

July 2023

## **Forest Fold Baptist Church – Safeguarding**

### **Safe Practice Code of Conduct for Leaders of Young Peoples Groups, including Rooted and Camp Leaders.**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This church is very grateful to all the leaders and helpers of its YP work, for their commitment and service, and the way in which they give so freely their time & energy for the good of the young people.

The way this Christian work is carried out is of tremendous importance. In the Bible Paul urges Timothy to...

***“set ...an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” 1 Tim 4 v12***

It is with this attitude in mind that we set out the Policy and Code of Conduct below.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

***Jesus has a pure and genuine love for all; this is what we seek to emulate.***

The Church Leadership recognises the importance of its ministry to Young People (YPs) and its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all YPs entrusted to the Church's care.

As part of its Mission, the Church is committed to;

- Valuing, listening to and respecting YPs as well as promoting their welfare and protection.
- Safe recruitment, supervision and training for all YP leaders and workers within the Church.
- Adopting a procedure for dealing with concerns about possible abuse, exploitation & inappropriate behaviour/relationships.
- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers.
- Supporting those affected by abuse, exploitation & inappropriate behaviour/relationships.

#### **What do we mean by safeguarding of YPs?**

As a Church we see the question of Safeguarding as wider than just the sexual exploitation of those under 18. The Forest Fold leadership has adopted the view of Thirtyone:eight (Churches Safeguarding Advisory Service) that all YPs, whether under 18 or not, are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation at times by virtue of age, character, circumstances, experiences, sensitivities, trauma, etc. and that abuse and exploitation can be in various forms, ie.

- Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Spiritual, Neglect, Financial, Institutional, Discriminatory.

The Safeguarding threshold at FF is set significantly below criminal activity. If YPs are made to feel uncomfortable by reason of any Leader's behaviour then that falls within the scope of Safeguarding.

### **Key Standards for a safe YP organisation.**

- Having a policy and implementing the policy.
- Developing safeguarding awareness training for YP leaders.
- Management of YP workers.
- Communicating between leaders, and leaders and YPs, effectively and appropriately.
- Responding to concerns.
- Provision of pastoral care.
- Managing those who may pose a risk.

### **Specific code of conduct for leaders of YP groups.**

**Keypad communications** - Keeping 1:1 keypad communications with children and YPs to a minimum and being alert & sensitive to avoid anything that is over-familiar, or inappropriately complimentary, or could be misunderstood in any way as innuendo, or possibly misleading in terms of romantic interest. There is to be no unnecessary late night communications with YPs and no exchange of unhelpful or inappropriate images one to one with children or YPs. All social media contact is to be by group communications as far as possible.

**Alone with individuals** – Taking all reasonable precautions to avoid being alone with a YP. Use a Team approach to managing YP activities ensuring there is sufficient mixed gender leadership cover.

Specific aspects relating to being with the opposite sex include: -

No child or YP is to be at a leader's house on their own, nor any leader meeting a child or YP alone in a secluded or private place. Leaders are to ensure another adult is around ahead of time when there are meetings/ Bible studies, etc.

- avoiding individual YPs being the last or first on drop offs / pick-ups wherever possible. No drivers who are not leaders or parents are permitted to transport under 18s on official YP activities unless specifically approved by the leaders.
- avoid being alone with a YP in the YP/Rooted rooms at FF. A YP/Rooted leader is to be the last to leave the rooms and is to lock the doors on leaving.

If, for any exceptional reason, these standards cannot be avoided, then make another leader aware.

**Tone** – Being watchful that the tone of humour, both by leaders and others they are supervising, is in keeping with purity.

**Drug/Alcohol Use** – Leaders must refrain from alcohol and illicit/recreational drug use at all times when working with YPs.

**Relationships** – Staff & volunteers who provide pastoral counselling or spiritual direction must avoid developing inappropriate relationships with YPs or other leaders. All sexual intimacies, verbal or physical, must be avoided including consensual and non-consensual contact. Keep all physical

contact to a minimum especially anything that could be construed as suggestive or sexually inappropriate.

YP Leaders will assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all relationships including counselling and counselling-related activities.

Of course, single leaders are free to seek romantic Christian friendship with another Christian single of the opposite sex who is over 18. In order to be clear and avoid misunderstanding, if that interest was in someone over which they are a leader, the leader should make his/her intention clear, be open and honest at all times being careful and sensitive to the feelings of all. The leader should let a senior YP leader/elder and one of the Safeguarding team know of the situation beforehand.

**Personal Conversations** – Conversations and/or advice given on personal, spiritual or relationship matters is to be done by people of the same gender unless there are known LGBT issues to consider. Referring to or involving another suitable person as soon as possible is the best general policy. Individuals wanting to give their testimony will be heard initially by an elder with another person present. All personal communications are to have the purpose of developing positive, trusting and caring relationships. Leaders are to be aware of the mixed group setting at Leaders' Meetings.

**Telephone Conversations** – Keeping conversations focussed on the issue in hand and brief to avoid misunderstanding.

**Behaviour Management** - Leaders are to develop a culture where all feel comfortable to point out any unacceptable or inappropriate attitude or behaviour, YP to YP or Leader to YP, and inform the Safeguarding personnel of any concerns. Avoid showing favouritism to any group or individual.

**Group/Event Leadership** – The Leadership of all YP Groups is to be discussed and agreed, before allocation, with the Safeguarding Team, and reviewed from time to time, to ensure an optimum balance of gender and maturity.

**Raising concerns** – If any have concerns about the appropriateness of any Leaders or other YPs conduct or communications it is important they feel free to raise it at any time with the Safeguarding Coordinators and the Pastor John Cowley. A good route for female YPs is to Jo Philpott. For male YPs, issues could be raised in the first instance with Tim David. All Safeguarding matters are to be passed in confidence to the Safeguarding Coordinators who will respond to concerns seriously and sensitively, will show care and compassion and endeavour to have appropriate Pastoral care available.

**Finally** -The safety and well-being of all the YP Groups is paramount in the life of the Church here at FF to uphold principles of justice and righteousness and for the protection and support for all YPs and Leaders in accordance with Christian teaching.

#### **Forest Fold Safeguarding team representatives for YPs**

Tim David 07807 571740 [Tim.david.dt@googlemail.com](mailto:Tim.david.dt@googlemail.com)

Jo Philpott 07833 704208 [joanna\\_philpott@hotmail.com](mailto:joanna_philpott@hotmail.com)

### Safeguarding Co-ordinators –

Jean Hare            07950515392    [jeanhare7@hotmail.com](mailto:jeanhare7@hotmail.com)  
Marilyn Hitchcock   07816 787643    [mhitchcock321@gmail.com](mailto:mhitchcock321@gmail.com)  
David Holman        07955027258    [dsrrtba@btinternet.com](mailto:dsrrtba@btinternet.com)

- (1. The above Code is especially focussed on the need for safeguarding with members of the opposite sex. If a leader struggles with same sex attraction in any significant way that may affect the way they relate to people of the same gender then they should discuss this with a senior leader and realise this Code may apply to the way they conduct themselves with those of the same gender.)

### Declaration

***I have an enhanced DBS check and have read the FFBC's Safeguarding Policy and the Code of Conduct for Leaders of YP Groups. I will act with sensitivity when dealing with children, young people and adults and will avoid anything that could be construed as neglectful, exploitative or abusive. I will abide by FFBC's Safeguarding Policy and the Safe Practice Code of Conduct and I will also avoid situations in which I could be falsely accused of inappropriate behaviour.***

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_