - August 2022

# The Law Regarding Safeguarding

Below is a list of the legislation we are guided by in our policies & procedures

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND:

- The Criminal Law Act 1967
- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Sex Offenders Act 1997
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998
- The Criminal Justice (Children) (NI) Order 1998
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007



## RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND:

- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The Child Care Acts 1991
- The Domestic Violence Acts 1996
- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Children First Guidelines 1999
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children's Act 2001
- Children Trafficking and Prostitution/Sex Offender Act 2001
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006
- Criminal Justice Act 2006
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

# Our Code of Conduct



*Those working with children and young people at Strandtown Baptist Church must:*

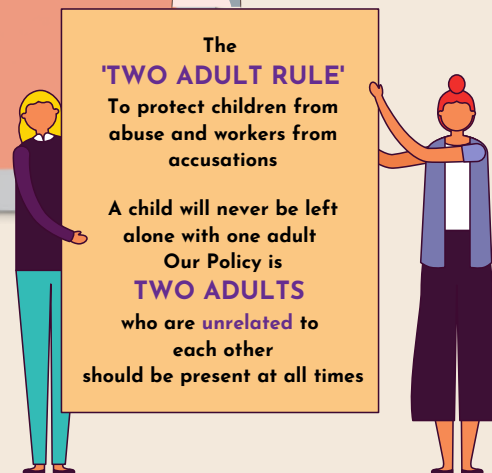
- Abide by our comprehensive Safeguarding Policy 'Safe & Secure' and follow our safeguarding guidelines contained herein. Each worker engaged in Regulated Activity with children, **must sign** to say they have read, understood its contents and are willing to work within its constraints. We keep a record of this.
- Listen to, respect and value children and young people at all times.
- Treat all children and young people fairly, without prejudice or favouritism.
- Challenge any unacceptable behaviour in an appropriate way.
- Use language that is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
- Behave in a way that is appropriate, and that avoids inappropriate relationships developing with any of the children or young people.
- We are responsible for children and young people attending organised Groups/Programmes until the child or young person is handed back to the nominated person with parental responsibility or when the young person has pre-authorised permission to walk home.



**REMEMBER!**



\*Please see our SBC Code of Conduct for Church Workers, Staff & Church Members in the Appendix



# Ratios

\*The ratios are Adult: Number of Children

Age Range	Recommended minimum ratio for <b>INDOOR</b> activities	Recommended minimum ratio for <b>OUTDOOR</b> activities
0-2 years (includes Crèche)	1:3 (minimum 2 Adults)	1:3 (minimum 2 Adults)
3 years	1:4 (minimum 2 Adults)	1:4 (minimum 2 Adults)
4-7 years	1:8 (minimum 2 Adults)	1:6 (minimum 2 Adults)
8-12 years	2 Adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 Adults for up to 15 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children
13 years and over	2 Adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children	2 Adults for up to 20 children (preferably one of each gender) with an extra adult for every 10 additional children

The table above represents the recommended minimum ratios of adults to children. This is our starting point in calculating appropriate ratios for our Groups and Activities. If any special factors emerge within our risk assessment, we will look to increase the recommended ratio in order to ensure safety of all children and young people.



**BEST PRACTICE**  
TWO ADULTS  
OPPOSITE SEX  
UNRELATED

## What if ratios drop below the required level?

Two different situations:


1. The one-off situation where a Leader is unavailable for one session and it is not possible to arrange alternative cover.
2. On a more permanent basis, where it is not possible to find sufficient volunteers to staff a Group at the desired level.

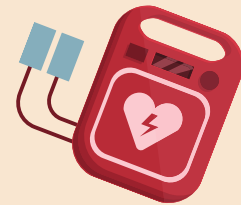
### **BEST PRACTICE**

We ask is it safe to continue? Can we reduce the risks?

**IF SAFETY IS COMPROMISED, THEN WE CANCEL THE ACTIVITY**  
A report is to be written by the Group Leader, to the Safeguarding Coordinator, detailing the circumstances and actions taken

# First Aid

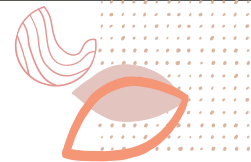
- 'First Aid is the initial assistance or treatment given to someone who is injured or suddenly taken ill'.
- All Groups will seek to have at least one worker who is 'First Aid' trained. In the event of an accident/injury, First Aid will be carried out by trained First Aiders. We provide certificated, annual First Aid training for our workers but we have several Members who are health professionals with additional training.
- The **ACCIDENT BOOK** must be completed along with the Body Map sheet. This is signed by the parent/carer. They then take a photo on their phone for their records. The body map sheet is stapled to the **ACCIDENT BOOK** entry for our records. All kept in the Church Office.
- Workers administering First Aid should seek to assess the situation, protect themselves and the casualty from further danger, deal with any life threatening situation and, where necessary, obtain medical assistance or refer the casualty to hospital as quickly as possible.
- The consequence of a bump or blow to a child's head is not always evident immediately and the effects may only become noticeable after a period of time. Where emergency treatment is not required, parents/carers **must be** informed.
- First Aid equipment is located in **both kitchens** in the Church buildings and the contents will be reviewed and refilled regularly by the Church Manager. **If something needs replacing, please inform the Church Manager by emailing [info@sbchurch.co.uk](mailto:info@sbchurch.co.uk)**
- When a disclosure is made that a child has an allergy, the Group Leader will have a discussion with the parent/carer and risk assess the exact nature of the allergy. Details of the allergy will be included on the child's registration form. A clear understanding of what may trigger allergies should be recorded. All workers, and if necessary, all children in the Group, should be informed/warned of the triggers.
- **REMEMBER!** Some workers may have allergies too.
- Where **EpiPens** are carried by the child, they should be handed to the Group Leader by the child/parent/carer at the start of the programme and returned to child/parent/carer at end of the programme. Clarity should be sought whether the child is competent to use their own **EpiPen**. 
- All workers in a Group caring for a child who may potentially require the use of an **EpiPen**, will be trained by a Medical Professional in the use of **EpiPens** and to recognise the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis shock.



Call or email  
the Church Manager  
if items in the First  
Aid boxes need  
replenishing



# Recognising types of abuse



## Understanding Abuse & Neglect (Child - under 18 years of age)

Defining child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm, or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or the adult at risk of harm.

In order to safeguard those children in our care, we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and have as our starting point as a definition of abuse, Article 19 which states:



1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

### Physical Abuse

Is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. Some examples may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding or being confined to a room. Watch out for unexplained recurrent injuries or burns, improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries, fear of medical help or examination, fear of physical contact, shrinking back if touched, fear of suspected abuser being contacted, chronic running away, etc., [Bruising observed on a 'pre-mobile' baby under 6 months of age requires an immediate report to the Safeguarding Coordinator]

### Emotional Abuse

Is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause continuous adverse effects to the child's emotional development. Examples would be telling a child they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or not valued. It may also involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger. Watch out for physical, mental and emotional development lags, sudden speech disorders, continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless' etc.), overreaction to mistakes, neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation) and an inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this').

### Neglect

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in harm. Examples would be failure to provide adequate food, clothing, access to medical care or to protect a child from physical harm or danger.



# Recognising types of abuse

## Understanding Abuse & Neglect (Child - under 18 years of age)

### Sexual Abuse

Any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted or takes place without consent or understanding. Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non-penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, irrelevant of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation.



### Bullying

Is verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber-bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies. Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse. Watch out for non-participation, asking for money, no food, missing possessions, nightmares, bed wetting or being withdrawn.

**Bullying will not  
be tolerated at  
Strandtown Baptist Church**

**Bullying will never  
be ignored  
but will be  
challenged**



The relevant Group Leader will also ensure that children, young people and adults at risk of harm, are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern. Informational posters are in position around the Church with contact details for Childline and the NSPCC. See also the Resources Page in this document.

# Behaviours the child may display



Source: [NSPCC website](#)



## Physical

- Bruises
- Broken or fractured bones
- Burns/Scalds
- Bite Marks/Scratches
- Scarring
- Breathing or vomiting (signs of poisoning)

## Emotional

- Unconfident/low self esteem
- Struggle to control emotions
- Have difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- Act in an inappropriate way for their age
- Lack social skills

## Sexual

- Changes in mood
- Nightmares/bedwetting
- Avoiding being alone with person they know
- Inappropriate sexual language for their age
- Changes in eating habits

## Neglect

- Being hungry
- Unwashed clothes
- Poor hygiene
- Wrong clothes for the season
- Clingy or depressed
- Medical or dental issues
- Thin or swollen tummy

Our workers are trained to spot these signs and we have a robust reporting procedure, liaising with Social Services and the PSNI when necessary





# Responding & Reporting Procedure



## If a disclosure of abuse is made by a child

**Under no circumstances should a member of Staff or volunteer carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse.**

Follow the procedure as below:

- The person in receipt of an allegation or suspicion of abuse should report their concern as soon as possible, initially to the Group Leader in charge and thereafter the Safeguarding Coordinator (SC) on the **Safeguarding Mobile: 07745 572648 (call do not text)**
- Notes should be made as soon as possible after the disclosure. **DO NOT** do this in front of the child. **You must keep your original note** if you did not use the **SBC Form 7 'Report A Concern'** (kept in the Church Office or downloadable from the website) initially. This note will be evidential and will be passed to Social Services and/or the PSNI. **Complete a Form 7** (Which has a body map on the reverse should you require it) and attach your original note to it. These should be given to the SC as soon as possible. If the Leader in charge is the subject of the allegation or suspicion, then the matter should be reported directly to the SC.
- In the absence of the SC or, if the suspicion in any way involves the SC, then the report should be made to the Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding unless they are connected to the matter. In the event that independent advice is required concerning an allegation or suspicion, contact can be made with **ThirtyOne:Eight (Christian Safeguarding Advisory Organisation. We pay an annual membership), Telephone: 0303 003 111** Alternatively contact local Social Services **Gateway Team Office: 028 9050 7000** (office hours). The **Out of Hours Emergency Number is 028 9504 9999**. Or contact the **PSNI on 101 or, if quicker, call 02890 650222** and ask to be put through to the Child Abuse Protection Unit. Where the concern is about a child, the SC may contact Children's Social Services or take advice from ThirtyOne:Eight as above.
- Where required, the SC, will then immediately inform the Insurance Company and the Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding within the Church.
- Disclosure information must be kept confidential amongst the Safeguarding Team and be treated strictly on a 'need to know' basis. The Team will decide together, maintaining confidentiality, whether to elevate their response to the Trustees, Social Services and the PSNI.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the SC, in their absence or the absence of the Deputy SC, a referral should not be delayed to Social Services, the PSNI or taking advice from ThirtyOne:Eight.
- The Trustees, will give full support to the Safeguarding Officers in their roles.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual to make a direct referral to the Safeguarding Agencies or seek advice from ThirtyOne:Eight. We hope that Members & Regular Attenders of Strandtown Baptist Church will adopt these procedures as a matter of course. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the SC/Deputy SC has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the SC/ Deputy SC as to the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside Agency directly.



**The role of the SC/Deputy SC is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory Agencies that have a legal duty to investigate**



# Responding & Reporting Procedure



## If a disclosure is made of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the SC/Deputy SC will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or ThirtyOne:Eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed, informing the Doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, encourage parent/carer to seek help or support, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services directly.
- Seek and follow advice given by ThirtyOne:Eight (who will confirm their advice to us in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

## If a disclosure is made of sexual abuse:

In the event of an allegation or suspicion of sexual abuse, the SC/Deputy SC will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for Children and Families or the Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by ThirtyOne:Eight. ThirtyOne:Eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference and for our records.

## If a disclosure is made against a person who works with children:

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of Staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the SC/Deputy SC will need to liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker.

**At Strandtown Baptist Church, we will always remember that the safety of the child is paramount**



Even if Church Members or Trustees of a Church disagree with the need to report a disclosure, anyone, who has reasonable suspicion about abuse, can report to the PSNI or Social Services directly



# Adults at Risk of Harm

## Protecting the vulnerable



The language around adults and safeguarding has now changed from 'vulnerable adults' to an 'adult at risk of harm' which takes into account of a complex range of interconnected personal characteristics and/or life circumstances, which may increase exposure to harm either because a person may be unable to protect him/herself or their situation may provide opportunities for others to neglect, exploit or abuse them. It is not possible to definitively state when an adult is at risk of harm, as this will vary on a case by case basis.

### Identifying an adult at risk

An adult at risk of harm is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics or life circumstances.



### Includes:

- Domestic violence
- Hate crimes
- Human trafficking
- Coercive control
- Institutional abuse
- Slavery
- Controlling finances
- Sexual abuse

### An abuser can be anyone:

- Partner or relative
- Person entrusted to act on behalf of the adult
- Neighbour
- Employer
- Health or Social Care worker
- Volunteer
- Person with no previous connection to the victim



**You Can Stop Harm**

**Worried or concerned?**

If you're worried or concerned about an adult who needs help to protect themselves from harm you should talk to them. Listen to them and, if possible, write down exactly what they tell you. Then contact the police or social services to report it.

**Police Service Northern Ireland**

- In an emergency call: **999**
- To report your concerns, call: **101**

**Social Services**

Monday to Friday - 9.00am to 5.00pm call:

- Belfast Trust - 028 9504 1744
- South Eastern Trust - 028 9250 1227
- Northern Trust - 028 2563 5512
- Southern Trust - 028 3756 4423
- Western Trust - 028 7161 1366

Evenings and weekends call: 028 9504 9999

Do you know an adult who needs help to protect themselves from harm?

If you **SEE SOMETHING.....**

**SAY SOMETHING**

Harm can happen anywhere!

**SEE**

**Something**

**SAY**

**Something**

Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership  
[www.hscboard.hscni.net/niasp](http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/niasp)

**Everyone has the right to live life safe from harm.**

Harm is unacceptable and you can help stop it. If you see someone with possible signs of harm, exploitation or neglect such as:

- Unexplained physical injuries such as bruises or burn marks.
- Unusually untidy, hungry or thirsty.
- More withdrawn or avoids being touched.
- Seems to be struggling financially or more than usual.
- Stops doing things they used to enjoy.
- Someone else is telling them what to do.
- Nobody comes when they call out for help.

**Say something.**

**Adult Protection Gateway Team:**  
**028 9504 1744** available from 9am to 5pm.  
 If you need to speak to someone outside these hours, contact the emergency social work service on **028 9504 9999**



**Find out more at the NI Direct website**



- See Definition of an Adult at Risk in Appendix

# Safer Recruitment

## Prevention of Abuse



The Trustees will ensure that all workers are appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with Government guidance on safe recruitment.

### Employed Workers

- All Applicants will complete an Application Form.
- Those short listed will be interviewed.
- Safeguarding must be discussed at the interview and the Applicant will be informed that, any offer of employment will be subject to a satisfactory AccessNI check.
- Written references will be obtained and verified.
- An AccessNI check will be completed (we will comply with AccessNI Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- An SBC Self Declaration Form will be completed at this stage and the Applicant informed that we keep this will be retained indefinitely.
- Qualifications will be verified.
- New Employees are expected to attend mandatory, initial Safeguarding training with the Safeguarding Coordinator and attend our mandatory, annual Safeguarding training.
- The new Employee will complete a probationary period.
- The new Employee will be provided with a copy of our 'Safe & Secure' Safeguarding Policy and will be required to sign a statement to say they have read and understood the document and they are willing to work within these constraints.



### Voluntary Workers

All persons interested in working with children & young people, in a voluntary capacity, will discuss with Group Leaders, the potential of them serving in the Ministry in a general or specified role:-

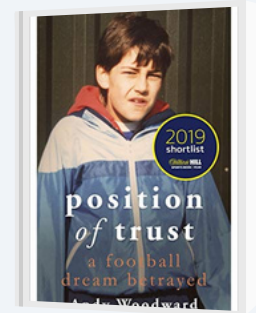
- If the Applicant is considered suitable, and a position is available, they will complete an Application Form (SBC Form 1 for over 18s or SBC Form 2 14-18yrs Young Helper), and include references.
- The Applicant will then discuss with the Leader, the necessary requirements of the role. If accepted, an AccessNI Enhanced Check will be conducted for over 18s.
- Applicants should give a copy of our '**Form 9 References**' to their Referees to complete and return to the Safeguarding Coordinator. Completed forms can be emailed, posted, or photos taken and sent. Whatever is easiest. **Use the email [safeguarding@sbchurch.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@sbchurch.co.uk)**
- The Applicant will be provided with a copy of our 'Safe & Secure' Safeguarding Policy and will be required to sign a statement to say they have read and understood the document and they are willing to work within these constraints.
- Holiday Bible Club represents exceptional circumstances. Further details on this can be obtained from the Safeguarding Coordinator.

\*See our Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders in the Appendix

A criminal record does not necessarily disbar someone from volunteering or being employed by SBC

# Positions of Trust

## Management of Workers



**You may wish to read more of  
Andy's account**



After the football abuse scandal came to light in 2016 when footballer, Andy Woodward, bravely spoke out about his experience of abuse at the hands of his coach, Barry Bennell, there was an extensive lobbying campaign to the Government by various Safeguarding Agencies including ThirtyOne:Eight and the NSPCC. The call was to 'close the loophole' in the existing law. As of 28 June 2022, the law has changed and Sections 16 to 19 of the Sexual Offence Act 2003 (the Act) will state that it is illegal for an adult in a **position of trust** to be involved in sexual activity with a person who is 16 or 17 years old and who they look after.

Although young people aged 16 and 17 have reached the age of consent for sexual activity according to UK law, they could be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation in certain situations. This includes sexual activity and manipulation by adults who hold a **position of trust**, responsibility, or authority in relation to them, and, as a result, have a considerable amount of power and influence on their lives. The law changes have expanded to include adults in a **position of trust**, where an adult is coaching, teaching, training, supervising or instructing in a sport to a 16 or 17-year-old on a regular basis.

Examples of **positions of trust** include:

- teachers
- care workers
- youth justice workers
- social workers
- doctors.

**The law has now been extended to cover:**

- faith group leaders
- sports coaches.



It's a **criminal offence** for someone in a **position of trust** to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care, even if that child is over the age of consent (16 or over).

All our workers are trained concerning their conduct towards children, young people, and adults at risk of harm and are made aware, in our training, of this legislation. Parents may want to bear this legislation in mind with regards to their children's extra curricular activities, outside of the Church, and be particularly vigilant.

Any worker, employed or voluntary, will adhere to our Safe & Secure Policy and the guidance herein.

[For more detailed information and links click here](#)



\*See our SBC Code of Conduct for Church Workers, Staff & Church Members in the Appendix

# Pastoral Care

## Support for Survivors of Child Abuse

The Trustees are committed to offering pastoral care, and providing support to all those who have been affected by child abuse (or any type of abuse) who have contact with or are part of our Church family at Strandtown Baptist. We will prioritise their needs. We will work with statutory Agencies as appropriate. Please speak to our Designated Adult Lead who can give you further advice.



**Provides an extensive list of resources and support groups**

They offer support to all adult survivors of any type of abuse in childhood, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.

Call the free, confidential support line:

0808 801 0331

Monday to Thursday: 10am - 9pm

Friday: 10am - 6pm

Saturday and Sunday - Closed



**Christian Guidelines**

66 Newtownards Road, Bangor, BT20 4DR

Telephone

028 9146 8846

Email

[admin@cguidelines.org.uk](mailto:admin@cguidelines.org.uk)

Monday - Friday: 9.30 am - 5 pm

Tuesday & Thursday: 9.30 am - 8.30 pm

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: Closed



# Practical Guidelines

All workers engaged with working with children and young people, will be trained in following these practical guidelines:-

## Physical Contact with Children

- As a general principle, workers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children.
- It is unrealistic and unnecessary, to suggest that workers should never touch children. A distressed child may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent might provide. Workers should not feel inhibited from providing this in an appropriate manner. Keep everything public.
- Workers should never touch a child who has clearly indicated they do not want to be touched. However, it may be necessary to protect the child, others, and/or property from harm.
- Physical punishment is illegal as is a physical response to misbehaviour unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- Workers who administer First Aid should ensure, wherever possible, that this is done in the presence another adult whilst being mindful of the possible privacy needs of the child. Workers should not hesitate to administer First Aid simply because another person cannot be present. Keep everything public.
- Avoid any physical contact which could be misinterpreted by the child, parent or other casual observer. Would a parent be ok with your physical contact if they were present?
- Following an incident where a worker feels that his/her actions have been or may be misconstrued, the Group Leader in charge of the programme or SC should be informed.
- When supervising children and young people in residential or special activities where the setting is less formal and more relaxed, workers should not let their guard down but remain vigilant.

**Remember the mnemonic from our Safeguarding Training**  
**DITTY**

**Disclosure, Isolation, Touching, Toilets and You**

These are the five areas where workers should abide by our Policy at all times. (Click [here](#) to view our [Holiday Bible Club Video](#) on the website for an explanation)



Disclosure



Isolation



Touching



Toilets



You



# Practical Guidelines

## Transport



- Authorisation - parents must know arrangements.
- Best practice is not to leave one child until the last drop off and in an emergency, the child should be placed in the back seat.
- Best practice is to use Leaders. If parents used to assist, they must be accompanied by a Leader.
- Avoid young drivers (SBC policy is over 21, full driving licence holder, at least 2 years driving experience and the Group Leader should be confident they are a safe and competent driver)
- Vehicles should be roadworthy and should be fully insured.
- Driving licence points must be brought to the attention of the SC, especially speeding points, or other driving offences.



## Photography

Photos and images of individuals taken for Church business may be classified as personal data and are therefore subject the Data Protection Act 2018. If it can be used to identify someone then it is likely to meet the definition of personal data.

- Where a photo is clearly of an individual or group of individuals who are the focus of the image, this is treated as personal data and consent is required to take and use the image. Although the Data Protection Act does not specify that consent should be in written format, it is strongly recommended that written consent is obtained so that a copy of the agreement may be kept for future reference.
- If any individual indicates that they do not wish to appear in photographs/film recordings, their wishes must be respected.
- Images of a child under a Court Order must never be recorded or published.
- Where images of crowds are being taken with no person(s) being the focal point of the image, it may not be possible to obtain the consent of every individual, but it is good practice to advise people that photos will be taken and what they will be used for.

## GENERAL POINTS TO NOTE

- Children and young people should be made aware of these guidelines and supervised accordingly by Leaders.
- A Leader, conversant with the guidelines, should be nominated as photographer for events etc., This person should be briefed with reference to any person who has not given permission to be photographed. The photographer should wear some form of identification badge or bib etc., to identify themselves.
- Parents/Spectators at any SBC event, intending to photograph or video should also be made aware of these guidelines and adhere to them. (Information should be included on tickets/ programmes etc.,)
- Cameras or any photographic video equipment are not permitted in the toilets or areas where children are getting changed for activities.
- Concerns about inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the Group Leader and or the SC. It should be recorded as per any other safeguarding concern.
- Any person acting outside these guidelines and believed to be taking inappropriate or intrusive photographs must be challenged by the Group Leader or another Leader as appropriate.





# Communication & Social Media

Whilst it is important to recognise that, in a 21st century world, online communication is necessary to connect with young people, we must also be aware of the risks it carries.

As a result, our guidelines seek to keep young people and our workers safe from harm.

All workers must abide by these guidelines:-

- Communication with young people via phone or online should only take place on the basis of parental consent being granted.
- Communication with young people will only take place between **0900hrs - 2200hrs**.
- Upon engaging in a conversation with young people, whether face-to-face or online, workers should not promise confidentiality.
- Online communication with young people should be carried out, where possible, on Church/Youth Group devices or accounts (e.g. youth group Facebook page, email, phone). If this is not possible, parental consent forms should be specific about who exactly is being permitted to contact a young person (e.g. Small Group Leader, Mentor, Youth Coordinator, Youth Pastor etc.).
- In all online interactions, workers should seek '**communication and not conversation**.' Contact can be made about dates, times and information relating to the organisation. However, extended dialogue should be carried out in a public forum.
- Workers cannot be friends on Facebook/Instagram/TikTok etc., with an under 18 where their contact has been established through their role as a worker within our children's or youth work.
- NO worker should be contacting any child or young person under 18yrs on Snapchat.
- It is our practice to have at least two Leaders present on a call using Zoom/Skype/MS Teams or equivalent. This is regardless of how few young people take part in a video call. The call administrator should ensure that young people are not able to join the call (e.g. have young people remain in the waiting room) until at least one other Leader is virtually present.
- Workers should make themselves aware of the age restrictions on certain apps. Respect the minimum age requirements for video chat enabled platforms and consider the minimum age limit for any one to one chat (e.g. Skype and Google hangout are generally **13 years old**)
- If a child discloses something to a worker via a social networking site, a chat room or any other public domain publishing method, then the disclosure must be dealt with by following the normal Safeguarding reporting process.
- If a worker is concerned about something that a young person communicates to him or her via the internet, he or she should encourage the child to talk to a suitable adult about it or arrange to meet with the child (within the usual Safeguarding parameters).



*The internet is never private but permanent and public*

\*See our Policy on Communication & Social Media in the Appendix

# Working with Offenders & Ex-Offenders

When someone attending Strandtown Baptist Church is known to have abused children, or is believed to be a risk to children, the Trustees will agree to supervise the individual concerned. We will offer pastoral care to the individual. Within our safeguarding commitment to the protection of children, the Trustees will set boundaries, for him or her, which they will be expected to keep.

The Trustees will put significant importance on the issue in order to manage the risk appropriately by creating clear policies and a code of behaviour the individual must follow. This will help protect the vulnerable and lessen the possibility of the person being wrongly suspected of abuse in the future.

A 'Boundary Agreement' with sex offenders in faith communities is common and often put in place and recommended by ThirtyOne:Eight. This 'Boundary Agreement' should give details of both the limits applied to the individual and the support the Trustees will offer them.

The 'Boundary Agreement' will be tailored specifically to individual circumstances and informed ideally by risk assessments made by the Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Team. Advice will be sought from various Agencies such as Social Services, the PSNI and ThirtyOne:Eight. In the case of individuals being on the Sex Offenders Register, the Designated Risk Manager in the PSNI, assigned to the person concerned, will be contacted.

If the person concerned will not agree to a 'Boundary Agreement', or to abide by its terms, they will be barred from attending Strandtown Baptist Church. Our first priority is the protection and safeguarding of children in our care and supporting survivors of child abuse within our Church family.



\*An Ex-Offender is a person who has served a sentence in connection with a criminal offence and is subject to a period of licence or some other mandated supervision. An Offender may be someone who is currently on bail for a criminal offence, pending trial or awaiting sentence.

\*Please also see our Policy on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders in the Appendix



# AccessNI



**Strandtown Baptist Church is a Registered Body authorised by AccessNI.**



This means we carry out our own Standard and Enhanced Check applications with AccessNI. As a Registered Body, we are a legitimate organisation entitled to ask an exempted question under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979.

Our Safeguarding Co-Ordinator is our Lead Signatory on the AccessNI account and responsible for training our Counter Signatories. All Signatories attend mandatory training with AccessNI in the following areas:

- Processing applications, checking the validity of ID documents, types of disclosures
- Eligibility
- Legislation
- Criminal history assessment
- Police information, understanding convictions & cautions
- Barred Lists
- AccessNI Code of Practice
- AccessNI Privacy Policy
- Case Tracking and disputes
- Conflict related disclosures
- Fees and Processes

As a Registered Body, we are audited every three years by the Compliance Team at AccessNI. They will also carry out random checks on our ID Validation paperwork, systems and handling of confidential data in line with GDPR regulations.

It is our Policy at Strandtown Baptist Church, that every person working in Regulated Activity with children or adults at risk, is required to have an Enhanced Check carried out by AccessNI. All those working in our Crèche, Xstream programme and our Encounter programme are all Enhanced Checked as are some of our employed Staff. Our Policy is also that **we will ask for renewals every four years**. AccessNI checks are NOT transferable between organisations. You will still require a check to be done with us.

**An Enhanced Check discloses an individual's full criminal record, giving:**

- Spent and unspent convictions from the Police National Computer
- Cautions, informed warnings and other non-court disposals from the Police National Computer
- Information held by the Disclosure and Barring Service (for positions in regulated activity)
- Information held by the police that is relevant to the role applied for
- Some old and minor convictions and non-court disposals on a criminal record may be filtered. Fixed penalty tickets or parking fines aren't included in an enhanced check.

Enhanced Checks are normally required where the applicant will work or volunteer in a role providing services to, or having close and regular supervision, of children or vulnerable adults. An individual cannot apply for an Enhanced Check. An application for an Enhanced Check must be counter-signed by an AccessNI-registered organisation such as ourselves.

**Please do not be offended if you are asked to complete an AccessNI Check or Renewal  
It is simply our policy and procedure. It is not personal and everyone is treated equally.**

# Data Protection

## Data Protection Act 2018

This legislation gives individuals rights and protection in how their personal data is used by us as an organisation.

The law is complex, but there are a number of underlying principles, including that personal data:

- Will be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently.
- Is only used for a specific processing purpose that the data subject has been made aware of and no other, without further consent.
- Collected on a data subject should be "adequate, relevant and limited." i.e. only the minimum amount of data should be kept for specific processing.
- Must be "accurate and where necessary kept up to date"
- Should not be stored for longer than is necessary, and that storage is safe and secure. Some digital copies are password protected.

### For Further Information

NI - Information Commissioner Office, [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)



DPA 2018 requires us to retain documents for safeguarding for as long as is necessary to perform our role.

Documents created by Strandtown Baptist Church will be retained on a graduated basis, determined by this necessity.

Adequate  
Relevant  
Limited

Your  
Data



# Resources

You will find these under the 'Safeguarding' tab at [sbchurch.co.uk/safeguarding](http://sbchurch.co.uk/safeguarding)



- EpiPen Training
- ThirtyOne:Eight Help Guides
- Allergy Advice
- NSPCC Net Aware
- Staying Safe Online (CEOP)
- Gaming Rating Information

Let's talk to our children about sex because someone else will

# Websites



Parents may find these helpful in talking with their children:

**TalkPANTS** by the NSPCC. Helps children understand that their body belongs to them, and they should tell someone they trust if anything makes them feel upset or worried.


**Plugged In** by Focus on the Family  
Plugged In exists to help you and your family make family appropriate entertainment choices. Reviews of films, games, books and music. You can sign up for weekly reviews to your inbox.

# Books

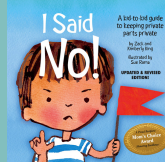
For Parents - A small selection of good books which are available at Amazon and other book suppliers



Click on the title for the link



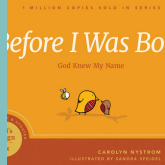
**Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family**  
by Paul David Tripp



**I said NO! : A Kid to Kid Guide on Keeping Private Parts Private**  
by Zac & Kimberly King



**Story of Me, The: Babies, Bodies, and a Very Good God: 1 (God's Design for Sex) Ages 3-5**  
By Stan Jones




**Before I Was Born: God Knew My Name: 2 (God's Design for Sex) Ages 5-8**  
By Carolyn Nystrom



**What's the Big Deal?: Why God Cares about Sex (God's Design for Sex) Ages 8-11**  
By Stan Jones



**Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids Ages 7-11**  
By Kristen Jenson MA



**Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds Ages 3-6**  
By Kristen Jenson MA

## ThirtyOne:Eight Help Guides

Knowing how best to respond to a situation isn't always easy. Where do you go to get the right help and advice? These Help Guides, give short, easy-to-understand summaries of common topics and practical advice on the steps to take. Downloadable.

# Appendix



# Strandtown Baptist Church

## Code of Conduct for Church Workers, Staff & Church Members

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As Trustees, we are committed to caring for all our workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision.

All our Trustees, Staff and volunteer workers will be trained concerning their conduct towards children, young people and adults at risk of harm.

On 27 April 2022, the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Bill (Northern Ireland) gained Royal Assent. This Bill extends 'abuse of trust' legislation to faith leaders and sports coaches in Northern Ireland. Along with the NSPCC, faith and sports organisations, ThirtyOne:Eight successfully campaigned for the Northern Ireland Assembly to bring about this welcome change in legislation. Further amendments are expected in due course.

We undertake to follow the Safeguarding principles and guidance given to us by ThirtyOne:Eight (our Safeguarding Advisory organisation) and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop. Broadly speaking, a **position of trust** can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in **positions of trust** to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.

At Strandtown Baptist Church, we recognise the importance of having clear boundaries in regards to the personal relationships which can develop and the trust that is placed on our workers to adhere to the above guidance.

An informal but recorded visit will be made to Groups, by the Safeguarding Coordinator, with the primary aim of identifying areas of deficiencies and good practice. The visit will seek to embed the development of all workers and to promote and encourage best practice in relation to Safeguarding.

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### The Key 12 Points:

1. All those engaged in working with children or young people, are expected to attend annual Safeguarding Awareness training and will be given a copy of our 'Safe & Secure' Safeguarding Policy. They are required to sign that they have read, understood and are willing to work within these constraints.
2. Listen to, respect and value children and young people at all times.
3. Treat all children and young people fairly, without prejudice or favouritism.
4. Challenge any unacceptable behaviour in an appropriate way.
5. Use language that is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
6. We follow the '**two adult rule**' meaning there should always be two adults present with children. These adults should not be related to each other.
7. Only women are to take children to the toilet.
8. Behave in a way that is appropriate, and that avoids inappropriate relationships developing with any of the children or young people.
9. No sexual contact is ever to take place between a youth worker and a child. Teams will work together to minimise the scope for isolation of a child with a lone adult.
10. The Safeguarding Coordinator and the Trustees will have responsibility for any disciplinary matters involving workers and they (under the authority of the Bible) have the final say on what is appropriate and what is not.
11. The Leader organising an event will carry out all risk assessments and take steps to mitigate any risks identified. Workers will be expected to have read the Risk Assessment form. The Leader signs the Risk Assessment form on behalf of the Group.
12. The Trustees are committed to ensuring that concerns or disclosures raised, present or historic, are investigated, and they will take the appropriate action, where required, in a timely manner.

If you have any concerns about the actions or behaviour of any adult or child attending Strandtown Baptist Church, in any capacity, these concerns must be reported as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Coordinator. If the concern is about the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy, report it to the Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding.

*\*Please also see our Policy on Communication & Social Media in the Appendix*





# Strandtown Baptist Church

## Communication & Social Media Policy

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Strandtown Baptist Church believes that communication between children and adults, by whatever means, should take place within clear, open, accountable, professional and Christian boundaries. The Trustees determine what these boundaries are, if they are broken, and have the last say should there be a breach.

We recognise the relevance of using Social Media to communicate with children and young people. However, we urge caution to ensure that all existing Safeguarding policies and guidelines are adhered to. In order to comply with the above, Staff, volunteer workers should not have non-Ministry related contact via electronic communication with children and young people under the age of 18yrs.

Ministry related communication should be via the use of Group accounts, emails, texts etc., or in the event of messaging an individual, that a fellow Leader is copied into same. We recognise the more difficult area to manage is that of young people moving in to Leadership who have established connections with other young people. We also recognise that Leaders with relatives who are under 18 yrs and who are attending programmes, should endeavour to communicate appropriately.

We are also to be aware of and bound by the 'Terms of Use' issued by Social Media platforms and we must be mindful that many children are using these platforms whilst still at Primary school, contrary to the age restrictions laid down by the app. The average age requirement for most platforms is 13 yrs old. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that any communication with children and young people is above reproach and that the language used cannot be inappropriate, misconstrued or misunderstood. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to monitor their child's engagement with Social Media.

Electronic communication between workers and young people will only be between **0900hrs-2100hrs**. In the event that a Leader, Staff Member or worker is contacted by a child or young person via private message, email etc., then **a copy should be kept**. This means of contact should be discouraged however and anything inappropriate must be brought to the attention of the Leader in Charge and/or the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy.

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### **Use of online and social media platforms**

The following guidance is on the use of Social Media e.g. where social distancing requirements prevent face to face meetings. Please note: electronic communication such as use of Social Media platforms, emails, texts, chat and messaging should conform to the Social Media Policy.

It is important to remember that communicating with young people one to one online, whether via messaging or video, is the equivalent of meeting that young person in a room, on your own, and with no-one around. It contravenes our 'two adult' rule.

### **Guidance for One to One Ministry online/video calls**

When Leaders are seeking to do one to one work with a young person, we support this work for the spiritual growth and mental health of the young people but we expect the following guidelines to be adhered to:

- The Leader obtains written consent to conduct a one to one meeting over telephone or video.
- The child is over 11 years old.
- Both parties agree.
- Conversations via electronic media, happen in a public place in the home. They should NOT take place in a bedroom or a workplace (eg; Church building).
- The meeting should not exceed 40 minutes.
- The meeting must cease at any time if the child, parent or Leader is not comfortable.
- The Safeguarding Coordinator is made aware of any regular meeting.
- A note is kept of what has been discussed in the meeting.

### **Workers should remember:-**

- They should not follow any under 18yr old on TikTok or Instagram (or similar) where the contact has been established through their role as a worker. They should absolutely never connect with young people on Snapchat.
- They should make their profiles private so young people cannot follow them.
- Workers should evaluate photos of themselves posted on any Social Media and consider deleting or 'untagging' any photos which could be considered inappropriate.
- Comments made on the internet should be considered the same if made in a public place. Remember the internet is permanent. Once it is out there, it is very hard to delete.
- A disclosure made to a worker via a Social Media platform or private message should be dealt with by our normal reporting process, notifying the Safeguarding Coordinator on a Form 7 'Report A Concern' (downloadable from the website) and hard copies are also kept in the Church Office.

\*\* With fast changing technology and new apps being released all the time, we reserve the right to amend this Policy at short notice



# Strandtown Baptist Church

## Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

On the 28th May 2013, legislation came into force that allows certain old and minor cautions and convictions to no longer be subject to disclosure.

In addition, employers will no longer be able to take an individual's old and minor cautions and convictions into account when making decisions.

All cautions and convictions for specified serious violent and sexual offences, and other specified offences of relevance, concerned with the Safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk, will remain subject to disclosure. In addition, all convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not suspended, will remain subject to disclosure, as will all convictions where an individual has more than one conviction recorded.

Strandtown Baptist Church fully complies with AccessNI's Code of Practice when assessing an applicant's suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1979 (Exceptions) NI Order (as Amended in 2014). We are committed to treating all applicants fairly and we undertake to not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

Strandtown Baptist Church can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions which we are legally entitled to know about. Where an AccessNI certificate, at either standard or enhanced level, can legally be requested (concerning a position that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and where appropriate S122 of the Police Act 1997 as amended), we can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions which are not protected.

Strandtown Baptist Church is committed to the fair treatment of our Staff, potential Staff, volunteer workers, Church Members and users of our services.

This Policy is made available to all applicants at the outset of our recruitment process.

Please see the AccessNI page in this document and click on the link at the top of the page.

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Strandtown Baptist Church actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and potential and we welcome applications from a diverse range of applicants including those with criminal records. We select all applicants for interview based on their eligibility for the role.

An application for an Enhanced Check with AccessNI is only submitted after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that such a check is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions, where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement to that effect. In the event of the individual being offered the position, an Enhanced Check with AccessNI will be conducted.

In the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, Strandtown Baptist Church ensures that all those involved in any recruitment process within the Church have been suitably trained. We also ensure that Staff and volunteer workers have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-Offenders.

An interview, or in a separate discussion, Strandtown Baptist Church ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought, could lead to a withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Strandtown Baptist Church undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on an AccessNI Certificate, with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

You can view a short guide to AccessNI Criminal Records Disclosure Regime Filtering Guidance [here](#)





# Strandtown Baptist Church

## Security of Private Data with AccessNI Disclosure Policy

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### Usage

- We will use disclosure information only for the purpose for which it was requested and provided. Disclosure information will not be used or disclosed in a manner incompatible with that purpose. We will not share disclosure information with a third party unless the subject has given their written consent and has been made aware of the sharing.
- We recognise that it is a **criminal offence** to reveal disclosure information to any unauthorised person. Disclosure information is only shared with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.

### Access and Storage

- We do not keep disclosure information on an individual any longer than the time period set by AccessNI which is 90 days.
- Disclosure information is kept securely in a lockable, non portable storage cabinet. Digitally, it is kept in a password protected file.
- Only the Safeguarding Team will have access to this information in the course of their duties. Only they have the passcode.

### Retention

- We do not keep disclosure information for longer than is necessary from the date the relevant decision has been taken, allowing for the resolution of disputes or complaints.
- We will not retain any paper or electronic image of the disclosure information.
- We will, however, keep records of the date of issue, the individual's name and address and the unique reference number of the disclosure certificate.
- The same conditions relating to the secure storage and access of these documents apply, irrespective of the period of retention.

### Disposal

- We will ensure that disclosure information is destroyed in a secure manner i.e; by shredding, pulping or burning. Digital files will be deleted.
- We will ensure that disclosure information awaiting destruction will not be kept in any insecure receptacle or location. (eg; a waste bin, confidential waste sack or unlocked, desk drawer.)



# Strandtown Baptist Church

## Legal Definition of an Adult at Risk

An adult is someone over 18 (unless specific legislation states otherwise). Over the years, there have been a number of pieces of legislation dealing with adults of different ages and circumstances. (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008)).

These can now be summarised in the Care Act 2014 which refers to adults with care and support needs. It follows that some adults, because of circumstance or particular vulnerability or risk, may be in need of protection.

### Adults at risk of harm definition

The definition of an **'adult at risk of harm'** takes account of a complex range of interconnected personal characteristics and/or life circumstances, which may increase exposure to harm either because a person may be unable to protect him/herself or their situation may provide opportunities for others to neglect, exploit or abuse them. It is not possible to definitively state when an adult is at risk of harm, as this will vary on a case by case basis. The following definition is intended to provide guidance as to when an adult may be at risk of harm, in order that further professional assessment can be sought.

**An 'adult at risk of harm' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:**

- personal characteristics AND/OR
- life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to:-

- age
- disability
- special educational needs
- illness, mental or physical frailty
- or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.
- Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

**An 'adult in need of protection' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:**

- a) personal characteristics AND/OR
- b) life circumstances AND
- c) is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; AND
- d) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

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In order to meet the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' either (a) or (b) must be present, in addition to both elements (c), and (d).

The decision as to whether the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' is met will demand the careful exercise of professional judgement applied on a case by case basis. This will take into account all the available evidence, concerns, the impact of harm, degree of risk and other matters relating to the individual and his or her circumstances.

The seriousness and the degree of risk of harm are key to determining the most appropriate response and establishing whether the threshold for protective intervention has been met.

\*Please see Page 19 in this Policy for more information and links



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