

North Point Church Safeguarding Policy

(Revised September 2024)

1. Church and Contact Information:

- **Name of Church:** North Point Church
 - **Address:** 300 Roseberry Avenue, Coventry, CV2 1UT
 - **Phone Number:** 02476 680710
 - **Email:** northpointchurch.cov@gmail.com
 - **Charity Number:** 1052742
 - **Denomination:** Assemblies of God (GB)
 - **Senior Leader:** Patrick Boyle | Contact: 07825 368006
 - **Safeguarding Coordinator:** safeguarding@northpointchurch.co.uk
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2. Introduction to Our Safeguarding Commitment:

At North Point Church, we are dedicated to providing a safe environment for all children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We recognize the potential risks they face and take action to prevent harm by adhering to statutory guidance and the best practices outlined by *Thirtyone* safeguarding standards.

Our policy ensures:

- A safer environment and culture.
- Safe recruitment and training of volunteers and staff.
- Prompt responses to safeguarding concerns.
- Pastoral support for victims, survivors, and others affected by abuse.
- Procedures to work with those who may pose a risk.

We believe safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and encourage openness in reporting any concerns.

3. Prevention and Safer Recruitment:

To prevent abuse and ensure the safety of our congregation, North Point Church follows a comprehensive approach to safeguarding. Abuse can occur in many forms: physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, financial, or neglect.

Key Prevention Steps:

- **Safe Recruitment:** All workers and volunteers are thoroughly vetted. They must be part of the church for 3–6 months before serving in sensitive roles. Exceptions apply for roles with no direct contact with children or vulnerable adults.
 - **DBS Checks:** We perform Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where required, following the Code of Practice. References are also collected.
 - **Training:** All volunteers are trained in safeguarding, understand how to report concerns, and are aware of the importance of maintaining professional boundaries.
 - **Ongoing Safeguarding Awareness:** We regularly update training for volunteers and provide resources to raise awareness of safeguarding issues.
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4. Responding to Allegations of Abuse:

When concerns about abuse or neglect arise, we follow clear procedures:

What to Do if You Have a Concern:

- Report concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator at safeguarding@northpointchurch.co.uk within 48 hours.
- **Immediate danger:** If there is an immediate risk of harm, contact 999.
- If both the Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy are implicated, contact *Thirtyone* at 0303 003 1111 or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at lado@coventry.gov.uk.

Next Steps:

- The Safeguarding Coordinator will refer the concern to statutory authorities such as social services or the police.
- A written record of the concern will be created, and confidentiality will be maintained on a need-to-know basis.

For children and vulnerable adults, the policy outlines specific steps for responding to different types of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, neglect). See Appendix 2 for detailed signs and indicators of abuse.

5. Supporting Victims and Working with Offenders:

Pastoral Care:

We are committed to providing pastoral care and support for anyone affected by abuse. Where appropriate, we work alongside statutory agencies to offer counselling and guidance.

Working with Offenders:

If someone attending North Point Church has a history of abusive behaviour, or if they are under investigation, we will supervise them closely. Risk assessments will be carried out, and boundaries set to protect others. A written risk management plan may be required.

6. Partnership Working:

We collaborate with a range of external organisations to safeguard those in our care. Any organisation using North Point Church premises must have a safeguarding policy that meets the standards of *Thirtyone*.

Our safeguarding policy also promotes transparency and good communication, which are critical to protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

7. Procedures for Reporting Concerns and Further Action:

- **Internal Reporting:** Volunteers, staff, or members must report concerns directly to the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy as soon as possible.

- **External Agencies:** If the concern requires external intervention, the Safeguarding Coordinator will liaise with local social services, police, or other statutory bodies.
- **Serious Incidents:** In some cases, such as criminal offences or when charity assets are at risk, trustees may be required to report the incident to the Charity Commission.

See Appendix 5 for a detailed Code of Conduct and Appendix 6 for our Online Safety Policy.

8. Review and Updates:

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required. It is our commitment to keep up with legal developments and ensure our policy reflects best safeguarding practices.

Appendices (Summarised):

1. **Safeguarding Statement:** Outlines legal responsibilities.
2. **Definitions of Abuse:** Provides detailed descriptions of abuse types (physical, emotional, neglect, etc.).
3. **Signs and Indicators of Abuse:** Helps identify potential abuse cases.
4. **Code of Conduct:** Sets expectations for staff and volunteers.
5. **Online Safety Policy:** Guidelines for safe communication online, including with children and young people.
6. **Flowcharts for Action:** Visual guides for reporting concerns.
7. **Accident and Incident Form:** For reporting any incidents during church activities.

Appendix 1: Safeguarding Statement

North Point Church Safeguarding Statement

At North Point Church, we are committed to the safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We recognize that it is everyone's responsibility to prevent harm and protect those at risk from abuse or neglect in any form.

- We ensure a safe environment for all through clear policies and practices.
- We commit to safe recruitment, training, and supervision of staff and volunteers.
- We will respond promptly to any concerns of abuse or neglect.
- We work with statutory agencies to protect those at risk.

Our safeguarding practices follow the guidelines provided by *Thirtyone* and national legislation, including:

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**
 - **Care Act (2014)** for adults
 - **Equality Act (2010)**
 - **Disability Discrimination Acts (1995 & 2005)**
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Appendix 2: Definitions of Abuse and Indicators

Types of Abuse and Their Definitions:

- 1. Physical Abuse:**
 - Deliberate use of force causing injury or harm.
 - Examples: hitting, slapping, burning, or inappropriate use of restraint.
- 2. Emotional/Psychological Abuse:**
 - Continuous emotional maltreatment affecting mental well-being.
 - Examples: bullying, threats, verbal abuse, controlling behaviour.
- 3. Sexual Abuse:**
 - Any form of sexual activity where consent is not given or understood.
 - Examples: sexual assault, inappropriate touching, exploitation.
- 4. Neglect:**
 - Failure to meet basic needs, resulting in harm or distress.

- Examples: lack of food, shelter, medical care, or emotional support.

5. Spiritual Abuse:

- Using religious beliefs or practices to control or harm an individual.
- Examples: manipulation using faith, forcing unwanted religious practices.

6. Financial Abuse (for adults):

- Misuse of someone's finances, property, or assets.
- Examples: theft, coercion, fraud, or exploitation.

Signs of Abuse:

- **Physical:** Unexplained injuries, frequent accidents, or fear of physical contact.
- **Emotional:** Withdrawal, anxiety, low self-esteem, or aggression.
- **Sexual:** Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge, bruising, infections.
- **Neglect:** Poor hygiene, malnutrition, untreated medical conditions.

(For more detail on abuse types, see Appendix 4: Adult-Specific Indicators.)

Appendix 3: Signs and Indicators of Child Abuse

General Indicators:

- Fear of certain people or places.
- Unexplained injuries or frequent accidents.
- Aggressive, withdrawn, or anxious behaviour.
- Running away, self-harming, or difficulty sleeping.
- Knowledge of inappropriate adult topics (e.g., drugs, sexual behaviour).

Specific Signs:

- **Physical Abuse:** Bruises, burns, or broken bones.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Excessive clinginess, extreme behaviour changes, or delayed development.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Infections, inappropriate sexual language, or difficulty walking/sitting.

- **Neglect:** Persistent hunger, dirty clothing, untreated medical issues, or poor hygiene.

Always take these signs seriously and report concerns according to the policy.

Appendix 4: Types of Abuse and Indicators for Adults

Types of Abuse for Adults at Risk:

1. **Physical Abuse:** Hitting, rough handling, misuse of medication.
 - **Signs:** Injuries, bruises, or sudden behavioural changes.
 2. **Domestic Abuse:** Abuse between intimate partners or family members.
 - **Signs:** Physical injuries, isolation from support, fear of another person.
 3. **Sexual Abuse:** Non-consensual sexual activity.
 - **Signs:** Bruising, difficulty walking, or sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
 4. **Psychological Abuse:** Bullying, threats, or humiliation.
 - **Signs:** Anxiety, withdrawal, or depression.
 5. **Financial Abuse:** Theft or coercion regarding finances.
 - **Signs:** Unexplained withdrawals, missing possessions, unpaid bills.
 6. **Neglect:** Failure to meet basic needs.
 - **Signs:** Poor hygiene, malnutrition, untreated medical conditions.
 7. **Modern Slavery:** Forced labour or human trafficking.
 - **Signs:** Isolation, poor living conditions, inability to access documents.
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Appendix 5: Code of Conduct

North Point Church Code of Conduct for Working with Children, Young People, and Adults at Risk of Harm

Purpose:

This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected of all staff and volunteers at North Point Church. It is designed to protect both those in positions of trust and the children, young people, and vulnerable adults we serve.

General Guidelines:

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, and fairness.
- Avoid being alone with a child or vulnerable adult when not necessary.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Respect the rights, opinions, and concerns of others.
- Report any concerns about safeguarding immediately to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Do:

- Follow all church safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all interactions are transparent and accountable.
- Work in pairs when dealing with children or vulnerable adults.
- Use appropriate language and behaviour.
- Immediately report any safeguarding concerns or breaches of conduct.

Do Not:

- Engage in physical, emotional, or spiritual abuse of any kind.
- Use inappropriate language or make offensive jokes.
- Promise to keep secrets when a safeguarding issue is disclosed.
- Ignore signs of abuse or misconduct.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct:

If a breach of this Code of Conduct occurs, the volunteer or staff member will be subject to disciplinary procedures. In serious cases, this may lead to termination of role or referral to statutory authorities.

Volunteer Declaration:

I have read and agree to abide by the North Point Church Code of Conduct. I understand that any breach of this code may result in disciplinary action.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Leader's Acknowledgment:

I confirm that I have discussed this Code of Conduct with the volunteer and they have agreed to adhere to it.

Leader's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 6: Online Safety Policy

North Point Church Online Safety Policy

Purpose:

This policy ensures that staff and volunteers maintain safe and professional communication with children, young people, and vulnerable adults online, while safeguarding their privacy and security.

Guidelines for Church Workers/Volunteers:

- **Communication:** Maintain a friendly but professional tone at all times. Avoid personal or overly familiar communication.
- **Transparency:** Only communicate with children and young people using church-approved methods (e.g., official email, church social media accounts).
- **Parents' Consent:** Ensure parents are aware and have given permission for any communication with children.
- **Records:** Log all digital communication and ensure it is open and accessible to supervisors.
- **Social Media:** Use only monitored and approved church social media groups. Personal interaction or private messages should be avoided.

Acceptable Use:

- Do not use personal email or social media accounts to communicate with children or vulnerable adults.
- Do not engage in any online behaviour that could be construed as inappropriate or unsafe.
- Report any online communication that raises safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Consent for Photographic Images and Videos Online:

- Obtain parental consent before taking or using any photographs of children.
- Do not share images that could identify children or reveal personal information.

- Ensure any photos or videos used are appropriate, with a clear purpose stated.
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Volunteer Declaration:

I have read and agree to abide by the North Point Church Online Safety Policy. I understand that any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Leader's Acknowledgment:

I confirm that I have discussed this Online Safety Policy with the volunteer and they have agreed to adhere to it.

Leader's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 7: Flowchart for Action – Children and Young People

If a safeguarding concern arises involving a child or young person:

1. **Receive the Information:**
 - Stay calm and listen carefully.
 - Reassure the child that they've done the right thing in telling you.
 - Do not promise confidentiality.
 2. **Report to the Safeguarding Coordinator:**
 - Contact safeguarding@northpointchurch.co.uk as soon as possible (within 48 hours).
 3. **Referral to Authorities:**
 - If necessary, the Safeguarding Coordinator will contact Social Services or the Police.
 4. **Follow-Up:**
 - Keep a written record of the report and any actions taken.
 - Ensure the child receives appropriate support.
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Appendix 8: Flowchart for Action – Adults at Risk

If a safeguarding concern arises involving an adult at risk:

1. **Receive the Information:**
 - Listen carefully, stay calm, and offer support.
 - Respect the adult's wishes but explain the need to report if there is a risk of harm.
 2. **Report to the Safeguarding Coordinator:**
 - Contact safeguarding@northpointchurch.co.uk within 48 hours.
 3. **Referral to Authorities:**
 - If required, the Safeguarding Coordinator will contact Adult Social Services or the Police.
 4. **Support and Follow-Up:**
 - Keep records and ensure that appropriate steps are taken for the adult's safety and well-being.
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Appendix 9: Accident and Incident Form

This form must be completed following any accident or incident.

- **Date of Incident:** _____
- **Names of those involved:** _____
- **Location:** _____
- **Details of the Incident:**

- **Action Taken:**

- **Follow-up Action:**

Person in Charge of Group: _____

Signature: _____

Date: // _____

Appendix 10: How the Charity Commission Can Help

The Charity Commission can provide guidance if safeguarding concerns arise that could affect the church's ability to operate safely. Concerns about criminal activity should still be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies (e.g., the police or HMRC).

For more information, see the [Charity Commission's guidelines on safeguarding](#).