

Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship

Safeguarding Policy September 2026

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Section 1

Place of worship.

Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship
Thropton,
Morpeth,
Northumberland.
NE65 7NA

Email: ahcf.thropton@gmail.com

Safeguarding Lead: Clare Packer
Safeguarding Lead Contact: <See copy in church>

Deputy Safeguarding Lead: Stewart Evans
Deputy Safeguarding Lead contact: <See copy in church>

Insurance Company: Ansvar Insurance

The following is a brief description of our place of worship and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:
Armstrong hall offers a range of church and community orientated activities for all ages and practically facilitates on a regular basis:

- A weekly worship for adults and families of all ages
- A weekly community coffee morning
- A monthly community craft group
- A term time Kids' Club for children aged 3 – 13
- A youth group (AHGOD) for young adults 13 – 18
- A youth club (Midway) for children aged 9 – 13.

Section 2: Governance and Culture

Our commitment

We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults.

We know that people can experience harm, abuse, and neglect.

We believe that everyone should be treated fairly and with respect. We support the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights. These say that everyone should have equal rights and freedoms, whoever they are and whatever their circumstances.

We also support the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This says that every child should be safe, protected from harm and supported to reach their full potential.

This is why Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship follows the safeguarding procedures in this policy, in line with law and guidance.

We are committed to working with statutory and volunteer agencies to help keep children, young people and adults safe.

The policy and any attached practice guidelines are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by thirtyone:eight.org

Our safeguarding statement can be found in **appendix 1**.

Governance

The Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship Leadership Church helps make important decisions and makes sure the organisation follows the law and good practice.

The leadership also helps create the organisation's culture. Culture means "the way we do things around here". It includes our values, behaviours and how people treat one another. A good culture helps keep people safe.

The Leadership has overall responsibility for safeguarding. This includes making sure:

- Safeguarding is taken seriously
- People know how to report concerns
- Workers/volunteers are trained
- Policies are followed
- Risks are managed
- Legal duties are met

This Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Statement are designed to create a safe environment and a positive culture where:

- Leaders set a good example
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- Workers and volunteers are recruited safely
- Workers and volunteers receive the training they need
- People are accountable for their actions
- Workers/volunteers follow the Code of Conduct
- the organisation's values are seen in everyday actions and behaviour
- people feel able to speak openly about concerns

Section 3: Awareness and Prevention

Understanding harm, abuse and neglect

Safeguarding means taking steps to prevent and respond to harm, abuse and neglect.

Anyone can experience harm or abuse. It can happen to children, young people and adults.

Harm and abuse can happen in many places, including:

- at home
- in the community
- in schools, churches and other organisations
- online
- in places where people live or receive care

Harm and abuse can be caused by:

- a family member
- a friend
- someone in a Position of trust
- a carer
- a stranger
- another child or adult

Everyone has the right to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. UK law gives extra protection to children and some adults who may be at greater risk of harm.

For the purposes of this policy, a child is anyone under 18 years old.

An adult at risk of harm is defined as any person aged 18 or over who, due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances, may not be able to take care of or protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation.

We follow the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 19 says that children should be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

We also support the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 5 states that nobody should experience cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

This policy follows the UK safeguarding laws and statutory guidance.

Further information about:

- types of harm and abuse
- signs and indicators of harm and abuse can be found in **appendix 2**

Organisational Awareness

We want everyone who comes into contact with Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship to know that safeguarding is important. We will make sure people know how to get help, raise concerns and find information about safeguarding.

We will share our safeguarding message in the following ways:

- We will publish this policy on our website.
- We will display posters and safeguarding information in our building.
- Safeguarding will be discussed at relevant meetings.
- We will remind workers, volunteers and service users how to report concerns.

Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship will also make sure children and adults at risk of harm know where to get help if they are worried about:

- Abuse
- Harm
- Neglect
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Exploitation
- Any other concern affecting their safety or wellbeing.

We believe that safeguarding information should be easy to find, easy to understand and available to everyone who needs it.

Safeguarding training

Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship is committed to providing safeguarding training for all workers and volunteers. Training people to understand their responsibilities and to know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern. We want everyone in the organisation to understand:

- What safeguarding is
- How to recognise signs of harm, abuse and neglect
- How to respond to concerns
- How to report concerns
- Their role in keeping people safe

All workers and volunteers will receive safeguarding training that is appropriate for their role. This will include induction training and undertake recognised safeguarding training every 3 years.

The organisation will keep records of safeguarding training and make sure people complete the training needed for their role. Safeguarding training is an important part of creating a culture where people are aware of safeguarding issues and know how to help keep others safe.

Safer recruitment

Armstrong Hall is committed to recruiting workers and volunteers safely. Before someone starts to work or volunteer with us we will make sure that they are:

- Committed Christians attending Armstrong Hall or another Church
- Known to the church for a period of six months before working with children, young people and vulnerable adults; where necessary references will be sought
- Aware of their roles and responsibilities
- Subject to an enhanced DBS check completed
- Provided with a copy of the organisations safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns
- Able to undertake the required training as appropriate and can then demonstrate a clear knowledge of how to report concerns
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Understand that initial participation in any relevant activity is for a probationary period agreed at the time of appointment

When carrying out criminal record checks, we will follow the relevant Code of Practice and handle information fairly, securely and lawfully.

Safer recruitment helps us make informed decisions about who works and volunteers in our organisation. It is an important part of our commitment to safeguarding.

Managing those who may pose a risk

Sometimes a person who attends the organisation may be known to pose a risk to children or adults at risk of harm. When this happens, Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship will take steps to help keep everyone safe.

The Leadership will:

- Assess the risks involved
- Seek advice from appropriate agencies and professionals where needed
- Put appropriate safeguarding measures in place
- Clearly explain any boundaries that must be followed
- Monitor the situation to help ensure those boundaries are kept
- Offer wellbeing support or pastoral care where appropriate

Any boundaries or restrictions will be based on:

- A risk assessment
- The need of those who may be at risk
- Advice from relevant external agencies and professionals. Our priority is to protect children and adults at risk of harm while treating all people fairly and with dignity.

Section 4: Management of Workers

Practice Guidelines

As an organisation that works with children, young people and adults at risk of harm, we are committed to good practice. Good practice helps us:

- Keep people safe
- Run activities safely
- Build positive relationships
- Reduce the risk of harm, abuse and neglect
- Reduce the risk of misunderstandings or false allegations
- We have practice guidelines for the activities we run. These guidelines explain how activities should be planned and delivered safely.

See appendix 3.

A registration and consent form is completed by the parent/carer of all children and young people attending Kids' Club, Midway & Youth Group.

See appendix 4.

All workers and volunteers are expected to follow the practice guidelines that apply to their role and activities.

Good practice helps us create a safe, positive and supportive environment for everyone involved in our organisation.

Codes of Conduct

Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship is committed to supporting all workers and volunteers. We will provide support, supervision and training to help people carry out their role safely and well.

All workers and volunteers will receive a Code of Conduct. This explains the standards of behaviour expected when working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm. The Code of Conduct helps workers and volunteers:

- Understand their responsibilities
- Act safely and professionally
- Maintain appropriate boundaries
- Protect the people they work with
- Protect themselves from misunderstandings or unfounded allegations.

All workers and volunteers are expected to:

- Follow the Code of Conduct
- Act in ways that support safeguarding
- Treat people with dignity and respect
- Follow organisational policies and procedures
- Seek advice if they are unsure what to do.

The Code of Conduct applies both during organisational activities and, where relevant, outside of those activities when a person's behaviour could affect their role, the safety of others and the reputation of the organisation. Additional training and support will be provided where needed to help workers and volunteers understand and follow the Code of Conduct.

See appendix 3.

Positions of Trust

All adults who work with children, young people or adults at risk are in a Position of Trust. This means people place trust in them because of their role and responsibilities.

People in a Position of Trust have a responsibility to use their role safely and appropriately. They must always act in the best interests of the people they support.

Workers and volunteers must:

- Maintain professional boundaries
- Treat people with dignity and respect
- Act in a safe and appropriate way
- Avoid behaviour that could be misunderstood
- Never misuse their position, influence or authority
- People in Positions of Trust should be aware that the power they hold can affect the people they support. Because of this, they must take extra care in how they behave and interact with others.

Any behaviour that exploits, manipulates or harms another person is unacceptable and may result in safeguarding action being taken.

It is illegal in England and Wales and Northern Ireland for a person in a Position of Trust within in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old who is under their care or supervision.

All workers and volunteers are expected to understand the responsibilities that come with being in a Position of trust and to act in a way that supports safeguarding at all times.

Whistleblowing/Raising a concern

Armstrong Hall Christian fellowship wants people to feel safe speaking up about concerns.

We encourage workers, volunteers and others to report anything that may put people at risk or go against our values.

We are committed to:

- Promoting an open and honest culture
- Creating a safe environment where concerns can be raised
- Listening to concerns carefully
- Responding fairly and appropriately
- Taking concerns seriously
- Protecting people who raise concerns from unfair treatment, retaliation or mistreatment

Workers and volunteers should report concerns if they believe:

- Someone may be at risk of harm
- Safeguarding procedures are not being followed
- There has been misconduct or poor practice
- Behaviour is putting people or the organisation at risk
- Something does not feel right and needs to be checked

People who raise concerns in good faith will be supported. They will not be treated unfairly because they have reported a genuine concern.

All concerns will be considered carefully and managed in line with organisational policies and procedures.

Our Whistleblowing Policy can be found in Appendix 5 and should be read alongside this policy.

Section 5: Partnership working

We work with a range of organisations and groups. We know that safeguarding practices may differ between organisations, so it is important that everyone understands our safeguarding expectations.

When we work in partnership with others we will:

- Discuss safeguarding arrangements
- Share our safeguarding expectations
- Agree how concerns will be reported and managed
- Work together to keep people safe

Any organisation that uses our premises must have its own safeguarding policy that meets our safeguarding standards.

Section 6: Responding to Concerns

Never investigate a safeguarding concern yourself. If someone tells you about harm, abuse or neglect, your role is to listen, record the information and report it.

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded using the organisation's safeguarding reporting form.

A copy of the form can be found in Appendix 6

If a worker or volunteer receives a disclosure, allegation or concern about harm, abuse or neglect, they should report it as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Lead.

Safeguarding Lead

Name: Clare Packer

Tel: <See copy in church>

Email: squirreldene@hotmail.com

The Safeguarding Lead has been appointed by the leadership to manage safeguarding concerns and make referrals to statutory authorities when needed.

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

If the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, or if the concern involves the Safeguarding Lead, the concern should be reported to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Name: Stewart Evans

Tel: <See copy in church>

Email: stewartevans@protonmail.com

If the concern involves both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Safeguarding Lead, the concern should be made to a member of the leadership.

Support From Thirtyone:eight

Armstrong Hall is a member of Thirtyone:eight, the Safeguarding Lead or other authorised workers may contact the Thirtyone:eight Safeguarding Helpline for advice.

Telephone: 0303 003 1111. Option 2

Recording Concerns

The worker or volunteer should:

1. Listen carefully
2. Take the concern seriously
3. Record the information accurately
4. Complete the safeguarding report form
5. Share the information with the Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead or a member of the leadership as soon as possible.

Concerns should only be shared with people who need to know. All records must be stored securely.

Getting Advice and Making Referrals

The Safeguarding Lead may need to seek advice or share information with other organisations.

Depending on the concern, this may include:

- A member of the leadership
- The organisations insurers
- Local safeguarding professionals
- Statutory agencies

This may include referrals to social services at Northumberland County Council

Children's Social Services, Onecall: 01670 536400

Adult Social Care, Onecall: 01670 536400

Website Address: www.northumberland.gov.uk

If there is an allegation about a person who works with children, the Safeguarding Lead may need to inform the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** Call: **07500 606174** (Monday to Thursday 08:30-17:00, Friday 08:30-16:30) or 01670 536400 (Out of hours)

LADO@northumberland.gov.uk

If the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead is unavailable

The absence of the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead should never delay action to protect someone from harm. If there is an immediate risk, contact the relevant statutory service, Onecall: 01670 536400, emergency services or Northumbria Police: 101, without delay.

Making a Referral Yourself

Anyone can make a referral to safeguarding agencies as a citizen. However, we encourage workers and volunteers to follow this policy wherever possible. If someone believes a concern has not been managed appropriately, or disagrees with a decision about a referral, they may contact an external agency directly.

The Role of the Safeguarding Lead

The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead do not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.

Their role is to:

- Gather information about the concern
- Make sure concerns are recorded properly
- Seek advice where needed
- Share information with relevant agencies
- Make referrals when appropriate
- Support safe decision making

Statutory agencies have the legal responsibility to investigate safeguarding concerns.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child

Concerns About Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional Abuse.

If there are concerns that a child may have experienced physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Deputy will take appropriate action.

They will:

- Make sure the concern is recorded
- Consider the child's immediate safety
- Seek advice from the appropriate safeguarding services where needed
- Make referrals when required

If the child needs urgent medical help, emergency or medical services should be contacted straight away. Medical staff should be told about any safeguarding concerns.

The Safeguarding Lead may contact:

- Contact Children's Social Care
- Thirtyone:eight for advice

If the concern involves a parent or carer, they should not be informed unless safeguarding professionals advise that it is safe to do so.

For lower-level concerns, such as concerns about parenting, families should be encouraged to seek support where this does not place the child at risk.
If there is uncertainty about whether a referral is needed, advice should be sought from safeguarding professionals or Thirtyone:eight.

Concerns About Sexual Abuse

If there is a disclosure, allegations or concern about sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead will act without delay,

They will:

- Contact the relevant children's safeguarding service
- Contact the police where appropriate
- Seek advice from Thirtyone:eight

The child's safety and wellbeing will always be the main priority,

The Safeguarding Lead will consider whether parents or carers should be informed and will seek advice if they are unsure.

Detailed Procedures Where There Is a Concern About an Adult at Risk:

Concerns may involve:

- Physical harm or abuse
- Sexual harm or abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Financial harm or abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Neglect
- Self-neglect
- Exploitation
- Forced marriage
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Other forms of abuse

If there are concerns about an adult at risk, the Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Safeguarding Lead will take action to help[protect them from harm.

If the adult is in immediate danger or has been seriously injured, emergency services should be contacted on **999**.

Where possible, the adult should be involved in decisions about safeguarding concerns.

Their views, wishes and consent should be considered before making a referral.

However, a referral may still be made without consent if:

- The person cannot understand the risk
- The person cannot protect themselves
- Others may also be at risk
- There is a legal duty to share information

Referrals for Adults at Risk

The Safeguarding Lead may contact:

- Adult Social Care **Onecall:** 01670 536400
- Thirtyone:eight for advice

Concerns About Spiritual Abuse

If there is a concern about spiritual abuse the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Make sure the concern is recorded
- Identify appropriate support for the victim-survivor
- Consider counselling, wellbeing support or pastoral support
- Seek advice from Thirtyone:eight
- Consider what safeguarding action may be needed

Allegations Against Workers Who Work with Children

If a concern involves a worker or a volunteer who works with children or young people, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Make a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Share information with the safeguarding agencies as required
- Contact the police where appropriate
- Consider whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The organisation will fully cooperate with any safeguarding investigation.

Allegations Against Workers Who Work with Adults at Risk

If a concern involves a worker or a volunteer who works with adults at risk, the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Liaise with the relevant adult safeguarding service
- Follow safeguarding advice received
- Consider making a referral to the DBS
- Share information with the police where appropriate. Safeguarding investigations are the responsibility of the relevant statutory agencies, not the organisation.

Allegations of Non-Recent Sexual Abuse

If an adult discloses non-recent sexual abuse the Safeguarding Lead will:

- Listen carefully and take the disclosure seriously
- Offer support to the victim
- Explain their options
- Offer the opportunity to talk to the police

If the person does not wish to report the abuse, information about the alleged perpetrator may still be shared where there are safeguarding concerns, but the identity of the victim-survivor should be protected wherever possible.

If the alleged perpetrator currently works with children or adults at risk, the Safeguarding Lead will contact the relevant safeguarding agencies and seek advice about further action.

Section 7: Supporting Victim-Survivors

Supporting Those Affected by Harm and Abuse

Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship is committed to supporting people who have experienced harm, abuse or neglect. We recognise that abuse can have a lasting impact on people and those around them.

We will treat all victim-survivors with:

- Dignity
- Respect
- Compassion
- Sensitivity
- Fairness

Where appropriate, we will:

- Listen to people and take their concerns seriously
- Provide wellbeing support or pastoral care
- Help people access specialist agencies
- Work alongside statutory agencies

We understand that every person's experience is different. Support will be offered in a way that respects the person's wishes, needs and circumstances wherever possible.

Support should never replace the work of the safeguarding agencies, healthcare professionals or other specialist services. However, we will do whatever we can to help people feel safe, supported and listened to.

Adoption of the policy

This policy has been approved by the leadership of Armstrong Hall Christian Fellowship.

The policy will be reviewed annually on 1st September to make sure it:

- Remains up to date
- Reflects current safeguarding guidance
- Reflects changes in legislation
- Continues to meet the needs of the organisation.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Date: 1st September 2026

