

YORK EVANGELICAL CHURCH SAFEGUARDING POLICY

FEBRUARY 2023

1 About the Church

Name: York Evangelical Church (or YEC)
Address: 60 South Bank Avenue, York, YO23 1DP (or 60SBA)
Telephone: 01904 375 875
Email: info@yec.org.uk
Registered Charity No.: 1170144
Insurance Company: Congregational

60SBA is where we have our church office and a community space for activities involving at most thirty people. For larger meetings, including Sunday services, we hire rooms at Millthorpe School and Clements Hall.

Full-time pastor: Ed Hambleton
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Email: ed.hambleton@yec.org.uk

Safeguarding Coordinator: David Dowling
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Deputy Coordinator: Jane Martin
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YEC is a family church with people of all ages and backgrounds. Our church programme includes activities for children and young people, and activities for adults of whom some may be vulnerable — e.g. activities for the elderly. Participants often include visitors along with regular members of the congregation.

Although we are an independent local church, we are affiliated both to the national *Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches* (FIEC) and to *Affinity*. We are also part of the *Yorkshire Gospel Partnership*. And we cooperate with other churches and Christian organisations in the York area.

We own 60SBA which houses church offices, flats and a community space. The events and activities we run there give us an opportunity to meet the needs of the people in the South Bank area, and to share with them the good news of Jesus.

Our concern to safeguard all who join us at YEC is rooted in our biblical faith. We believe life is given by God himself. We respect the dignity of every person, as all are created in the image of God. In a fallen world, where harm is sadly possible, the church of Christ is called to show his care and love. And like Christ himself we should show special care for the weak and vulnerable.

Leaders and workers

Leaders: The church is led by elders, including our full-time pastor and part-time pastoral worker, with a supporting team of deacons including a church treasurer and a church secretary. To meet the particular needs of women and girls, the elders are also supported by a *Women's Pastoral Care Team*.

The church is a *Charitable Incorporated Organisation*, and its trustees are the elders, treasurer and secretary. It is the trustees who have a particular legal responsibility for safeguarding those who attend the church.

Workers: Most roles and jobs in the church, such as the leading of activities for children or vulnerable adults, are open only to volunteers among the recognised *members* of the church. Our practice is that anyone wishing to become a member, having first attended the church for some time, submits a detailed membership-application form. This serves as the starting point for an interview involving at least one elder, after which any recommendation for membership goes to the trustees for approval.

Keeping people safe

As a church, we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, or neglect.

The procedures set out in this safeguarding policy follow statutory guidance. We are committed to working whenever necessary with statutory agencies with responsibility for safeguarding. The policy is informed by guidance available from various voluntary organisations, such as the *Safe and Secure* standards published by the Christian safeguarding charity *Thirtyone:eight*, and the *Six Pillars of Safeguarding* identified by *Christian Safeguarding Services*. The policy has been reviewed by *Christian Safeguarding Services* and amended in the light of comments received.

A *Safeguarding Coordinator* and a *Deputy* coordinator are appointed by the Trustees to assist them in safeguarding matters, and in some important respects to act on their behalf. The coordinators arrange and record DBS checks and safeguarding training, as specified in Section 2. The coordinators deal with any disclosure, allegation or other suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities, as set out in Section 4. The coordinators submit a short report to each quarterly Trustees meeting, briefly summarising their safeguarding activities without disclosing confidential information.

Wherever this document refers to the responsibilities and actions of *the church leaders*, it means the elders in due collaboration with their fellow trustees and the safeguarding coordinators.

The church leaders undertake:

- to endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures;
- to provide on-going safeguarding training for all workers in the church;
- to support the *Safeguarding Coordinator* and their *Deputy* in their work, and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults with care and support needs;
- to ensure that church premises meet statutory requirements such as the Equality Act 2010;
- to keep this policy and any associated guidelines under review.

2 Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

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

The law about safeguarding from abuse and neglect differentiates between children and adults — so, for example, the required actions set out in Section 4 differ.

Appendix A gives detailed definitions and explanations of some terms relevant to the understanding of abuse and neglect.

Safer recruitment

Due process must be followed for any appointment to a role that involves working with children, or adults in need of protection, whether individually or as part of a team. The church leaders will maintain a clear record of which roles these are and who has been appointed to them, with sufficient detail to confirm each stage of the process.

The church leaders will ensure that all such workers are appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance. Recalling from Section 1 that all workers have already completed a process to be accepted as church members, here are the further requirements for someone to be appointed to a specific role.

- There is a concise written description of what is expected from a person in this role;
- Any person to be considered for the role is interviewed with an elder present; the person should supply in advance a completed *Disclosure and Barring Service* (DBS) self-declaration form, and safeguarding should be one of the topics discussed in the interview;
- Unless the person has been a YEC member for at least a year, they should be asked to nominate two referees in positions of authority who have known them for at least two years — references to be obtained using YEC email, and followed up if necessary, before the person starts work;
- If the person is to be appointed, DBS clearance must be obtained before they start work; (This rule is not intended to prevent someone who is considering taking on a role from observing related activities, and having some involvement in them, without DBS clearance. However, they must at all times be under the close supervision of a DBS-cleared worker.)
- Some initial training must be provided, including a session about awareness of safeguarding issues, procedures for reporting any concerns, and how to access this safeguarding policy;
- If the person has little or no previous experience, a probationary period should be agreed during which a named mentor will support the new worker.

A simple form is used to track the process of working through the above bullet list, and to provide a due record of the appointment process for each person.

Safeguarding training

The church leaders are committed to on-going safeguarding training for all workers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All workers will receive initial training including safeguarding, with refresher training sessions at least once a year. The church

leaders will maintain a record of training sessions, including who was present at each session and what specific topics were addressed.

The church leaders will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs know where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern.

3 Practice Guidelines

As an organisation working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, to develop good relationships, and to minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusations.

As supplements to this overall safeguarding policy, we encourage the development of specific good practice guidelines for the teams running each activity in the church.

Working in Partnership

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse of a child or an adult.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults, and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Safety at 60SBA

All those responsible for activities at 60SBA are asked to read and comply with the *Notes for Users of 60 South Bank Avenue* — available online to all church members. Major sections of this document set out rules and guidelines for the safety and security of all 60SBA users, with particular reference to the safety of children.

When external organisations make regular or occasional bookings for use of 60SBA, they are given printed copies of the *Notes* and asked to comply with them as a condition of their booking. We also expect any organisation using our premises at 60SBA, for events involving children or vulnerable adults, to have its own safeguarding standards.

4 Responding to disclosures, allegations or other suspicions of abuse

The terms *disclosure* and *allegation* are used to make an important distinction when someone, particularly a child, speaks of being abused. In a local-church context, a disclosure is when a child tells someone at church that something was done to them in another setting — usually by someone they know, perhaps at home. An allegation is when a child says that something was done by someone associated with the church.

If there is a disclosure, allegation or other suspicion of abuse, *under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation*. Instead they should follow the procedure set out below.

- Any person receiving a disclosure or allegation or other suspicion of abuse should report the concern *as soon as possible* to the *Safeguarding Coordinator* or to the *Deputy Coordinator* — see Section 1. Although an initial report may be spoken, it must be put in writing *without delay*, and delivered either by hand or by email addressed to the coordinator only. A report may be brief, but it should be specific about when (date and time), where, who and what.
- If suspicions in any way involve the *Safeguarding Coordinator*, a report should be made instead to the *Deputy Coordinator*, and vice versa.
- In the absence of both the Safeguarding Coordinator and their Deputy, or if the suspicions involve both of them, a report should be made instead to the relevant social-services agency or, if there is immediate danger, to the police:

Name of local authority:	City of York
Children’s Social Services	
Telephone:	01904 551 900
Out of hours Telephone:	01609 780 780
Email:	childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk
Website:	www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk

Adult Social Services	
Telephone:	01904 555 111
Out of hours Telephone:	01609 534 527
Email:	adult.socialsupport@york.gov.uk
Website:	www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk

Police Protection Team	
Telephone:	999

- In any case, it is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Coordinator, or Deputy Coordinator, to collate and clarify the precise details of the disclosure, allegation or other suspicion in a concise written record. They should pass on this information to the statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.
- The Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy may also need to inform others depending on the circumstances and nature of the concern. (a) If the incident is serious, the trustees may have to report it to the insurance company or to the *Charity Commission*. (b) If an allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18, it must be reported to a *Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)*.
- Concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. However, the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy must make a written record of the concerns, and keep it in a secure place.

The church leaders support the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy in their role, accepting that the coordinator or deputy can only share information in strictly limited circumstances, and to the extent that there is a clear need for others to know it.

Although any individual has a legal right to make a direct referral to safeguarding agencies, members of the church are asked to use this procedure. If, however, a concerned individual feels that the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy has not responded adequately or appropriately, they are free to contact an outside agency directly.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child

Physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse: If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator or their Deputy should:

- Contact Children's Social Services (see above for contact details) in cases of deliberate injury, if they are 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 urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions;
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage the parent or carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm;
- If a parent or carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of continuing concern, contact Children's Social Services for advice.

Sexual abuse: If there is a disclosure, allegation or other suspicion of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator or their Deputy should contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team directly. They should *not* speak to the parent or carer unless advised to do so, or to anyone else.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about an adult

The church also has a safeguarding responsibility for any adult with care and support needs and in need of protection. If there is concern about suspicions or allegations of *abuse or harm including physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, or domestic abuse*, the Safeguarding Coordinator or their Deputy should:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team (see above for contact details) who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse;
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children or young people

If an allegation is made against someone who works with children or young people, in addition to following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Coordinator or their Deputy, in accordance with *Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)* procedures, should:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services (see above for contact details) about suspension of the worker;
- Make a referral to a *Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)* whose job it is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity;
- Make a referral to *Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)* for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults with additional care and support needs. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults with care and support needs

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator or their Deputy should:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services (see above for contact details) about suspension of the worker;
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.

The *Care Act* places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers, or no further action. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to make, not the church.

5 Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The church leaders are committed to offering pastoral care and support to all those involved in the life of the church who have been affected by abuse. They will work with statutory agencies as appropriate.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending YEC is known to have abused children, or is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to adults with care and support needs, the church leaders will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care. As part of our safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, the church leaders may set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and consultation with appropriate parties.

This policy has been reviewed by the YEC trustees, and will be reviewed annually.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:



28 February 2023

Appendix A: Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are derived from those given by ThirtyOne:Eight, which is an independent Christian safeguarding charity

Adult at risk & in need of protection: The definition of regulated activity in relation to adults focuses on those activities which, should they be needed by any adult, mean that an adult is considered at risk of abuse and in need of protection at the point of receiving them. The definition applies to individuals undertaking the following activities:

- Healthcare for adults provided by, or under the direction or supervision of a regulated health care professional
- Personal care for adults involving hands-on physical assistance with washing and dressing, eating, drinking and toileting; prompting and supervising an adult with any of these tasks because of their age, illness or disability; or teaching someone to do one of these tasks
- Social work-provision by a social care worker of social work which is required in connection with any health services or social services
- Assistance with an adult's cash, bills or shopping, because of their age, illness or disability arranged by a third party
- Assisting in the conduct of an adult's own affairs under a formal appointment
- Conveying adults for reasons of age, illness or disability to, from, or between places, where they receive healthcare, personal care or social work arranged via a third party

Child: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children: Defined for the purposes of this policy as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best chances in life.

Child protection: Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Abuse: A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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

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

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

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing:

- to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Young carers: Are children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care assistance or support to another family member. They carry out on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility, which would usually be associated with an adult. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or another condition connected with a need for care support or supervision.