

RE:HOPE

NEXT GENERATION BIBLE CHURCH

Re:Hope Church Glasgow
37 Stewartville Street
Glasgow
G11 5PL
Charity Number: SC037327

Under-18s Child Protection Policy

Reviewed January 2021

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Designated Child Protection Officers (DCPOs)

West End: Rachel Millar
Southside: Molly Mitchell
Royston: Alison Meldrum
Belfast:

Phone Numbers for Referral:

Glasgow and Partners Emergency Social Work: 0300 343 1505
Police: 101

Section 1 - Policy Statement

As people of Re:Hope Next Generation Bible Church we are concerned with the wholeness and safety of every individual within God's purposes. We therefore seek to safeguard all who are part of our community, especially under-18s and those legally considered vulnerable.

It is the duty of all persons working with children, young people to prevent abuse and report any suspected abuse to their supervisor, ensuring that it is in turn reported to the police or other relevant authority.

Our church is committed to valuing, listening to and respecting vulnerable people, including children, young people and adults at risk, as well as promoting their welfare and protection. This involves safe recruitment, supervision and training where necessary of all servers and staff workers in contact with vulnerable people within the church; the use of and adherence to correct procedure for dealing with suspected and confirmed abuse; supporting those affected by abuse in the church; following correct procedures to ensure information privacy for everyone in the church.

1.1 Re:Hope Next Generation Bible Church will:

- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their obligations to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation.
- Develop best practice in relation to the recruitment of all staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to work to the standards and procedures detailed in the organisation's Child Protection Policy and Volunteer's Handbook.
- Ensure that the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) for each campus understands his/ her role and responsibilities.
- Report incidents of concern, disclosures or allegations of abuse to the appropriate authorities. It is not Re:Hope's responsibility to investigate them.
- Provide opportunities for all staff and volunteers to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the care and protection of children and young people.
- Ensure that all parents/carers get access, when requested to guidelines and procedures.
- Support staff and volunteers during the process of any child protection investigation or inquiry as appropriate.
- Co-operate fully with any police and/or social work investigation or enquiries as appropriate.
- Endeavour to keep up to date with national developments relating to the care and protection of children and young people.

1.2 Legal and Practice Framework

- This policy has been written in accordance with the following legislation:
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) (Scotland) Act 2007
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)

1.2.1 In all matters relating to decisions regarding children and young people who may or may not have been abused, the child or young person's welfare will be the paramount consideration in line with the Children (Scotland) Acts 1995 and 2014.

1.2.2 In reaching any decision regarding a child or young person due regard will be given to the child or young person's view, taking into account their age and maturity in line with the Children (Scotland) Acts 1995 and 2014.

1.2.3 Re:Hope's procedures and practice will be in line with Getting It right For Every Child (GIRFEC) – the national approach in Scotland for supporting the well-being of children and young people. (See Appendix 1).

1.3 The Scope of Re:Hope's Child Protection Policy and Procedures

When children and young people are in contact with Re:Hope they should have the highest standard of care and protection given to them from adult staff and volunteers. With this in mind this policy is applicable to all activities (group and individual) and events run in the name of Re:Hope.

When groups, individual work or activities are taking place in the school day and with the knowledge of school staff Re:Hope staff and volunteers will comply with the school's child protection policy and procedures in the first instance.

When a group or event is registered with Scripture Union Scotland and is being run in their name Re:Hope staff and volunteers will comply with SU Scotland's child protection policy and procedures in the first instance.

1.4 Re:Hope's Child Protection Policy and Procedures address 3 separate issues:

- **A Disclosure:** by a child or young person of alleged abuse which has occurred/is occurring out with Re:Hope.
- **A Concern:** by Re:Hope staff or volunteer that a child or young person may be being, has been or is at risk of being abused.
- **An Allegation:** by a child or young person about a member of Re:Hope staff or a Re:Hope volunteer.

Section 2 - Definitions of Abuse

Re:Hope accepts the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) where a child is defined as someone under the age of 18. However, 16 and 17 year olds can give consent in circumstances outlined in the policy and procedures below.

Re:Hope accepts the definition and categories of abuse detailed with the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) "Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or more rarely, a stranger. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur."

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age - or developmentally - inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of indecent images or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from „non-organic failure to thrive“, where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation. This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life threatening within a relatively short period of time.

Section 3 – Appointment of Leaders

It is important to us that we know and trust those who we allow to work with our under-18s.

3.1 Application Process

Our application process for those wishing to work with these groups is as follows:

1. Applicant fills out our application form and is directed to our child protection policy.
2. Applicant's references are applied for.
3. Informal interview to establish previous history of working with children, motivation, suitability for the role, and to explain what the role involves.
4. Applicant applies for PVG membership (if not scheme member) or a PVG scheme record update (if already a scheme member). This includes verifying the identity of the applicant. In line with The Disclosure (Scotland) Act, it is mandatory for those carrying out regulated roles with children to be a member of the PVG scheme.

5. Applicant's references, form and disclosure are checked - if satisfactory, the applicant is appointed to the role. Re:Hope staff and volunteer positions working with Under 18's are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by the Exclusions and Exceptions (Scotland) Order 2013. The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 also applies.

3.2 Training and supervision

- Staff and Volunteers will be provided with appropriate levels of training and supervision for the tasks they need to undertake. This includes ensuring they are aware of child safety issues.
- All staff and volunteers are to follow the practical guidelines for appropriate conduct.
- It is best practice to always work alongside another leader, and for no leader to be left unsupervised.
- All staff and volunteers will undergo annual child protection training.
- All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy which includes the Code of Practice and the Volunteer's Handbook and will understand how this translates into practice.

3.3 Removal of workers

If it emerges at any point that a worker or member of staff is inappropriate for the role they occupy, for whatever reason, they will be immediately removed from their position as part of the standard disciplinary procedure. If necessary, boundaries will be set in church attendance and contact with attendees to maintain safety and well-being and fulfil our duty to protect children at risk of harm.

Section 4 - Talking with an independent person

Occasionally a child may seek independent counsel from a volunteer or member of staff. It is important that people can talk about their concerns in a safe place and the church is often an appropriate community for providing that. It is best practice to pass all such meetings should be passed on to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) or an appropriate member of staff. If speaking privately with someone under 18, the following guidelines are to be followed for your and their protection:

1. If at all possible, have another leader with you.
2. Ensure other people know you are speaking - preferably their parent/guardian. They do not need to know the topic.
3. It is best practice to speak at the church where other people are present nearby.

4. With some young people it may also be appropriate to meet in a public place such as a coffee shop. In this case the appropriate parental permission should be sought.
5. Do not meet alone with a person of the opposite gender.
6. Individual support should NEVER take place at the home of a Re:Hope staff member or volunteer.
7. Respect the boundaries, privacy and confidentiality of the person you are speaking with, bearing in mind that some difficult situations will require discussion with someone else on the team, such as your team leader.
8. Avoid physical contact with the child or vulnerable adult.
9. If there are any concerns during an individual piece of support that falls within the remit of Re:Hope's Child Protection Policy and Procedures, the member of staff or volunteer MUST inform the DCPO immediately or as soon as is practicably possible.
10. Any other concerns that arise should be recorded and reported to the appropriate person at the earliest opportunity.
11. It is not appropriate for a child/young person to have personal contact details of Re:Hope staff or volunteers. It is the responsibility of the staff member/volunteer to ensure they never give their personal email address, landline or mobile number to a child/young person. Re:Hope recognises that in some instances children and young people may already know where staff or volunteers live. In these cases, it is the responsibility of the staff member/volunteer to ensure they never say anything to encourage a child/young person to turn up at their home. If this does happen the child/young person should not be given access to the house and the DCPO should be informed immediately. It will be the responsibility of the DCPO/the elders to follow this up with the child/young person and the parents/carers.

Section 5 - Code of Practice

In all contact with children and young people Re:Hope staff and volunteers are required to display the highest standards of practice putting the care, welfare and safety of children and young people first. This means that Re:Hope staff and volunteers will:

- Be a positive role model and Christian witness (where applicable) to children and young people
- Play their part in developing an ethos where all children and young people matter, are treated equally and with respect and dignity
- Respect a child/young person's right to be involved in making choices and decisions which directly affect them
- Listen attentively to the ideas and opinions any child/young person wants to share with them
- Respect a child's culture, faith and religious beliefs
- Respond sensitively to any anxieties a child/young person has
- Speak to the DCPO if they suspect a child/young person is experiencing bullying or harassment at a Re:Hope activity
- Refer any concerns observed or communicated to them to the DCPO

- Be mindful of the safety of the children and young people at all times, and in all circumstances.
- Respect the boundaries, privacy and confidentiality of children and young people.

As a Re:Hope staff member or a Re:Hope volunteer it is unacceptable on any occasion to:

- Exaggerate, trivialise or ignore child protection concerns, allegations or disclosures
- Discuss personal issues about a child/young person or their family with anyone other than the DCPO, the elders or the person in charge of an activity or event where you have concerns about a child/young person
- Allow a child/young person to be bullied or harmed by anyone in the organisation
- Form inappropriate emotional or physical relationships with children and young people
- Harass or intimidate a child/young person or Re:Hope volunteer because of their age, race,
- gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, socio-economic class or disability
- Allow a child to use foul, derogatory or sexualised language, unchallenged.
- Invite or allow a child or young person to stay with you at your home.

5.1 Practical Guidelines for appropriate conduct

- Avoid being on your own with any child or young person.
- Have two or more leaders present with a group whenever possible, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on the premises.
- If a parent who is not a leader wishes to accompany their child, they may only help their own child or act as a supervised observer.
- Never take a child or young person home on your own - you should have another helper with you, or else ensure that the last two people are dropped off together. It is better to seat the child or young person in the back.
- Encourage children and young people to enforce their own personal boundaries, for example by saying 'no'.
- Children and young people should not be taken on trips or away from the premises without prior written permission of parents/guardians and the authorisation of church leadership. *Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling a young person) ensure that others know when and where the interview is taking place, and that someone else is around in the building.
- Be wise in your physical contact with children and vulnerable adults. Physical contact can be natural and healthy, but must be kept appropriate at all times. It should also be initiated by the child or young person. Avoid physical contact in private.

- Do not show favouritism to some children or young people at the expense of others.
- Be wise with your words and actions around children or young people, especially those of the opposite gender.
- Never smack, hit or physically discipline a child or young person.
- If a child or young person is in immediate physical danger or is at risk of causing immediate physical danger to another person, it may be appropriate to temporarily hold them still.
- If you feel that a child or young person may have a "crush" on you, inform the DCPO and seek advice and guidance.
- Maintain a level of personal care (e.g. toileting) appropriate for the age and ability of the child or young person. If this is unclear, check with their parent or guardian.
- Children and young people must have parent/guardian consent in written form before being photographed or videoed.
- Photographs or videos of children and young people should only be taken in group settings by designated photographers. Volunteers must not take photographs on their mobile phones. • Monitor and restrict computer and internet access for children in your care as appropriate by age.
- Inform the DCPO immediately if you see or discover an issue of concern, including suspected abuse,
- Inform the DCPO immediately if you see another worker acting in a way which could be seen as inappropriate

5.2 Social Media and communication

- Do not follow or befriend children on Facebook or Instagram.
- Do not communicate privately with children via any social media or communication channel.
- If you have public social media accounts (e.g. Instagram), keep your online presence consistent with Christian standards for behaviour and living.
- Do not take or store still or moving images of children on your personal device. If you are asked to do this for social media purposes, they must be deleted once they are uploaded to the Re:Hope Flickr account.

5.3 Online U18s Ministry

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some U18s events may be risk assessed and deemed safer to be held online. In this case, the following guidelines are to be followed:

1. Age limits for social media platforms will be respected.
2. All contact with young people online will take place via Re:Hope U18s staff and approved volunteers.
3. U18s will not be added on personal social media accounts.
4. Staff and volunteers will ensure that they have appropriate physical presentation in all pre-recorded and live videos.
5. Video conferencing will take place via Zoom only. There must be parental

- permission for U18s to take part in video conferencing events.
6. For all video conferencing events, there must be at least 2 PVG checked staff members or volunteers. If 'breakout room' feature is used, there must still be two PVG checked staff members or volunteers present per 'breakout room'.
 7. Video calls will always be password protected, meaning only those who have been sent the information can access.
 8. Video calls will always be set up by Re:Hope U18s staff/volunteers who will have the ability to mute/block a participant if they are displaying/sharing anything inappropriate or illegal. This will be recorded and reported as per Child Protection Policy.
 9. Video calls will always be scheduled using a Re:Hope account, and not staff/volunteer's personal accounts.
 10. Video calls will not be recorded.
 11. Any Child Protection concerns may be recorded in writing and followed as per Re:Hope U18s Child Protection Policy.

Commented [1]:
Adapted this from code of practice.

Section 6 - Child Protection Procedures

6.1 Introduction

This policy and procedure document provides instructions on the action Re:Hope staff and volunteers are required to take in situations of allegations, concerns or disclosures as defined in Section 1.4 of this policy.

6.1.1 These procedures are designed to ensure that:

- The welfare of children and young people is protected
- Re:Hope staff and volunteers have access to the appropriate information and guidance and are supported in these situations
- Decisions are taken within a consultative framework

6.1.2 Confidentiality

- Children and young people may ask an adult to promise confidentiality before disclosing abuse. This is usually requested by asking for a promise not to tell anyone else. Re:Hope staff and volunteers must NEVER promise to keep secrets.
- Re:Hope recognises that children and young people are entitled to expect privacy as well as protection, so Re:Hope's policy is that information will only be passed on to people on a need to know basis.
- No children's worker is permitted to divulge any information concerning a child, vulnerable adult, their family or anything a child or vulnerable adult may tell them to anyone other than the DCPO or the church leadership. This confidentiality is a continuing requirement at all times and is required when workers are "off duty" or no longer involved in the

work. However, workers cannot promise to keep secrets or conceal disclosed information, and are expected to report any concerns to the DCPO immediately.

6.1.3 Responsibility

- In all situations it is the responsibility of Re:Hope to ensure that the practice and decisions of staff and volunteers are within Re:Hope's policies and procedures.
- It is recognised that Re:Hope staff or volunteers may be called on to give evidence or to help support a child or young person during any child protection investigation or inquiry initiated. They may also be called to give evidence in subsequent court proceedings. Re:Hope will seek to support any member of staff or volunteer through any such proceedings.

6.2 A Disclosure of Alleged Abuse

Where a child or young person discloses an incident of abuse or potential abuse this information must be passed to the DCPO immediately or on the same day.

- Where a member of staff or volunteer informs the DCPO that a child or young person has made a disclosure it is important to take time to allow that person to relate exactly what has been said and in what context. Consider what has been said, find out the context of the disclosure, how the staff member or volunteer concerned handled the situation and what they said if anything. Check that the child or young person has been told that the information was being passed on.
- If/when speaking to the child or young person say as little as possible, do not ask closed or searching questions or put words into the child/young person's mouth. It is good practice to ask; "have you told this to anyone else?" and "do you know what they are doing about it?"
- Where information is passed to the DCPO and where there are grounds for concern a referral will be made to the relevant external authorities (local social work department and/or police).
- The DCPO should keep the child or young person as informed as possible of the action being taken.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the child/young person is appropriately cared for and supported and where appropriate to continue their involvement with any current Re:Hope activity.
- All conversations with the child/young person and between staff and volunteers should be accurately recorded on the appropriate form on the same day.
- Any discussion with parents will be considered by the DCPO and if appropriate in discussion with external agencies.

6.3 A Concern that Abuse is Occurring or has Occurred

In the course of their duties Re:Hope staff or volunteers may become concerned about the children or young people they are responsible for. These concerns should be passed to the DCPO immediately or as soon as possible. These concerns could include:

- Observations and changes in a child/young person's behaviour and/or presentation
- Witnessing an incident involving the parent/carer and/or child
- Concerns expressed by a third party (e.g. another child or young person)
- Concerns about a child or young person need to be addressed without delay. Evidence of physical abuse may only be visible for a limited time.
- Where a member of staff or volunteer expresses a concern about a child/young person to the DCPO it is important to take time to allow that person to relate exactly what the basis of this concern is. Consider what has been said, establish the context in which the concern arose,
- how the staff member or volunteer concerned handled the situation and what they said if anything. Check that the child or young person has been told that the information was being passed on.
- If/when speaking to the child or young person do not ask closed or searching questions or put words into the child/young person's mouth. Consider whether any explanations given by the child/young person seem reasonable or likely in the context of what has been seen or heard and record/report this accurately.
- Where information is passed to the DCPO and where there are grounds for concern a referral will be made to the relevant external authorities (local police and/or social work department). • The DCPO should keep the child or young person as informed as possible of the action being taken.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the child/young person is appropriately cared for and supported and where appropriate to continue their involvement with the Re:Hope activity.
- All conversations with the child/young person and between staff and volunteers should be accurately recorded on the appropriate form on the same day.
- Any discussion with parents will be considered by the DCPO and if appropriate in discussion with external agencies.

6.4 An Allegation (made about Re:Hope staff or volunteer)

Allegations of Assault or Verbal Abuse

- Assess the child/young person's physical condition: if injury has occurred medical assistance must be sought immediately. The medical practitioner or A&E staff must be advised of any allegation PRIOR to their treating the child or young person.
- As a general principle Re:Hope staff and volunteers must err on the side of providing a safe environment for children and young people and decisions must be taken from this perspective. • The staff member or volunteer concerned must be immediately removed from contact with this child/young person and any others present.
- The staff member or volunteer should be accompanied by another adult at all times until they leave the situation/event.
- The DCPO should be informed immediately or as soon as the situation allows (as above).
- The DCPO will discuss the incident with the responsible person at the time and where appropriate interview the staff member or volunteer involved, the child/young person involved and any witnesses. In all cases 2 adults should be present so there is a witness to the interview and notes can be taken.
- Should it appear at any stage that an offence might have been committed and the police should be involved, no further questions should be asked.
- When interviewing anyone involved in the situation do not ask searching questions or put words in their mouth.
- Under no circumstances should a member of staff or volunteer collude in keeping the matter "a secret" between them and the child/young person. You must explain that you have a responsibility to protect them and others and that you must, where appropriate, take the matter further. At the same time reassure the child/young person that the matter will be treated confidentially and only shared with those who need to know.
- If it is alleged that sexual behaviour has occurred, the young person must not wash, shower or swim as this may affect the gathering of evidence during any possible medical examination.
- Suggest to the child/young person that he/she should not talk to others about what they have shared.
- The child/young person must not be allowed to talk to the alleged perpetrator, even if he/she requests this.
- It is important to ascertain if and who the child or young person has already spoken to. Appropriate action will be taken to reduce any unnecessary anxiety and/or speculation at an event or activity.
- The staff member or volunteer involved will be kept informed of the situation at the discretion of the DCPO. However confidential information received from others must not be passed on.

- Re:Hope acknowledges that this will be a traumatic time for the staff member or volunteer concerned (and they may be entirely innocent of any blame) so appropriate support will be provided. It is also important that the DCPO remains objective at all times.
- Where further investigation is required the concerned member of staff or volunteer should not have direct contact with children or young people until the matter is fully resolved.
- The decision to contact external agencies will be made by the DCPO who will keep the church leadership informed of the situation.
- All conversations with the child/young person and between staff and volunteers must be accurately recorded on the appropriate form on the same day.
- Any discussion with parents will be considered by the DCPO and if appropriate in discussion with external agencies. Parents/carers will be contacted immediately in all situations where the matter is to be taken further.
- If a member of Re:Hope staff or a Re:Hope volunteer observes actions or behaviour in another member of staff or volunteer which gives cause for concern or a sense of unease, they should discuss these with the DCPO.

Section 7 - Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

If inadequacies in the policy emerge, these may be adjusted as they are found.

Appendix A - GIRFEC

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) supports families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. The aim is to help them to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential.

Wellbeing (SHANARRI)

The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) approach supports children and young people so that they can grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and can realise their full potential. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be:

Safe

Healthy

Achieving

Nurtured

Active
Respected
Responsible
Included

These eight factors are often referred to by their initial letters – SHANARRI.

They are wellbeing indicators which help make it easier for children and families and the people working with them to discuss how a child or young person is doing at a point in time and if there is a need for support.

Each child is unique and there is no set level of wellbeing that children should achieve. Wellbeing is influenced by children's individual experiences and changing needs as they grow.

[\(https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/wellbeing-indicators-shanarri/\)](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/wellbeing-indicators-shanarri/)

Appendix B - Child Protection Procedure Flow

Chart



Rachel to be informed if DCPO decides to take action to contact parents/carers or other relevant services

