



Hillbank Church  
Cotton Road  
Dundee  
DD3 7BS

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **Updated December 2021**

Child abuse, in any form, is a criminal offence, and if it is suspected or alleged, our policy is to refer the facts and allegations at our disposal to the appropriate statutory investigating authorities

## Introduction

Hillbank Church is a church meeting in Cotton Road, Dundee. The objects of the church include:

- Individual, corporate and family worship and praise of God and the deepening of spiritual life.
- The study and preaching of the Word of God.
- The proclamation of the gospel and evangelistic outreach.
- The promotion of Christian education and training of children, young people and adults.
- The development of Christian character and leadership.

This document covers the work with children and young people (0-17 years old) when they are taking part in activities organised by Hillbank Church.

## General Policy Statement

At the heart of all the work with children and young people are two main objectives:

- 1 A concern for the safety of each young person, together with the mental, moral and spiritual wellbeing of each one.
- 2 The desire to see each child/young person grow into adulthood with a reverence for God and a respect for each other.

These two objectives will better equip each child/young person to relate to each other and to play a responsible role in society and in the church of the future. Essential to these objectives is the provision of an environment where each child/young person may **feel safe and be safe** from any form of abuse.

All activities must therefore have:

- Group leaders and workers with skills and/or qualifications appropriate to the particular activity and endorsed by the Elders.
- A registration form for each child/young person, when they first attend (see Appendix 4). This should include details relating to health problems which leaders should be aware of, and a contact name and telephone number for emergency use. This form should then be signed by the parent/guardian of the child/young person.
- These details should be kept in a safe and secure place by the group leader, such as the church office or an online password protected cloud.
- The forms are confidential and should only be passed to other adults in direct contact with the child/young person

- Registration forms should be destroyed and replaced every 12 months to confirm that the details held are still current and changes are notified.
- Written parental consent for a child/young person to attend activities out with the church premises, or usual location

### **Appointment of Leaders, Workers and Helpers**

All Church leaders and workers working with children and young people within Hillbank Church must be at least 18 years of age. They must be committed to the church and in agreement with the Doctrines and Statement of Faith of the Church (Appendix 1). They must demonstrate a genuine concern for the children/young people and a reasonable level of skill and calling to this service. They must be willing to take part on a regular basis.

The leader of an activity (e.g. Sunday Club Leader) should be appointed by the Elders. At an initial discussion of the appointment, Child Protection issues should be raised and the appointment should only be confirmed following receipt of a signed Declaration (see Appendix 2). Where an existing worker is to be appointed to a new role a signed copy of the Declaration will already be held and a new one is not required.

Church workers should be appointed by the Leader. At an initial discussion of the appointment Child Protection issues should be raised and the appointment should only be confirmed following receipt of a signed Declaration.

Additional helpers may be selected by the Leader. They may be under 18 years of age. They may never be left in charge of a group of children/young people and must be made aware of the main points of the Child Protection Policy (See Appendix 3).

The appointments of Group Leaders and Workers will be subject to receiving PVG membership. All ministry leaders, workers and helpers positions will be reviewed regularly to ensure all parties are satisfied with the arrangements.

### **Guidelines to Ensure Good Practice and Prevent Abuse**

Hillbank Church has a responsibility to ensure the safety of both children/young people and leaders in all activities. Leaders and workers should therefore at all times use common sense in their conduct, maintaining the safety of the children/young people in their care as their first priority.

**Good practice: Do**

- Provide a positive example and Christian witness to children/young people.
- Acknowledge and respect the individuality and dignity of each child/young person.
- Seek to create a healthy, friendly relationship, based on mutual respect between him/her and the children/young people in his/her care.
- Respect each child/young person's right to personal privacy and control over physical contact.
- Take account of each child/young person's age and stage of development during any interaction.
- Care for each child/young person's physical, emotional, social and spiritual welfare while in their care.
- Avoid situations of isolation with a child/young person; try always to stay within earshot or sight of others. If counselling a child/young person on their own, do so in a room with a door open into a public area and, if possible, let someone else know where the child/young person is, with whom and why.
- Avoid unnecessarily travelling in a car alone with a child/young person.
- Encourage and develop a caring, open atmosphere where children/young people feel comfortable to express views or concerns they may have with any of the leaders.
- Avoid actions or conversations which may be misinterpreted by children/young or other adults.
- Protect children/young people from bullying by others
- Refer any matters of concern observed by you or reported to you to the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- Seek to openly communicate with parents

**Bad practice: Don't**

- Permit any bullying or other peer abusive activities.
- Have any excessive or inappropriate physical contact with a child/young person.
- Engage in activities with a high risk of causing physical injuries.
- Make any remarks or be involved in any conversations which may be interpreted as suggestive or sexual in nature (regardless of whether explicit or implicit).
- Take part in or collude with any viewing of pornographic or sexually orientated magazines or material.
- Exaggerate or trivialise child protection issues.
- Agree to keep any secrets between you and a child/young person.
- Agree not to refer any concerns observed by, or communicated to you.
- Show, or be seen to show, favouritism to any individual.

## Guidelines for Overnight Events

In addition to the guidelines of good and bad practice, when running an event where an overnight stay is involved and parents are not present the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- Parental consent forms must be completed for each child/young person present.
- All sleeping rooms must be single-sex.
- Individuals should not enter sleeping rooms used by members of the opposite sex except in situations where the safety or wellbeing of someone is threatened.
- Where possible, leaders should sleep in separate rooms from children/young people.
- Parents must be given an emergency contact number for the group (mobile or landline).
- A complete list (names, addresses and telephone numbers) of all those in the group must be left with a church elder prior to the group leaving for the event.

## Guidelines for Leaders

### I. Where child abuse is suspected

- Child abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual or it may take the form of neglect. Noticeable change may occur in the child/young person's personality. In addition there may be evidence of physical trauma or neglect. A child/young person may use language inappropriate to his/her age or they may draw sexually explicit pictures.
- If a leader has reasonable grounds to suspect that abuse is taking place he/she should **immediately** contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator, who will decide what further action is necessary.
- The leader should take no further action initially, nor speak to anyone else, as **confidentiality** is extremely important.
- Where there is doubt the Child Protection Co-ordinator should seek advice from Dundee integrated Children's Services. 01382 307999.

### II. Where a child/young person alleges that he/she has been abused

- Remain calm and sensitive to what the child/young person is saying, assuring him/her that their words will be taken seriously
- Reassure the child/young person that he/she has done the right thing by reporting the incident and is not to blame.
- Let the child/young person know what further action will be taken.
- Ask the child/young person "Have you told this to anyone else?". Record, as nearly as possible verbatim, all the allegations made by the child/young person, together with any known relevant facts. (see Appendix 6)

- Avoid asking the child/young person to repeat the allegations unnecessarily.
- Affirm the child/young person's feeling (don't tell the child/young person how he/she should feel).
- Keep a note of his/her report, with the date, time and name of the individual to whom the report is given, and of course the action agreed.
- **Do not** show disbelief.
- **Never** ignore a child/young person's allegations, or trivialise them, nor assume that "it could never happen here".
- **Never** promise to keep a child/young person's secrets.
- **Never** enquire into details of alleged abuse, nor attempt a physical examination of a child/young person.
- **Never** speak to, or comment to press or any other parties who do not represent statutory organisations. Parents should only be spoken to under the advice of the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

### **Code of Practice**

#### **To be followed by a Child Protection Co-ordinator when consulted by a Leader regarding the suspicion or allegation of child abuse**

- At the earliest opportunity the Child Protection Co-ordinator will arrange to meet with the Leader/Worker concerned who will submit to him/her a written, signed, dated and timed statement of the circumstances which have caused concern. The urgency of the meeting will be determined by the circumstances. If possible this should not be a telephone conversation.
- At this meeting the Child Protection Co-ordinator will obtain and record all possible further information with regard to the suspicion or allegation, together with any additional relevant facts, including if the incident is possibly under investigation by a statutory body. If additional information is added to the Leader's original statement this should be signed by both the Leader and the Child Protection Co-ordinator.
- Should the Child Protection Co-ordinator not be available the Group Leader/Worker should contact Dundee integrated Children's Services 01382 307999 and seek further guidance.
- The Child Protection Co-ordinator will decide the course of action to be followed and record the reason for their decision. This will be one of the following:
  - a. No further action is required.
  - b. Consultation with/referral to Dundee integrated Children's Services 01382 307999

Whichever of these decisions is taken the Child Protection Co-ordinator will inform the Leader concerned.

- If the decision reached is that consultation with/referral to a statutory body is necessary, Child Protection Co-ordinator will make the approach to the appropriate statutory body.

- Once a decision has been reached a signed copy of all the reports and associated paperwork should be passed to the Child Protection Co-ordinator to be filed.

**Strictest confidentiality must be maintained throughout.**

## **CODE OF PRACTICE**

### **Where an allegation of sexual abuse or serious physical assault is made against anyone associated with Hillbank Church**

- The physical condition of the child/young person should be assessed and medical attention sought where necessary.

Any medical practitioner or hospital staff must be advised of any allegation prior to their treating the child/young person.

- The person must be removed from contact with any children/young people immediately. The person must not be allowed direct access to any child/young person (and must not be allowed to speak to the child/young person at the centre of the allegation) until the matter is fully resolved.
- The Group Leader/Child Protection Co-ordinator should advise the person that the matter will be taken further, explaining that this is a requirement of the general procedures to protect children/young people and does not indicate in any way they are held guilty of an offence.

The Group Leader/Child Protection Co-ordinator may use discretion in keeping the person advised, in general terms only, of the process but must not relate any confidential information obtained from others. It is important that the Group Leader/Child Protection Co-ordinator maintains his/her objectivity during the period of the investigation.

- If the Child Protection Co-ordinator cannot be contacted and immediate action to secure the safety of the child is required then the Group Leader should contact the relevant authorities.

## **Discipline**

All Children/Young People are respected regardless of their age, sex, race, disability, colour, sexuality or religion.

Children/Young People will be held accountable for their own behaviour.

Where a Child/Young Person is misbehaving the following procedure will be adopted:

- The Child/Young Person is warned verbally that his/her behaviour is inappropriate.
- If the behaviour persists, the child/young person is informed that he/she will be removed from the situation.
- If the behaviour continues, the child/young person is placed, for example, at the opposite end of the table from previously.
- If the behaviour continues, the child/young person is removed from the situation.
- Should the child/young person physically resist removal, reasonable restraint will be practised by the Worker to minimise the situation under the supervision of the Leader, or where he/she is not available, another Worker.
- In the last resort, the child/young person's parent/guardian will be asked to either supervise or remove the child/young person.

**In no situation will a Worker ever strike a Child/Young Person.**

## **SAFETY**

The safety of the children/young people in our care is a priority at all times.

- Should any accident occur an incident form must be completed (See Appendix 5) and a copy retained by the church. The Ministry Leader should then contact the parent/guardian of the child/young person either by telephone or letter to give details of the incident.
- All physical activities e.g. swimming must be supervised by a person with the relevant qualifications.
- A Parental consent form is required for all activities out with the church premises (See Appendix 4).
- For all activities out with the church premises the Ministry Leader or a deputy should take with them an emergency contact name and telephone number for each child.
- Travel by car – Drivers should carry a full driving licence and valid insurance and ensure that children travelling in cars are wearing seat belts, or where appropriate, are restrained using an appropriate child restraint, at all times.
- Relevant booster seat regulations should be adhered to when transporting children under the age of 12.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA/PHONE POLICY**

Volunteers should understand that contact with young people through phone calls, texting and via social media or other digital platforms can be wrought with danger.

Ministries wishing to engage with young people via social media should do this through a public/community account with multiple administrators.

Volunteers should not give out their telephone number as the young person may not understand what appropriate use of a telephone number would be and the volunteer could end up being called incessantly or in the middle of the night.

If, in the likely circumstance that the young person finds the volunteer's phone number, email or private social media account, calls and messages should not be encouraged and should be reported to the Ministry Leader/Child Protection Co-ordinator.

## APPENDIX 1

### Doctrines and Statement of Faith of the Church

#### We believe that...

- God is the creator of everything
- The Bible is God's revealed Word and He speaks to us through it
- God exists as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (The Trinity)
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man and after dying to pay the price for our sins, was resurrected from the dead
- Our sins have separated us from God
- Our sins can only be forgiven by repentance, confessing them to God and believing in Jesus as Lord.
- This is possible because Jesus died for our sins on the cross
- We practice baptism by full immersion in water as a symbolic act of entering a new life of faith in Jesus, signifying his and our resurrection.
- The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.
- The church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers — given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.
- The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth

**APPENDIX 2**

**Hillbank Church DECLARATION**

**BY ALL CHILDREN'S/YOUTH WORKERS**

Name  
Address


1. Have you had treatment for any illness during the past 5 years which may have a bearing on your ability to work with children and young people?

Yes  No

If YES, please state

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2. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, or are you at present the subject of criminal charges?

Yes  No

If YES, please state below the nature and date(s) of the offence(s)

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(NB. The disclosure of an illness or offence may be no bar to your appointment)

3. To your knowledge have you ever had any allegation made against you which has been reported to and investigated by, Social Service and/or the Police?

Yes  No

(If yes we will need to discuss this with you)

Do you agree to co-operate in obtaining a PVG check?

Yes  No

**APPENDIX 2 continued...**

4. Please give the name, address, telephone number and position of two people who know you well, who are not members of your family, and who would be able to give a personal reference:

Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Postcode _____	Postcode _____
Telephone No _____	Telephone No _____
Position _____	Position _____
Signed: _____	Date: _____

**Notes:**

1. This post is exempt from the provision of Section 4(ii) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, and you are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the Act. In the event of appointment, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in the withdrawal of approval to work with Children or Young People within Tayside Christian Fellowship.
  
2. a. A Child/Young Person for this purpose means anyone under the age of eighteen  
b. These questions relate to any conduct, whether as a paid employee, a voluntary worker, or otherwise.

## APPENDIX 3

### Hillbank Church

#### Summary of guidelines to ensure good practice and to prevent abuse for volunteers assisting with the Children/Young People's Work in Hillbank Church

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility: you must always take a child/young person seriously. However, as a volunteer you would not be expected to deal with a situation yourself. In the first instance you should speak to the Ministry Leader of the activity you are helping with, they will in turn communicate with the Child Protection Co-ordinator. Action should be taken at the earliest opportunity but without causing alarm amongst other children/young people or Workers; act discreetly.

**If you are concerned about a child/young person do not ignore this.**

#### Guidelines in the event of you becoming aware of abuse or of Suspected abuse

##### DO

- Show acceptance and remain calm.
- Listen and Hear.
- Allow time for the child/young person to speak.
- Reassure them that they are right to share the knowledge.
- Report to the appropriate person.
- Record in writing as soon as possible what was said and/or what you observed in behaviour. Sign and date your record.

##### DON'T

- React with outrage or disbelief.
- Make the child/young person repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Ask probing questions or push for information.
- Promise to keep secrets but assure the child/young person you will share only with someone who can help.
- Speak to anyone else at this stage.
- Mention concerns to parents.
- Try to deal with this on your own.

#### General Points

Display a willingness and accepting attitude however unlikely the story may seem.

Be aware that the child/young person may have been threatened not to tell.

It is best, on the whole, simply to reflect back (repeat) what the child/young person is recounting. eg. "I don't like my cousin coming to stay with us"

- your reflection – "Your cousin stays with you and you don't like that"

Avoid saying                      Why didn't you tell anyone before?

   I can't believe that!

   Are you sure you are telling the truth?

   Why? When? Where? Who? etc.

Be supportive and non-judgemental; and report your concerns as soon as possible to the Ministry Leader of the activity you are helping with.

APPENDIX 4 Sample Registration/parental consent form



**GLOBETROTTERS REGISTRATION FORM 2021-22**

**I give permission for my child/children to attend Globetrotters at Hillbank Church on Thursdays 3.30-4.45 pm.**

**Name of child** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of birth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of child** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of birth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Additional Contact** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any medical or dietary needs that we should be aware of?  
Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please detail them here \_\_\_\_\_

I would like my child/children to be escorted from Rosebank/Our Lady's School to Hillbank Church by Globetrotters Leaders after school each Thursday and I will inform Matty (or another leader) any week they are not attending. Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**During the club and related special activities and outings, photographs might occasionally be taken for publicity purposes and may occasionally be used on the Hillbank Facebook site.**

**If you would prefer your child NOT to be photographed, please tick this box**

**In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations please complete the following statement:- I \_\_\_\_\_ give consent for the above details to be held and used only to make contact regarding Globetrotters, Sunday Club or any other activities and events being held at/or related to Hillbank Church.**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Today's Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 5**  
**Sample Incident/Accident Form**

**Hillbank Church**

To be completed immediately after any accident or significant incident and filed in the incident book retained by the church. The worker should discuss the completed form with the Group Leader.

Day, Date and Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Names, Addresses and Ages of those involved:

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Details of incident (what happened, where, how, who was involved etc.):

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Names of any other workers present:

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Details of any First Aid/Treatment given and by whom:

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Parent/Guardian Informed: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Worker: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Ministry Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 6**  
**Sample Child Protection Report Form – Worker**  
**Hillbank Church**

**To be completed by the Worker to whom the disclosure was made.**

Day, Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Worker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Context of Disclosure: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Content of Disclosure: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When and Where did the Disclosure take place:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of any other persons present when the Disclosure was made:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was ACTUALLY said (Child/Young Person to Worker/Worker to Child/Young Person – record as nearly as possible the exact words used in the conversation):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 7**

**Sample Child Protection Report Form – Ministry Leader**

**Hillbank Church**

**To be completed by the Ministry Leader to whom the disclosure was reported.**

Day, Date and Time of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry Leader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Day, Date and Time of Disclosure: \_\_\_\_\_

From Whom was the Disclosure heard?:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken: (Give a summary of the discussion with the Worker and the Child/Young Person who made the disclosure using, where possible, the words used by the Child/Young Person when reporting the disclosure):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Decision Taken and Reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Agreements reached with the Elder responsible for Child Protection:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Ministry Leader): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Elder): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_