



Safeguarding Children Policy

Approved by the Kirk Session June 2026

Review every 3 years

1. Policy Statement

Hill Street Presbyterian Church (HSPC) believes that everyone has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and to keep them safe.

Children should never experience abuse of any kind. The Church is committed to safeguarding all children and protecting them from harm.

It is the policy of HSPC to safeguard all children and young people who interact with its ministry in any form. This includes actively protecting children from all forms of harm or abuse.

This commitment is demonstrated through the provision of this policy and its accompanying procedures. These are designed for all those involved in children's and youth ministry, ensuring that young people can engage safely, free from the threat of abuse.

2. Biblical Basis for Safeguarding

HSPC affirms that safeguarding is a biblical imperative and central to its mission.

Safeguarding reflects the Church's calling and demonstrates the character of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Bible is used as a key reference point for guiding safeguarding practices—not only as a legal and ethical duty, but as a core part of the Church's identity.

Examples of biblical guidance include:

- Love your neighbour as yourself (*Leviticus 19:18; Luke 10:27; Galatians 5:13–15*)
- Treat others as you would want to be treated (*Matthew 7:12*)
- Meet the needs of others (*Romans 15:1–2; Philippians 2:3–4*)
- Seek justice and correct oppression (*Psalms 89:14; Isaiah 1:17; Micah 6:8*)
- Protect the weak and those in need (*Psalms 82:3–4; Matthew 18:10*)

3. Legal Context

This policy and its procedures are informed by key legislation and guidance designed to protect children:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland* (October 2024)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

4. Core Principles

HSPC welcomes all children and young people, regardless of background.

4.1 Key Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children have equal rights to protection from harm
- Some children may be more vulnerable due to additional needs or circumstances
- The voices of children and young people are essential and must be heard
- Engagement should always be safe, inclusive, and supportive

4.2 Guiding Principles from The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

- The child's welfare is paramount
- The child's voice should be heard
- Families should be supported to stay together where possible
- Children must be protected from harm at all times
- Partnership with statutory services is essential
- Prevention should be a key focus
- Responses must be proportionate and informed

5. Church Commitments

HSPC will:

1. Appoint Designated Persons for safeguarding

2. Maintain robust recruitment, vetting, and monitoring procedures
3. Provide access to safeguarding training at least every 3 years
4. Implement clear reporting procedures (internal and external)
5. Assess and manage risks to children and young people
6. Safely manage individuals who may pose a risk
7. Respond appropriately to non-recent abuse disclosures
8. Protect children from other countries involved in ministries and missions
9. Provide safe ways for children to express concerns and be heard
10. Ensure confidential and secure information management

This policy is implemented through detailed procedures and will be displayed at various points throughout the church buildings.

6. Review

- This policy will be reviewed every **three years** by the Kirk Session
- The Designated Person(s) will advise on required updates

6.1 Procedures Review

- Reviewed at least every three years by the Kirk Session, taking advice from the Safeguarding Administration Team.
- Updated as needed for legislative or best practice changes

Kirk Session is responsible for ensuring relevant updates are communicated effectively and promptly to the congregation.