

Bessacarr Evangelical Church

Safeguarding Policy



SECTION 1: Details of the organisation/place of worship

Bessacarr Evangelical Church (BEC) meets on Bessacarr Lane, Doncaster on Sunday evenings and during the week, and at Hall Cross Lower School, Doncaster on Sunday mornings.

The objectives of BEC are set out in our constitution and statement of faith, and are available on request from the church office.

Address and contact details:

Bessacarr Evangelical Church,
Bessacarr Lane
Doncaster
DN4 7PT

Tel no: 01302 531040
www.bessacarr.church

Pastors:

Mark Harewood	mark@bessacarr.church
Jonathan Edmonds	jonathan@bessacarr.church

Safeguarding Lead:

Kathryn Mair	kathryn@bessacarr.church	01302 531040
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Membership of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC)

Regulator: Charity Commission of England and Wales

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This document covers the work with children, young people and adults with care and support needs, when they are taking part in activities organised by BEC including at Hall Cross Lower School.

SECTION 2: Governance and leadership

Our commitment

As a Leadership 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, and neglect. We believe that everyone has been created in God's image, having value and worth, and we see safeguarding as part of our biblical mandate to love, serve and care for one another. Safeguarding is necessary because we live in a fallen world, where all have fallen short of God's standards - both in how we treat God, and other people. In His redemptive purposes, we are those who have been loved, forgiven and welcomed into God's family through Jesus, and we therefore seek to be a church where we all show the love and care of the Lord Jesus to everyone.

We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child." As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

The policy and attached practice guidelines are based on the safeguarding standards published by *thirtyone:eight* (independent safeguarding specialists).

Governance

The Board of Trustees of BEC is appointed to have independent authority and legal responsibility. This includes having a critical role in decision making and compliance as well as setting the values, standards and behaviours of BEC.

These standards and behaviours may be referred to as the 'culture' of the organisation; culture can be shaped in both negative and positive ways.

"The culture of a charity goes beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory demands. Charity governance is most effective when it provides assurances not just that legal requirements are met, but that the behaviour of people working for the charity, and those who come into contact with it, is proper and ethical. Culture, alongside good governance, can be pivotal to whether a charity achieves its stated object" (IICSA The Governance Institute, 2017).

The Board of Trustees will have overall responsibility for safeguarding within BEC, including referring to the relevant charity regulator, in this case, the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

This Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in BEC, but to also build a culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles
- there are accountability structures
- with codes of conduct
- the values of the organisation are embedded in its day-to-day actions and behaviours of its people
- and there is open communication.

SECTION 3: Prevention

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult 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 adult.

For the purposes of this policy, a child will be referred to as someone under 18 years old.

An adult at risk of harm will be defined with reference to the Care Act 2014 (England) which states that adult safeguarding duties apply to any person aged 18 years or older who:

- Has care and support needs.
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.
- Is unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.

To safeguard those in our places of worship and organisations 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:

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.

Also for adults the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights with particular reference to Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Definitions and signs and indicators of abuse, as well as how to respond to a disclosure of abuse, are included in the BEC Good Practice Guide, given to all workers and volunteers.

Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022, it is illegal in England and Wales and Northern Ireland for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision.

Safer Recruitment

The Leadership will ensure all members of staff will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self declaration form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A disclosure and barring check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information).
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Volunteers must be committed to the church and in agreement with our statement of faith and covenant of fellowship. The Elders should be consulted before people are approached to be volunteers. At an initial discussion of the appointment Child Protection and Safeguarding issues should be raised and the appointment should only be confirmed following receipt of a DBS clearance and signed Code of Conduct.

Safeguarding Training

The Leadership is committed to on-going safeguarding training and development opportunities for all staff and volunteers, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our staff and volunteers with DBS clearance will receive induction training and undertake safeguarding training on a regular basis.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and adults with care and support needs 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.

Codes of conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers are issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs. (See Appendix 2)

SECTION 4: Practice Guidelines

As a church, working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs we wish to operate and promote good working practices. This will enable staff and volunteers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation.

As well as a general Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers we also have specific good practice guidelines for the activities we are involved in (held in the church office).

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. We therefore have clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and it is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises will have their own policy that meets our safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone 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.

SECTION 5: Responding to allegations of abuse

Under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

- Document a concern

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern using the safeguarding report form in the first instance, or providing a written account including the date, time, context, people involved, and as accurately as possible what was said, without opinion or judgement.

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to Kathryn Mair (Designated Safeguarding Lead, hereafter the "DSL"), tel no: 01302 531040 / 07587 184942 who is nominated by the Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities.
- In the absence of the DSL or if the suspicions in any way involve the DSL, then the report should be made to Angela Webster (Deputy Lead for Adults) on 07764 616643 or Katie McConway (Deputy Lead for Children and Young People) on 07538 783829 (hereafter the "Deputies"). If the suspicions implicate both the DSL and the Deputies, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

Christian Safeguarding Services,

The CSS c/o 55 Long Street Belton Loughborough LE11 9TP,

tel: 0116 2184420 www.thecss.co.uk

OR Thirtyoneeight,

PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ,

tel: 0303 003 1111 www.thirtyoneeight.org

Alternatively contact Social Services or the police.

- The DSL should contact the appropriate agency, or take advice from Christian Safeguarding Services or Thirtyoneeight as above.
- **For children's social services:** The Doncaster Children's Services Trust telephone number is 01302 737777 (8:30am-5pm, Monday to Friday). The out of hours emergency number is 01302 796000.
- **For adult social care:** The Doncaster Council Adult Contact Team telephone number is 01302 737391. The Safeguarding Adults Unit telephone number is 01302 736296. The out of hours emergency number is 01302 796000.
- The **Police Referral Unit** numbers are 01302 385109 and 385110.
- The DSL may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern:

- Lee Potts, Trustee responsible for safeguarding who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - Designated officer or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Concerns must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the DSL, the absence of the DSL or Deputies should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from the CSS or Thirtyoneeight.
- The Leadership will support the DSL/Deputies in their role, and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from the CSS or Thirtyoneeight, although the Leadership hopes that members of BEC will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the DSL/Deputies have not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the DSL(s) regarding the appropriateness of a referral, they are free to contact an outside agency directly. We hope by making this statement that the Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the DSL/Deputies is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations 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 DSL/ Deputy will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or the CSS or Thirtyoneeight) 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 parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns (eg. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where 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 Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by the CSS or Thirtyoneeight if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or concerns of sexual abuse, the DSL/Deputy will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services 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 advice given by the CSS or Thirtyoneeight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/ police. The CSS or Thirtyoneeight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult at risk:

Concerns or allegations of abuse or harm include: physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse

If there is concern about any of the above, the DSL/Deputy will:

- contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively the CSS or Thirtyoneeight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the DSL/Deputy will:

- Identify support services for the survivor, ie. counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact the CSS or Thirtyoneeight and in discussion with them consider appropriate action in accordance with the scale of the concern.

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

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) the DSL/Deputy, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services in regards to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function 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 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.
- Share information about the concern with the police if necessary.

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

The DSL/Deputy will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Care in regards to the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.
- Share information about the concern with the police if necessary.

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Social Care 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 if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Social Care to decide, not BEC.

Allegations of non-recent sexual abuse from an adult:

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from a child, the procedure in relation to sexual abuse will be followed as above.

If an accusation is made of non-recent sexual abuse from an adult, the DSL/Deputies will:

- Give the adult the option to report this to the Police. If the adult does not wish to report this to the police, then the DSL/Deputies can pass on the information relating to the alleged Perpetrator, however they must not share details of the Survivor.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role working or volunteering with children or young people, make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role working with adults with care and support needs, liaise with Adult Social Care to establish whether this can be investigated under their safeguarding processes.
- If the alleged Perpetrator is in a role within BEC, contact the CSS or Thirtyoneeight and with them consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

SECTION 6: Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of BEC.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the church is known to pose a potential risk to children, or adults with care and support needs, the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults with care and support needs, set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on an appropriate risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

Adoption of the Policy

This policy was agreed by the Leadership and will be reviewed annually on 1 April 2026:

Signed by: 

Position: Pastor

Signed by: 

Position: Designated Elder

Date: 1/4/26

A copy of this policy is also lodged with the Church Administrator.

APPENDIX 1

Protection of Children and Adults Policy Statement

The Leadership of Bessacarr Evangelical Church recognises the importance of its ministry/work with children and young people and adults at risk of harm and its responsibility to protect everyone entrusted to our care.

We believe that everyone has been created in God's image, having value and worth, and we see safeguarding as part of our biblical mandate to love, serve and care for one another.

We are committed to creating and enabling a healthy culture in order to minimise any coercion and control within our church.

The following statement was agreed by the Leadership on 01 April 2026.

This church (BEC) is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults with care and support needs and ensuring their well-being.

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent harm or abuse to children and adults with care and support needs in all their recognised forms.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and children and will ensure all our policies and procedures reflect this.
- We believe all people should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of BEC.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with children and adults with care and support needs.
- We believe every child should be valued, safe and happy, and would feel able to tell us if they are experiencing significant harm.

We are committed to:

- Following statutory denominational or organisational guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults and will ensure that as a church all workers will work within the agreed procedures of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of all relevant legislation and referring concerns about adults with care and support needs to the local authority under the Care Act 2014.
- Keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Supporting the Designated Safeguarding Leads in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children/adults with care and support needs.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by BEC.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Supporting all within BEC who are affected by abuse.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about an adult with care and support needs.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the Police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy and procedures annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult, then speak to one of the following who have been approved as Safeguarding Leads for BEC.

K. Mair KATHRYN MAIR. Designated Safeguarding Lead

A. Webster ANGELA WEBSTER Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Adults)

K. McConway KATHRYN MCCONWAY Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Children and young people)

A copy of the full policy and procedures for BEC is available from the church administrator.

Signed by the Leadership (Elders) of BEC:

Signed

<u>M. Harwood</u>	<u>S. Potts</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>H. V. Annett</u>
<u>[Signature]</u>	

Date

1 April 2026

