

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Church Details

Charity number:	SC029054
Church address:	201 Main Street Plains Airdrie ML6 7JQ
Safeguarding contact:	**HAZEL CONAGHAN**
Email:	**hconaghan@gmail.com**
Phone:	***Available on request***

This policy first adopted: **SEPTEMBER 2024**

This policy should be reviewed annually.

The last review date: **SEPTEMBER 2024**

The next review is due: **SEPTEMBER 2025**

Context

Plains Evangelical Church is an independent charity registered with the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR). The church has a formal membership and is led by Pastor/Elders and Deacons. In addition, there are trustee's comprising of the Pastor/Elders, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

Plains Mission was established in the current church building 1921 and became a Plains Evangelical Church in 1995. Our beliefs are outlined in our Statement of Faith and is run in accordance with our constitution. These are available on the church website or in printed form from a member of the leadership.

Plains Evangelical Church is affiliated to the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC). FIEC is a membership organisation and does not exercise any authority over the church.

The church is a group of Christians, formal members and non-members alike, who meet together in a building at 201 Main Street, Plains. There are Sunday services and a midweek Bible study and prayer which run on a weekly basis. The church also runs other mid-week meetings and one-off events for various groups, including children. All meetings are open for Christian's and non-Christians alike, with the exception of the AGM *(attended by members only)*.

The church does not currently provide for any exclusive groups of vulnerable adults, however, it is understood that vulnerable adults may be present and any number of the church groups and/or services.

Safeguarding Roles

Trustees / Leaders

- Ultimately responsible for safeguarding
- Responsible for the implementation of policy and procedures
- Responsible for supporting the church workers
- Responsible for raising awareness about best practice within the church
- Responsible for ensuring that the relevant people have received the appropriate training

Safeguarding Trustee / Leader

Not necessarily the person who heads up safeguarding in the church – could be a trustee / deacon with an interest and willingness to learn.

- Takes a lead on safeguarding matters for the trustees / deacons
- Is the point of contact with trustees / deacons for safeguarding issues
- Ensures church policy and procedures are reviewed annually

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Receives all reports of concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- Listens, observes and passes on those concerns appropriately, having taken advice from the relevant people
- Acts as a link between the church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding matters

Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Verifier

- Responsible for all aspects of collating and checking and submitting PVG forms for workers and liaising with Disclosure Scotland through their processing.

The Pastor

- Shares with the trustees the general responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the church's safeguarding policy
- Takes responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral needs of all are being met
- May need to be made aware of safeguarding issues
- Providing pastoral support to both sides during a safeguarding incident

Workers

For the purpose of this document, the combined term used for anyone involved in any role where safeguarding is an issue will be referred to ‘workers’.

- A worker can be an employee of PEC, a ministry group leader or a ministry group helper.
- All workers who have a frontline role in a safeguarding setting has a duty to report issues of safeguarding to the DSL.
- All employees and ministry group leaders should be PVG checked. Ideally all workers should be PVG checked.

Our responsibilities

We recognise that both as a charity and as Christians, we have a responsibility to:

- Protect and promote the wellbeing of those who attend the church; paying particular attention to those who may be more vulnerable than others.
- Ensure that we have suitable systems and processes in place to manage safeguarding risks, including the appointment of a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Ensure that those who act on our behalf are competent and safe to do so.
- Identify non-safeguarding risks and manage them effectively.
- Report any safeguarding concerns that meet the threshold to the appropriate statutory services as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. Where immediate action is required to ensure safety, an urgent report to the Police (999) or the appropriate Social Services department will be made without delay.
- Seek the relevant advice or help in any area's that we are uncertain of.
- Ensure that our conduct and practice is accountable and transparent and that we care well for those to whom we minister.
- Ensure that if problems occur or dissatisfaction is expressed, we examine these in an impartial and careful way and manage any conflict of interest effectively.

Our Commitments

- We will treat all who engage with the church through its ministries with courtesy and respect and will seek to uphold their inherent dignity and worth.
- We will seek to support and care well for anyone who discloses to us that they have been a victim of abuse or neglect and report this to statutory services in line with local procedures where required.
- We will seek to listen well to any concerns, complaints, or other expressions of dissatisfaction and to respond in a proportionate, impartial, transparent, and accountable manner.
- We will carefully examine any allegations made or concerns raised about any member or leader and respond appropriately.
- We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are competent to fulfil their roles and the legal duties associated with safeguarding.

Putting our policy into practice

- A printed copy of the safeguarding policy statement is available on request from the church leadership and is available on our church website.
- Each worker with children and/or adults at risk will be given a full copy of the safeguarding policy and procedures and will be expected to follow them.
- The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually, and any necessary revisions adopted into the policy and implemented through our procedures.
- The trustees will include a statement on safeguarding in their annual return as required by OSCR.

Handling safeguarding concerns

Any concerns that are identified or disclosures that are made must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is **HAZEL CONAGHAN**.

She can be contacted by phone *(number available on request)* or email at **hconaghan@gmail.com**

If the concern involves the DSL, or if the DSL is unavailable or implicated, the report should be made to:

PASTOR MARK NELSON

He can be contacted by phone on (on request) or email at **pastor@plainsevangelicalchurch.com**

If both the DSL and the Pastor are unavailable or implicated, then the concern should be passed on to another elder or senior leader.

The details of any concerns will be clearly and accurately recorded and stored securely, in keeping with the church Data Protection Policy.

The DSL will ascertain whether any action needs to be taken. If required, support and advice will be sought from either the relevant statutory services or independent advisory organisation.

The DSL will make any necessary referrals according to local procedures.

The DSL will cooperate with statutory services and provide the link between the church and those professionals involved in responding to the situation.

Records of all discussions, advice sought, decisions made, and actions taken will be retained in the confidential file.

Safer Recruitment

It is the desire of the elders that the main group leaders will be members of Plains Evangelical Church *(exceptions may be made at the discretion of the elders).* Group helpers will be made up of members and non-members alike.

Reasonable and proportionate assessment of the suitability and competence of workers will be made, and decisions recorded.

The church will ensure that, at least, the main leader(s) are Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checked in accordance with national guidance. Ideally, group helpers will also be PVG checked. PVG Checks are processed by Disclosure Scotland.

A copy of the PVG check certificates will be issued to the leaders/ helpers and a second copy will be stored in the church in a locked storage facility in the church building and retained in line with the Plains Evangelical Church Data Protection Policy.

As the main leader of a religious organisation, the Pastor, should always hold a PVG check certificate, no matter what groups are held at the church.

The church will provide training for The DSL, employee's and volunteers when/ where required.

When running children's events, the main leader should be aware of any unchecked people in the building at the time of the event and make a reasonable assessment of the situation. This also applies to anyone in the building who may not be a part of the event.

Managing Ex-Offenders, Those Who Are on a Barred List, or Others Who Pose a Risk to Vulnerable People

The elders, along with the DSL, will meet to decide on whether or not it is appropriate for an ex-offender to serve in any group in the church involving children/ vulnerable people.

Whilst we do recognise that ex-offenders can change, we will also acknowledge any flags that a PVG check may raise, and any advice given by the appropriate authorities.

A formal risk assessment will be made which will include input from statutory services. Advice and support will be sought where required and decisions will be recorded.

A formal contract will be drawn up that outlines the church's commitments to the individual and any control measures required. The contract will be formally reviewed and monitored on a regular basis.

Decisions will always be made with the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults as a priority.

Note: Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children or adults at risk to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children or adults at risk. It is also a criminal offence to knowingly offer work with children or adults at risk to an individual who is so disqualified or to knowingly allow such an individual to continue to work with children or adults at risk.

Safe Behaviour

The following is a general code of conduct for all those working with children and/or vulnerable adults which is to ensure that everyone is shown the respect that is due to them:

- Think about language and tone of voice that you are using when engaging with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Be aware of your body language and the effect you are having on the those you are working with. This applies to both in person and online interactions.
- Listen well to everyone. Be careful not to assume you know what a child or Vulnerable adult is thinking or feeling. Listen to what is being spoken and how it is said. At the same time, observe the individual's body language to better understand what is being said.
- Be aware of any physical contact you may have with a child or vulnerable adult and record it when necessary. For instance, if you need to stop a fight, administer First Aid, give a hug to someone in distress, or protect yourself or others from danger.
- Do not make suggestive comments about or to a child or vulnerable adults, even in 'fun'.
- Do not scapegoat, belittle, ridicule or reject a child or Vulnerable adult.
- Keep a record of any significant incidents or concerns on a Safeguarding Incident Form (Appendix 3). Enter the names of all those present and anything of note which you observe, e.g. details of any fights broken up by the workers, allegations made, etc. All workers who witnessed the incident, overheard it or responded in any way should record the details and sign and date the form.

Working with Children

For the purpose of this document, the term 'child' refers to anyone under the age of 18 years.

Code of Conduct

- Do not invade the privacy of children when they are using the toilet.
- The level of assistance with personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child, whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.
- Avoid rough games involving physical contact between a worker and a child.
- Avoid sexually provocative games.
- When it is necessary to discipline children, this should be done in a loving way; without using physical punishment and without using any way that the child becomes scared or feels victimised.
- Only invite children and young people to your home or on trips in groups and always make sure that another worker is present. Notify the DSL of any children's trips which take place in the name of the church. Specific parental permission must always be sought.
- Do not give lifts to children or young people on your own. Ensure that if transporting children as part of your church role, you have the correct insurance cover in place as well as parental permission. No person under 18 years of age should be left in sole charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.

Physical Contact

- Keep everything public.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the workers.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Workers should avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually provocative.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others.
- Never use physical punishment as a form of discipline.
- Forced physical contact may only be used for the safety of the child, the worker or anyone else.
- When giving first aid, workers should encourage the child to do what they can manage themselves but consider the child's best interests and give appropriate help where necessary.
- Workers should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should help each other by constructively challenging anything which could be misunderstood or misconstrued.
- If a team member is unsure about whether the actions of another volunteer or worker constitutes a concern, they should raise this with the DSL.

Consent

All children left in the care of workers will be required to attend with a completed consent form, giving the child permission to attend, along with home address and contact number, an alternative name and contact number and medical details *(doctors details, medication, allergies and emergency consent)*.

Where a child turns up alone, they may be welcomed into the event at first, however, the leader will attempt to establish as much of the consent details as possible. The child will be given a form and asked to bring it back next time.

Events where adults attend with the children do not require consent.

Being alone with a child

No one should normally be left working alone with children, but should instead work as part of a team.

If workers do find themselves on their own with children, they should:

- Assess the risk of sending the child home.
- Phone another team member and let them know the situation.
- Put steps in place to avoid the situation happening again.

If a child wants to talk on a one-to-one basis, you should make sure that:

- You try to hold the conversation in a corner of a room where other people are present.
- You leave the door open if you are in a room on your own.
- Another team member knows where you are.
- You do not promise confidentiality.

If there are insufficient leaders for groups in separate rooms:

- Internal doors should be left open.
- At least two people should be present before external doors are opened for an event.
- Consider whether you could combine groups together or rearrange planned activities.
- Reconsider whether you can run the group safely, carrying out a Risk Assessment to record your findings.

Ratio of Workers to Children.

A worker is regarded as someone over the age of 18 and should, ideally, be PVG checked.

Consideration should be given to how many workers should be involved with a group and whether they should be male or female workers, or both.

A couple or immediate family members should be considered to count as only one person when planning events or activities and the distribution of workers through different groups. Wherever possible couples or people who are related to each other should work with separate groups.

When working with children the following recommended minimum ratios of workers to children apply:

Age range	Recommended minimum ratio for INDOOR activities	Recommended minimum ratio for OUTDOOR activities
0 – 2 years	1:3 *(minimum 2)*	1:3 *(minimum 2)*
3 years	1:4 *(minimum 2)*	1:4 *(minimum 2)*
4 – 7 years	1:8 *(minimum 2)*	1:6 *(minimum 2)*
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 8 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

Children with Additional Support Needs

Children and young people who have additional support needs could require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility, etc.

Some children may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age-appropriate way.

In such cases, normal ratio's may not apply and a higher adult to child ratio should be considered.

Workers will endeavour to speak with the parents/carers of children/young people with additional support needs and find out from them how best to assist the child or young person.

Where provision is not possible for children with additional support needs, a parent or carer may be asked to attend the event with the child.

It should be noted that children and young people who have additional support needs can be at greater risk of abuse. Any concerns should be noted, and correct procedures put in place.

Working with Vulnerable Adults

For the purposes of this document, a vulnerable adult is described as any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

It is understood that some of the advice on working with children will also overlap into working with vulnerable adults as well.

Premises

The church building will be made as accessible as possible to all people. Any restrictions to access, visibility, audibility, toilet facilities, lighting or heating will be addressed wherever possible, and where necessary, aids and adaptations put in place, where practically possible.

Language

Every effort will be taken to use appropriate language and suitable vocabulary, enabling the greatest level of inclusivity and accessibility. We will be mindful of the language used within worship and the language used to describe people.

Worship

In all worship services, we will consider the varied requirements of our congregation and try to be as inclusive as possible, by:

- Providing some copies of large print type for all printed materials
- Speakers always facing the congregation and not covering their mouths when talking, enabling those who rely on lip-reading
- Using a microphone so that all can hear
- Describing what is being presented on a screen for those who cannot see it clearly
- Using inclusive language
- Using a variety of resources to cater for different levels of understanding

Insurance

We will take reasonable steps to safeguard adults at risk and will follow any specific safeguarding requirements as laid out by our insurance company.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

It is not the role of the worker to decide whether someone has mental capacity and is therefore able to make decisions that impact on their safety and well-being. Decisions on mental capacity are best made by professionals with the relevant background information to hand. Therefore, all concerns should be shared with the DSL, regardless of consent by the vulnerable adult or assessment of the worker.

The DSL will consider all the information to hand and decide whether it is appropriate for the information to be reported to the statutory authorities. If there are any concerns about an adult's mental capacity, the DSL will contact the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Team for advice.

Guidance on reporting Abuse, Neglect or Physical Injury in the cases of Children/ Vulnerable Adults

STAGE 1 – The Worker

The duty of the person who receives information or who has a concern about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult is to **RECOGNISE** the concerns, make a **RECORD** in writing and **RESPOND** by passing on their concerns to the DSL. If the DSL is not contactable, or they are implicated in the situation, the record should be passed to Deputy DSL or another member of the leadership within 24 hours of it being raised.

If anyone is considered to be in imminent danger of harm, a report should be made immediately to the police by calling 999. If such a report is made without reference to the DSL, they should be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

A written record using the standard incident report form (Appendix 3) should be made as soon as possible after a child or adult at risk tells you about harmful behaviour, or an incident takes place that gives cause for concern.

Advice on speaking to a child who is disclosing abuse is given in Appendix 4.

The record should…

- be hand-written as soon as possible after the event. When hand-written notes are typed up later the original hand-written notes should be retained. Handwriting should be legible and state the full facts accurately. Facts should not be selective.
- include the child/ vulnerable adults name, address, date of birth/ age
- include the nature of the concerns/allegation/disclosure
- include a description of any injuries that you may have noticed
- include an exact record of what the child/ adult at risk has said, using their own words where possible
- include what was said by the person to whom the concerns were reported
- include any action taken as a result of the concerns
- be signed and dated
- be kept secure and confidential and made available only to the DSL, leadership, representatives of any statutory authorities involved and any advisory bodies that may get involved.

If concerns arise in the context of a specific group/ event, the worker who has the concern may in the first instance seek advice from the group leader. However, such conversations should not delay concerns being passed on to the DSL. It should be clear that the duty remains with the worker to record and pass on their concerns to the DSL.

If a concern is brought to the attention of a group leader by one of the workers, the leader should remind the worker of their duty to record and report and will also themselves have a duty to pass on the concern to the DSL.

STAGE 2 – The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The duty of the DSL on receiving a report is to **REVIEW** the concern that they have received and **REPORT** the concern on to the appropriate people, where necessary.

*The duty to **REVIEW***

In reviewing the report that is received, the DSL…

- should take into account their level of experience and expertise in assessing risk to children or vulnerable adults.
- must take into account any other reports that have been received concerning the same individual or family.
- may speak with others in the church where appropriate *(including the Pastor and/ or the leadership, unless allegations involve them)* who may have relevant information and knowledge that would impact on any decision being made. Such conversations should not lead to undue delay in taking any necessary action.
- may consult with other agencies to seek guidance and advice in knowing how to respond appropriately to the concerns that have been raised.

*The duty to **REPORT***

The DSL will decide who the report should be referred on to, working in conjunction with the church leadership where appropriate.

They may…

- refer back to the worker who made the initial report if there is little evidence that a child/ vulnerable adult is being harmed, asking for appropriate continued observation.
- refer the concern to others who work with the child or vulnerable adult in question, asking for continued observation where appropriate.
- Inform parents / carers under certain circumstances, where doing so would not present any further risk of harm.
- Make a formal referral to the police or local Social Services team.
  For adults at risk, concerns will only be referred to the police or Social Services without consent where:
  - the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice
  - there is a risk of harm to the vulnerable adult or others
  - in order to prevent a crime

If an allegation is made against someone who works with children, the allegation should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or equivalent. The LADO is located within Children's Services and should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

A record should be kept of all safeguarding incidents and should be considered in the annual review of the church's safeguarding policy. All original reports should be retained safely and securely by the DSL and a written record should be made of the actions taken.

The Pastor/ Church Leadership should be made aware of all actions taken.

STAGE 3 – The Leadership and Pastor

Responsibilities to **REPORT** and **SUPPORT** in stage 3 of the process are shared by the church leadership and the Pastor.

*The duty to **SUPPORT***

Once concerns, suspicions and disclosures of abuse have been addressed, the church continues to have a responsibility to offer support to all those who have been affected, including: *Victims; Accused; Children; Vulnerable Adults; Other family members; Church workers; DSL; Pastor; Leadership Team*.

As a Bible Believing Church, we recognise that it is important that those who experience abuse…

- Are accepted for who they are, without being made to forgive or being put into a position of feeling guilty and responsible for what happened to them.
- Know that God loves them unconditionally, and that nothing can or will change this truth.
- Can be confident that those in the church community who know about the abuse are with them on their journey – no matter how long or difficult that journey may be.

On occasions where those who experience abuse require support that falls outside of the expertise of the church members, group leaders and church leadership, it may be helpful to signpost them to professional organisations that can help. These should be vetted by the DSL and The Pastor.

*The duty to **REPORT***

If a church worker has been accused of causing harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults, this would be classed as a serious incident that should be reported to the relevant authorities.

If a worker has been removed from their post or would have been removed from their post because of the risk of harm that they pose to children, young people or vulnerable adults, there is also a statutory duty to report the incident to Disclosure Scotland.

Handling Allegations of Abuse reported against Staff or Workers

If a staff member, group leader or worker is accused of any form of abuse, the following procedure should be followed:

1) If an allegation of abuse has been made, do not approach the accused about it.
2) Follow the usual safeguarding procedure: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report.**
3) **Do not immediately tell the accused that a concern has been raised about them**
4) Once the allegation has been reported to the DSL they can liaise with the relevant statutory authority and with the regional association Safeguarding Lead if they need further advice.
5) Whilst waiting for an outcome from the statutory authorities, the worker about whom concerns have been raised will be supervised as closely as possible, without raising suspicion.
6) A written record of all discussions with statutory authorities or other parties should be maintained by the DSL and stored securely and confidentially, where only those directly involved in safeguarding *(DPS, Safeguarding Trustee, Pastor)* can access them.
7) No information about the allegation will be shared with people in the church other than those directly involved in safeguarding; *not even for prayer purposes*.
8) Following the allegation/ suspicion, a period of internal and/or external investigation will follow.
9) Parties independent of the investigation should be appointed to offer support to both sides during this time.
10) Where the accused is cleared of all accusations, a period of rebuilding and reconciliation will begin.
11) Where the accusations are found to be true, and all legal processes satisfied, the accused will be invited to accept responsibility and seek specialised interventions to reduce the risk of reoffending.
12) The leadership, along with the DSL, will decide on what, if any, areas of work the guilty party will be involved with in the future.

It is the priority of the church to protect children and adults at risk from possible further abuse or from being influenced in any way by the alleged abuser. If the church is considering suspending a paid worker pending an investigation, then it is best to seek support from the relevant employment authorities.

It may be necessary, for the sake of the child / adult at risk or to satisfy the needs of an investigation, for the alleged abuser to worship elsewhere. In such cases the DSL at the new church will be informed of the reasons for this happening.

When concerns are expressed about the church DSL

Any safeguarding concerns involving the DSL should be raised with the Pastor, or appointed Deputy DSL. They in turn should consult the church leadership and, if necessary, seek advice from and outside organisation.

When concerns are expressed about the Pastor

Any safeguarding concerns involving the Pastor should always be reported immediately to the Church Leadership, in addition to following the church's usual procedures.

Handling of Complaints, Grievances or Any Other Expression of Dissatisfaction

Any concern, complaint or other expression of dissatisfaction will be passed to the group leader, who will either seek to resolve it or pass it on to the church leaders.

If the complaint or other expression of dissatisfaction is against the group leader, it will be passed directly onto church leaders.

The matter will be examined impartially and proportionately, and once conclusions have been reached, the church will respond to the complainant.

There is no need to inform the DSL of general complaints, grievances and expressions of dissatisfaction, unless they refer directly to the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults.

Safe Technology

Photographs/ Videos

Leaders and helpers should never store images/ videos on their personal devices of children attending clubs and events. If the need arises, an appointed person will be agreed by the main group leader and the DSL, written permission will be sought from the parent/ guardian and the image/ video stored and disposed of in accordance with the church data protection policy.

Communication with Children/ Young People

Leaders and helpers should avoid communication with children *(under 13)* through instant/ text messaging, social media and/ or any other internet-based platform. If the need arises, contact with young people/ vulnerable people *(over 13)* then a code of conduct will be established by the trustee's, along with the DSL. *(Further advice on this can be found in the* ***BUGB Guide to using social media to engage and communicate with young people within the church****, which can be downloaded from www.baptist.org.uk)*.

Communication and Pastoral Care

The pastor and elders should avoid having pastorally sensitive conversations through IM services and Text Messaging or other forms of social media. Such conversations should ideally take place in person or, where this is not possible, over email. If email is being used, workers will ensure that they are accountable by copying each message to a designated email address. It is important that workers use clear and unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation.

Social Media

The elders will have sole oversight for any church social media accounts and website content, however, management of these may be delegated to another appropriate person, who will be made aware of the relevant safeguarding policies.

Online Presence

It is understood that a Plains Evangelical Church leader/ helper's online presence should reflect that of their in-person presence and should be respectful of the values that is expected from the churches leaders and helpers.

Safe Finance

All aspects of church finance are the responsibility of the treasurer.

Group leaders and workers should seek the advice from and follow the directions of the treasurer when handling, storing, counting and processing money.

Receipts should be kept of all purchases and a record should be kept of all income.

Financial integrity

- If a worker becomes involved in any aspects of someone's personal finance in their duties, they should let the group leader, or a senior church leader know.
- Workers should take note of what they do on behalf of someone and keep receipts of any transactions.
- Workers should not seek personal financial gain from their position beyond any salary or recognised allowances or expenses.
- Workers should not be influenced by offers of money.
- Any gifts received by a worker in their duties should be reported to the church trustees, who should decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.
- Any money received by the church should be handled by two unrelated church workers.
- Care should be taken not to canvass for church donations from any vulnerable adults.
- Workers should ensure that church and personal finances are kept apart.
- If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it should be reported to the trustees.
- Workers should not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role, as this may lead to a conflict of interests.
- Expert legal advice should be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and Appointeeship to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.

General Health & Safety

The General Health and Safety practises of the church building is the responsibility of the Elders and/ or the Buildings and Fabrics Co-Ordinator.

Building Maintenance

Buildings being should be properly maintained. A representative from the various groups should carry out a dynamic safety review and report any lapses in maintenance to the leadership.

Fire

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

The fire extinguishers will undergo an annual fire check.

First Aid

The church will have an appointed first aider who is made known to all who use the building.

All church groups will endeavour to ensure that they have sufficient trained first aiders in their group so that there is always a first aider present at events and activities.

The church will always have at least one first aid kit as well as an incident reporting book, which must be completed in the event of any accidents, injuries, or incidents. It is the responsibility of the appointed first aider to ensure that the contents of the first aid kits are checked on a regular basis. Completed accident forms should be passed on to the nominated individual.

Food Hygiene

Those with responsibility for food will possess the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and be aware of food safety (preparation, handling and storage, disposal of waste, etc).

Whilst it is only required that the person in charge of food preparation possesses the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate, it is ideal for as many involved with food preparation to also have it.

Risk Assessment

Before undertaking any activity, the group leader will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out. It is advisable to appoint someone specifically for this task. Risk assessments should also be dynamic as the event plays out.

Appendix 1: Key Contact Details

The Church's Designated Safeguarding Lead is **HAZEL CONAGHAN**

She can be contacted on **hconaghan@gmail.com** or by phone on (on request)

The Church's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is **MARK NELSON**.

He can be contacted by email at **pastor@plainsevangelicalchurch.com** or by phone on (on request)

The Local Authority is **NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL**.

They can be contacted on **0345 143 0015**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is **CRAIG SMART**

He can be contacted using the online welfare reporting form at **www.culturenl.co.uk/welfare**

Further advice can be sought from Christian Safeguarding Services *(This is a separate organisation that operates independent of Plains Evangelical Church)*.

They can be contacted on **0116 218 4420** or by e-mail at **contact@thecss.co.uk**

Appendix 2: Definitions

Abuse

Abuse is a general term that is used to cover a wide range of harm caused to people. It always involves a violation of the person's rights. It can take various forms as described under "Categories of Abuse" later in this appendix.

Adult at risk of abuse (sometimes referred to as adult in need of protection)

These are adults who have care and support needs, however, in addition, they are at risk of abuse, and because of their support need, are unable to protect themselves.

Since these adults are unable to protect themselves, we have a legal duty to protect them.

Adult with care and support needs

An adult who requires help or support with basic and essential day-to-day tasks such as:

- Getting up, washing, or dressing
- Cooking meals
- Cleaning the house
- Shopping
- Managing their finances
- etc.

Adults with care and support needs have the right to choose whether they want support or not.

Allegation (against a member of staff of volunteer)

An allegation is a claim that a person who has a role that provides access to a vulnerable person has used their position to exploit, abuse, or otherwise harm the person they should have been caring for.

Categories of abuse

This term is used to refer to the legally recognised forms of abuse.

When considering the safeguarding of children, abuse is categorised under four headings:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

When considering the safeguarding of adults, abuse is categorised under ten headings:

- Physical
- Sexual

- Psychological (or emotional)
- Neglect
- Domestic
- Institutional
- Financial or material
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect
- Discriminatory

Child

A person (including an unborn child) who has not yet reached the age of 18 years.

Child protection

Child protection is defined as the protection of children who have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, "significant harm". It is our legal duty to report all Child Protection concerns to either Children's Social Care or the Police as per local procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Frequently abbreviated to DSL, this is the person appointed by the church to take responsibility for many aspects of safeguarding, including, receiving safeguarding concerns from staff or volunteers, and passing them on to the local authority where their threshold is met.

Early Help / Child in Need

Early Help and Child in Need are the areas of safeguarding where a child who has additional needs is receiving targeted support to meet their needs. Support is consent based and so the parents (or the young person if deemed competent to make decisions for themselves) can choose whether to access the support.

Neglect

Neglect is one of the categories of abuse that is characterised by the failure to provide the basic necessities for life where we have a responsibility to do so.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a broad range of activities that range from the general duty of care that we have for everyone who comes into contact with the charity, through early intervention and targeted support to protection from significant harm. It relates to both children and adults.

Spiritual Abuse

This term has become widely used, although remains ill-defined and is not a legally recognised category of abuse. We understand this to be a term referring to emotional, psychological or spiritual harm caused within the context of a religious community, often, but not always involving the misuse of power, authority, position or scripture to manipulate, control and abuse others. This policy does not refer specifically to the different categories of abuse since it covers all forms of abuse and harm.

Universal safeguarding

This refers to the general duty of care that we must provide for everyone who comes into contact with the church.

Vulnerable adults

This term is only used as a generic term. It is no longer used as a technical descriptor for a specific group of people. A vulnerable adult is less able to protect themselves and meet their own needs than an adult who has no vulnerabilities.

Appendix 3: Safeguarding Incident Form

PERSON REPORTING THE INCIDENT OR CONCERN:

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email:

Role in Church:

DETAILS OF CHILD / VULNERABLE ADULT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT:

Name:

Date of Birth / Approximate Age:

Address:

Phone number:

Email:

Do they know that you are sharing concerns about them?

If not, please explain why:

IF UNDER 18 PLEASE INCLUDE DETAILS OF THE PARENT OR CARER:

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Email:

Relationship to the child/ young person:

Do they know that you have concerns that you are sharing?

If not, please explain why:

DETAILS OF ACCUSED (IF RELEVANT)

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Are they an adult or a child (under 18):

Relationship to the child/adult at risk:

Does the child / adult at risk live with the accused?

DETAILS OF INCIDENT OR CONCERN:

- Remember to include the 4 W's – Who, What, Where, When.
- Be clear whether this is something you have been told about or something that you have observed directly.
- Include names of anyone else who witnessed the incident or is aware of the concern.
- Don't use this form as a quiz. Establish the facts through conversation and known information.
- Refer to the church safeguarding policy if you are unsure what to include.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

HAVE YOU CONTACTED ANYONE ELSE (SOCIAL SERVICES, POLICE, REGIONAL SAFEGUARDING LEAD, PASTOR)?

Please give details of who and when below:

Organisation:

Name of contact:

Date of contact:

This Incident Form should be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within 24 hours of any incident or concern arising. Do not delay reporting your concerns to the DSL because you do not have all the information requested in this form. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, please call the DSL straight away and use this form to follow up on that call. Remember if they are not available call the Deputy DSL. If neither are available, the police or social services, do not wait for the DSL to become available.

Remember: Treat this information confidentially.
Do not discuss the contents of this form with anyone who is not directly involved with the case.

Signed .....

Date .....

Appendix 4: Advice for listening to a child's disclosure of abuse

- Accept what the child, however unbelievable it might sound.
- Keep calm and don't panic.
- Be aware of your non-verbal reactions
- Reassure the child that they valued no matter what they have told you.
- Be honest.
- Do not pressure them for information. Do not begin with *Why? When? Who? Where?* Don't ask leading questions. Let them speak and reveal information at their own pace.
- Don't jump steps in reporting. The first call is always the group leader, followed by the DSL. The police and social services are for reasonable suspicions and emergencies.
- Remember, they may have been threatened.
- Reassure the child/young person that they were right to tell you.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next.

Positive things to say...
"I believe you", "I'm glad you told me", "It's not your fault", "I will try to help you"

Avoid saying...
"Why didn't you tell anyone before?", "I can't believe it", "Are you sure this is true?"

NEVER SAY ...
"I'm shocked", "don't tell anyone else", "I keep it a secret"