

# Child Safeguarding Statement – Grace Bible Fellowship

## Name of service being provided:

Sunday School and youth activities associated with Grace Bible Fellowship and with other congregations linked to Grace Bible Fellowship

## Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

### *Services Provided*

- Sunday School classes on Sunday morning
- Occasional outings for Sunday School children
- Youth club meetings
- Residential weekends for young people attending the youth club
- Occasional outings for youth club

### *Principles and Policies followed*

In addition to this Safeguarding Statement, the principles and policies followed by the Church in relation to Child Safeguarding are set out in three documents:

1. Grace Bible Fellowship Child Protection Policy
2. Grace Bible Fellowship Childcare Guidelines
3. Grace Bible Fellowship Guidelines for leaders on photography, computers, phones and internet

## Risk assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child or vulnerable adult while availing of our services. Overleaf is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	ACTIVITY	RISK	RISK RANKING (NOTE 1)	WHO OWNS THE RISK	CURRENT CONTROLS (NOTE 2)	PROPOSED ACTIONS AND PROTOCOL
1	Children moving from the main service to their Sunday School class on Sunday mornings	Unsupervised children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from other adults in the building	Medium	Sunday School superintendent, parents and church leadership		Parents must sign their child into SS on arrival at church. Children leave with their teachers who accompany them to the classroom. All teachers and teaching assistants are to be vetted. Where children arrive at church without their parents, they may sign themselves in provided a general permission to do so has been signed by a parent.
2	Children in their Sunday School classroom	Children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from their teachers or teaching assistants	Low	Sunday School superintendent and church leadership		Windows have been placed in each door. These windows must not be covered. Younger classes must have two persons (teacher and teaching assistant) in the class. No teacher or teaching assistant may be alone in a classroom with a child, when no other persons are present and the door is closed.
3	Young children being accompanied to the toilet during Sunday School	Children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from their teachers or teaching assistants	High	Sunday School superintendent and church leadership		Children only to be accompanied by a vetted teacher or teaching assistant.
4	Children being returned to their parents after Sunday School is finished	Unsupervised children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from other adults in the building	High	Sunday School superintendent		Children 11 years and under must be collected from Sunday School. Those over 11 may return unaccompanied.
5	Children in the building after the end of the Sunday Service	Unsupervised children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from other adults in the building	Medium	Parents and church leadership		Restrictions on movement of children around the building. Sunday School children to remain on the ground floor (main hall, multi-function room and main corridor) except youth who will be permitted to use the basement.
6	Children, whilst on outings	Unsupervised children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse by strangers; abuse also possible from those accompanying them, when alone with them	Medium	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		Children should never be unaccompanied. Where unvetted parents are assisting, they must be accompanied by a vetted person
7	Sunday School children being given lifts in cars by workers or parents	Children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from drivers, when alone with them	High	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		No child should be in a car alone with an adult other than a parent, either male or female.

	ACTIVITY	RISK	RISK RANKING (NOTE 1)	WHO OWNS THE RISK	CURRENT CONTROLS (NOTE 2)	PROPOSED ACTIONS AND PROTOCOL
8	Youth at youth club being in areas of the building without supervision	Teenagers at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from other teenagers or other users of the building	Medium	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		Young people will remain within the zone designated for youth activities. All workers must be vetted and no other persons will be allowed in the zone except for parents and invited helpers, who should be accompanied by a vetted persons.
9	Youth being given lifts in cars by workers or parents	Teenagers at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse from drivers, when alone with them	High	Youth Worker, youth club leadership, and church leadership		No child should be in a car alone with an adult, either male or female, other than their parent. Best practice is if a child is getting a lift from another parent they drop other children off before their own, and reverse when collecting.
10	Youth on outings	Unsupervised children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse by strangers; abuse also possible from those accompanying them, when alone with them	Medium	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		Individuals or groups should never be left unsupervised. All adults on such trips must be vetted.
11	Youth on residential activities	Unsupervised children at risk from emotional, physical or sexual abuse by adults in the residential facility, including those linked to the trip	High	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		No adult alone with one youth except in a public place. Adequate security of bedrooms at night. Other adults occasionally assisting at the event must be accompanied by a vetted leader at all times – e.g. external speakers, bands, parents helping out with catering, etc.
12	Internet usage	Risk of cyber-bullying	High	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		See guidelines on photography and internet
13	Social Media	Risk of unwanted social media interaction including pornography	High	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		See guidelines on photography and internet
14	Counselling of vulnerable adults	Risk of emotional, physical or sexual abuse from counsellor	Medium	Church leadership		No private counselling except in a public place and accompanied by an adult whose duty is to protect the interests of the vulnerable adult
15	Youth leader meetings	Junior leaders at risk of emotional, physical or sexual abuse by adult leaders	High	Youth Worker, youth club leadership and church leadership		Adult leaders should never be alone with a junior leader except in a public place. Occasionally circumstances will mean that this may occur for a short period – e.g. they are the first two to arrive for a meeting – but meetings should be organized to minimize this.
16	Sexual offender attending church	Children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk from grooming	High	Child Protection Committee and church leadership		Offender may be required to sign contract, as in Annex 4 or suitably amended.

Note 1: In ranking each risk, we have considered the likelihood of each risk occurring and how serious the consequences could be Note 2: to be completed by Sunday School teachers and youth workers

## **Procedures**

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

### **Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service**

1. Details as reported to be logged in the incident file.
2. If the CPO as designated person, considers that an accusation MAY be vexacious or implausible, she or he will seek the guidance of the Child Care Committee (CPC), who will make the decision on whether to proceed or not, and inform the relevant mandated person in the church of their decision.
3. Where the CPO and/or the CPC consider there are reasonable grounds for concern, they will facilitate staff and volunteers to report to Tusla using the Report Form (available at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)) and inform the relevant mandated person in the church that this action is being taken.
4. Where there is doubt in the mind of the CPO and/or the CPC they will contact Tusla informally to discuss their concern, and inform the relevant mandated person in the church that this action is being taken.
5. Where the person reporting the suspected abuse, or the mandated person, is unhappy with the decision with any of the above persons or bodies, they will be facilitated in making their own report

Where allegations relate to another congregation associated with Grace Bible Fellowship, reporting shall in the first instance be to the designated liaison person of that congregation, and then to the CPO appointed by Grace Bible Fellowship, who will then follow the procedure set out in steps 1 to 5 above.

### **Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children**

To work with children, we will only employ or use as volunteers, persons who have been vetted by the National Vetting Bureau. At the discretion of the Child Safety Committee, such persons may also be required to provide evidence of police clearance in other jurisdictions in which they have been resident for more than three months. All persons who have been attending the church for less than two years are also required to provide references of good character.

### **Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm**

Key persons employed or used as volunteers to work with children, (including the CPO, members of the CPC, Church Leaders, Sunday School Superintendant and certain leaders of the youth work) must complete the Tusla online Children First training course and provide certified evidence of completion. Other teachers and youth workers will be required to attend a training evening organized by the church.

All such persons will also be shown child protection policies and guidelines drawn up by the church including the Child Safeguarding Statement and must sign a statement agreeing to adhere to them.

## **Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla**

Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child associated with the church has been abused in circumstances that does not involve the church (e.g. domestic, school), the following steps will be taken

1. If the CPO as designated person, considers that an accusation MAY be vexacious or implausible, she or he will seek the guidance of the Child Care Committee (CPC), who will make the decision on whether to proceed or not, and inform the relevant mandated person in the church of their decision.
2. Where the CPO and/or the CPC consider there are reasonable grounds for concern, they will facilitate staff and volunteers to report to Tusla using the Report Form (available at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)) and inform the relevant mandated person in the church that this action is being taken.
3. Where there is doubt in the mind of the CPO and/or the CPC they will contact Tusla informally to discuss their concern, and inform the relevant mandated person in the church that this action is being taken.
4. Where the person reporting the suspected abuse, or the mandated person, is unhappy with the decision with any of the above persons or bodies, they will be facilitated in making their own report
5. If it is decided to proceed, and the child is considered to be in immediate danger if returned home, the Gardai will be notified immediately and child asked to wait rather than return home.

Where allegations relate to another congregation associated with Grace Bible Fellowship, reporting shall in the first instance be to the designated liaison person of that congregation, and then to the CPO appointed by Grace Bible Fellowship, who will then follow the procedure set out in steps 1 to 5 above.

## **Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons**

The CPO as designated person will maintain and make available for inspection when requested, a list of persons within the church who are mandated persons.

## **Procedure for appointing a relevant person**

The Child Protection Officer is appointed by the membership of the church on an annual basis

The Child Protection Committee is appointed by the membership of the church on an annual basis

## **Implementation**

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on **30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

(Provider)

[Provider's name and contact details]

For queries, please contact Sandra Blackwell (Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.)

## **ANNEX 1 - Grace Bible Fellowship Child Protection Policy**

### **Philosophy and core values**

Children are an integral and vital part of the church; Jesus made this clear by rebuking those who tried to prevent them coming to him. They are included in regular church gatherings - worship services, lunches, weekends away, etc. They also participate in specific activities aimed at fostering their spiritual development - Sunday school, youth activities, etc.

In participating in church activities - both those including adults, and those dedicated to children - children should be protected from harm - physical, sexual, emotional, social and spiritual. We believe that ultimately protection is from God - "unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen keep watch in vain". However, far from being an excuse for inactivity in child protection this belief should encourage us and give us confidence to diligently act in protection of the children for whom we have responsibility. Jesus spoke in the strongest possible terms against those who caused harm to little children. While seeking to do good for the children in the church, we should also do all within our power to protect them from harm.

### **Policy**

In practical terms, child protection in GBF will be ensured by:

- A three-person child protection committee (CPC)
- The appointment of a child protection officer (CPO) who will be the designated person for the purposes of the Safeguarding statement
- The appointment of designated persons in other congregations associated with Grace Bible Fellowship
- Our Safeguarding Statement and risk assessment
- Vetting people who will have substantial contact with and/or responsibility for children (called leaders in the rest of this document - includes Sunday school teachers, youth club/activity leaders, etc.)
- Providing simple guidelines for leaders and parents (Parents in this document includes guardians and others who may be acting "in loco parentis", e.g. grand-parents)
- Training leaders in applying these guidelines
- Setting up a reporting and feedback process to ensure that difficulties and risks are picked up, dealt with as early as possible, and that there is an effective communication process between leaders, parents and children. This will include specific procedures for handling complaints, vetting and leaders, etc. in conformity with our Safeguarding Statement and statutory requirements
- Regular revision of this policy and related guidelines and procedures

### **Procedures and guidelines**

GBF has specific procedures for:

1. Vetting: these are set out in the guidelines and include the requirement for a declaration of fitness, provision of references, probationary period and Garda clearance;
2. Training. Appropriate training programmes will be organized for leaders and will include those required by law in relation to child abuse;
3. Reporting difficulties, risks, etc. Procedures are set out in the general guidelines and guidelines for leaders and specific procedures required by law are set out in the

## Safeguarding Statement

Guidelines are provided for leaders and parents

### **The Responsibilities of the Child Protection Officer**

The child protection officer is responsible to:

1. Ensure that leaders are appropriately vetted, trained and sign up to the GBF child protection policy
2. Ensure that parents, and children are made familiar with the appropriate guidelines
3. Ensure that important information is gathered about children's needs - allergies, learning difficulties, who is collecting and other parental consents etc.
4. Maintain records of vetting, training, sign-ups, reports and complaints
5. Manage formal reports - e.g. complaints - and informal feedback - e.g. difficulties experienced by leaders, risks identified
6. Report to the CPC at least twice annually
7. Liaise with church leaders on child protection issues
8. Update procedures, guidelines and training materials including the Safeguarding Statement
9. Keep up-to-date with regulations, best practice guidelines
10. Liaise with the relevant person in other churches
11. Develop, communicate and administer procedures and propose new policies and guidelines as required

The CPO will be an annual appointment made by church members

### **The Child Protection Committee**

The CPC shall be appointed annually by church members. It shall comprise three members, one of whom will be the child protection officer. It should meet at least twice a year.

The role of the CPC is:

1. To support the CPO in his/her work by providing advice, assistance, etc.
2. To deputise for the CPO in his/her absence
3. To provide an alternative channel of communication, for example in the case where a complaint is being brought against the CPO him/her self.

List of available documents

1. GBF Child Protection Policy
2. Child Care Guidelines
3. Safeguarding Statement
4. Child Care Guidelines for Leaders
5. Child Care Guidelines for Parents
6. Leaders' Declaration
7. Consent/Code of Conduct to be signed by young persons and parents
8. Referees' Form
9. Abuse reporting procedures for CPO

Please request any of these documents from the CPO

## **ANNEX 2: Grace Bible Fellowship Childcare Guidelines**

### **Introduction: general policy statement on children, young people and the church**

Children are an integral and vital part of the church; Jesus made this clear by rebuking those who tried to prevent them coming to him. They are included in regular church gatherings - worship services, lunches, weekends away, etc. They also participate in specific activities aimed at fostering their spiritual development - Sunday school, youth activities, etc.

In participating in church activities - both those including adults, and those dedicated to children - children should be protected from harm - physical, sexual, emotional, social and spiritual. We believe that ultimately protection is from God - "unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen keep watch in vain". However, far from being an excuse for inactivity in child protection this belief should encourage us and give us confidence to diligently act in protection of the children we have responsibility for. Jesus spoke in the strongest possible terms against those who caused harm to little children. While seeking to do good for the children in the church, we should also do all within our power to protect them from harm.

With these principles in mind:

- The members of Grace Bible Fellowship commit themselves to pray to our heavenly Father for the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all children and young people among us and at the same time do all we are able, to ensure the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of the children and young people..
- We also commit ourselves to support and strengthen parental responsibility for children, recognizing that the paramount responsibility for children and young people lies with their parents; yet also recognizing that our work with children and young people is the responsibility of the whole church.
- We specifically acknowledge that it is the responsibility of each one of us to do what we are able to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people, and to handle appropriately any abuse discovered or suspected.

The church is committed to carefully selecting, supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people, and to providing supervision.

Each worker with children and young people must read these Child Care Guidelines and agree to follow the guidelines contained in it. They must complete the Garda vetting form and obtain references.

### **Guideline 1 - Good practice with children and young people**

Children have a right to be treated with respect and dignity since they are all created in the image of God. To this end:

#### **1. *Each leader or worker should:***

1. Treat all children and young people (meaning under-eighteens) with respect and dignity befitting their age, taking care to control language, tone of voice, and body language.
2. Learn to control and discipline children without using physical punishment (see Guideline 2 on

discipline).

3. Not invite children or young people to events outside the church building without the consent of a parent or guardian.
4. Always seek prior permission from a parent or guardian to contact children or young persons outside official church activities, in particular direct contact by mobile phone, email, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Bebo or other social networking sites.
5. Ensure that they are not alone with a child where they cannot be seen. On church premises, this may mean leaving doors open, or two groups working in the same room. Where privacy and confidentiality are important, ensure (a) that another adult knows the conversation is taking place and with whom, and (b) that another adult is in the building, and the young person knows they are there.
6. Avoid showing favouritism to any individual.
7. Be aware of safety issues in every activity undertaken
8. Not engage in or tolerate any of the following:
  - invading the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting;
  - rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
  - making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in 'fun';
  - inappropriate or intrusive touching;
  - any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting any child or young person.
9. Not let youngsters involve them in excessive attention-seeking that is physical or overtly sexual.
10. Not invite a child or young person to their home alone; but to invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the house. Make sure the parents know where the child is.
11. Not give lifts to children or young people on their own, other than for short journeys. If they are alone, ask them to sit in the rear of the car. In some circumstances it may be unwise to carry a particular child on their own. It is good practice to arrange for a different child to be the last dropped home on each occasion.
12. Avoid overloading vehicles and ensure all seat belts are worn.
13. Not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people if you take a group away. If this is unavoidable, make sure there are at least two leaders in any room/tent.
14. Never tolerate abusive youth activities (e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying etc.)

## **2. *The church should ensure that:***

1. Two written references are obtained for leaders who have been with us less than two years, or who have been away for the last two years. All leaders must have Garda clearance.
2. There is a probationary period of six months for all youth leaders/helpers appointed.
3. An Accident Book be kept in the church filing cabinet, in which to enter details of all accidents involving young people, e.g. date, accident, action taken, how and when parents/guardians informed, names and addresses of witnesses.
4. All allegations or suspicions of child abuse will be referred to the Child Protection Officer or

Child Protection Committee.

5. These guidelines be publicly displayed on a church notice board.

**3. *The Child Protection Officer should ensure that:***

1. A register of children and young persons (that is all under 18 year olds) is kept based on information from forms given to parents/guardians to fill in, including names, address(es), contact numbers, notes of medical or other problems, together with the granting of consent by the parents/guardians to involvement by their children in the normal activities of the group, e.g. swimming, ice-skating. Collection and storage of data will be in conformity with GDPR 2018 requirements.
2. All new leaders/helpers shall sign the leader's declaration form attached, on becoming a leader/helper.
3. A policy of openness with parents is fostered.
4. Where young persons are aged eight or over, they sign the consent/code of conduct form and that it is cosigned by a parent or guardian.
5. Reporting of suspected abuse conforms to procedures set out in our Safeguarding Statement

**4. *Parents and Guardians should ensure that:***

1. They accept primary responsibility for their children at Grace
2. They have read the "Note for Parents on Child Care at Grace Bible Fellowship"
3. They have signed and returned the code of conduct and consent form

**Guideline 2 - Discipline**

1. *What is discipline<sup>1</sup>?*  
Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, chastisement, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement.
2. *Why discipline?*  
It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart. See Hebrews 12:5-12 and Proverbs 22:6.
3. *Do's and don'ts of discipline in children's work:*
  1. We need to be insistent, consistent and persistent.
  2. NEVER smack or hit a child
  3. Discipline out of love NEVER anger. (*Call on support from other leaders if you feel you may deal with the situation unwisely in your anger.*)
  4. Do not shout in anger or put down a child.
  5. Lay down ground rules (e.g. no swearing, racism or calling each other names; a respect for property), consulting the children where appropriate.

6. Keep the ground rules simple and clear, and make sure the children understand what procedures will be taken if they are not kept.
7. Talk to a child away from the 'group', not publicly. (*Explain what they have done wrong, encourage remorse - leave them on a positive note*)
8. Never reject a child, just the behaviour. (*Encourage the child that you want them, but you are not willing to accept the behaviour.*)
9. Each child is unique, special and individual, and each child needs a different method of being dealt with. We, therefore, need to ask ourselves "Why is the child behaving like that?"

Then: -

- *Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding and pray for and with the children.*
- *Decide what is the best method for discipline and encouraging that child.*
- *Work on each individual child's positives, do not compare them to each other, but encourage and build them up.*

### **Guideline 3 - Good practice with colleagues**

- If you see another leader or worker acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.
- Where another leader is a young person under the age of eighteen, then leaders who are eighteen or over should be careful to treat such younger leaders with the same care with which they would treat young persons under these guidelines.

These measures will also protect leaders and workers from false accusations.

### **Guideline 4 - Procedure**

1. *If physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or abuse by neglect, is suspected:*

- Do not delay
- Report the matter to the Child Protection Officer
- Do not act alone
- Do not start to investigate
- Do not mention the matter to anyone else

2. *If a child discloses abuse:*

DO	DO NOT
Listen carefully	Panic
	Enquire into details of the abuse - trained professionals will do this properly
Reassure the child that you believe him or her - the vast majority of children who disclose are telling the truth	Imply blame to the abuser/parents

Tell the child that it was not his or her fault	Promise confidentiality or to keep the disclosure secret
Tell the Child Protection Officer (Sandra Blackwell) as soon as possible, or another church leader if she is not available.	Try and deal with the matter on your own
Make a written summary of what was said, noting the date of the conversation and the date of telling the CPO	Tell the child that everything will be fine now
Praise the child for telling you and reassure them that they did the right thing	
Keep your own emotions under control when talking to the child but express them afterwards to the CPO	

### Definition of abuse

There are four broad types of abuse:

- (1) Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt)
- (2) Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or that of others)
- (3) Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child)
- (4) Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally

# CHILD CARE GUIDELINES

Grace Bible Fellowship, Dublin

## LEADER'S DECLARATION

Name of Leader/Teacher.....

Name of Class .....

Meeting details.....

Age range(s) .....

Person to whom you will be responsible (e.g. Sunday School Superintendant) .....

Grace Bible Fellowship wants to help you give the best possible service to your group, so we will meet with you from time to time to see how things are going. We would also like to make sure that you receive any training needed.

Signed ..... (Sunday School Superintendant)

I confirm that I have read the church Child Care Guidelines on protecting children and young people. I understand that it is my duty to protect the children and young people with whom I come into contact. I will endeavour to follow the guidelines and if there are things I do not understand or if I have reason to be concerned about a child I will check with the Child Protection Officer (Sandra Blackwell)

I hereby and sincerely declare that:

- a. I have never been involved with or convicted, nor am I currently being investigated for violence, sexual assault, or any crime against a minor.
- b. I understand that checks may be made to verify the above and hereby give permission for any police checks which may be necessary.
- c. I understand that should I fail to meet my commitments as set out above I could be asked to withdraw from the ministry of Children's/Youth work at this church and will do so upon such request.

And I make this declaration believing it to be true

Signed..... (Leader/Teacher)

Date: .....

# Child Protection Policy

## Grace Bible Fellowship, Dublin

### APPENDIX - CODE OF CONDUCT TO BE SIGNED BY YOUNG PERSON & PARENT/GUARDIAN

*Grace Bible Fellowship*

Name of Child / Young person: .....

Date of Birth: .....

Name of Parent/Guardian: .....

Address: .....

Contact Phone No:                      Mobile:

Other relevant information (health issues, or otherwise, which you feel the leaders in charge should know):

Code of Conduct:

*All members of the group are expected to:*  
Respect the authority of the leaders/helpers.  
Respect the privacy of leaders/helpers and other members, including in the use of phone and social media.  
Respect the personal property of leaders/helpers and other members.  
Show due care and responsibility for equipment and property.

*The following behaviours are unacceptable:*  
Smoking, consumption of alcohol and abuse of any other substance within the church building or grounds or at any of the group's activities .  
Physical abuse of other members or leaders/helpers.  
Verbal abuse, including 'put-downs' of other members or leaders/helpers and inappropriate use of phone and social media in BASE meetings or at other times.  
Wilful destruction or damage of any property or equipment..  
Wilful destruction or damage of any property or equipment.

I give permission for my child to be involved in [name of group] .....  
at Grace Bible Fellowship and agree to ensure that they abide by the above CODE OF CONDUCT.

*Signed:* .....

(Parent/Guardian)

*Date:* .....

*Signed:* .....

(Young Person)

I have read the above code of conduct and agree to abide by it.

*Date:*

## **ANNEX 3: Grace Bible Fellowship - Guidelines for leaders on photography, computers, phones and internet**

### **A. Taking photographs of children and young people**

*The Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 restricts the use of photographs, videos and webcams of clearly identifiable people.*

1. Get permission (verbal or written) from all the people (children and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video or webcam image before you take it.
2. Make it clear why that person's image is being used, what use you will make of it, and who might want to look at the pictures.
3. Don't identify children and young people by name or other personal details (including email, phone or postal addresses).
4. Preferably use group pictures.
5. Carefully consider location and pose.
6. Do not insist that a child participates.
7. Get written consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website (*note: the new consent form will contain a parental consent for use of images of children for general purposes*).

### **B. Young people taking photographs of each other**

1. Encourage young people to be sensible when taking photos or videoing each other.
2. Enforce the rule that photos or videos taken at church-based activities by young people are not put on the internet or used in any social media including Whatsapp, Facebook, Snapchat etc.

### **C. Photography by third parties of children and young people at church events**

1. Leaders have authority to control the taking of photos or videos at church events where there are children and young present.
2. Leaders must advise those taking photos or videos that the images must not be put on the internet or used in any social media including Whatsapp, Facebook, Snapchat etc.

### **D. Using computers**

1. Agree with other leaders which websites are suitable and which are unsuitable for the age group of children that you are working with.
2. Ensure computers are secure with up to date virus checkers and appropriate parental controls.
3. Ensure young people are well supervised when using computers.

### **E. Communication via the internet**

1. Avoid adding a child or young person in the organisation in which you are a leader, as a friend or follower on a social networking site.
2. Evaluate photos of yourself that are posted on social media sites and consider deleting or 'untagging' any photos in which you are depicted in what could possibly be construed as compromising situations, thus preventing the photograph or other material being used inappropriately.
3. Do not post photographs of young people from the organisation in which you are a leader, on a social networking site or anywhere on the internet, unless you have written parental consent.
4. Comments made on the internet should be considered the same as if they were made in a public place. If a child discloses something to you via a social networking site, a chat room or any other public domain publishing method, then the disclosure must be dealt with by following the normal reporting process. If you are concerned about something that a young person communicates to you via the internet, you should encourage the child to talk to a suitable adult about it or arrange to meet with the child (within the usual child protection parameters). Do not get involved in lengthy or intense engagements online. Set boundaries. While communication via the internet can be highly effective, all such communication with children and young people should, as far as possible, be within an open forum, in order to protect both the young people and yourself.

### **Communication via mobile phones**

1. Only take children's mobile numbers if the nature of your involvement requires you to phone or text children, such as if you are running an organisation for older teenagers, or if you are an employed youth worker or a volunteer involved in co-ordinating youth work within the church.
2. Parental permission should be sought if, in this role, you will be contacting children via mobile phone.
3. If you have a child's phone number, it should only be used for the purposes it has been given i.e. you should not share this information with other church members.

### **F. Texting - communication not conversation!**

1. Texts should be used for the purposes of reminding young people about events which are forthcoming.
2. Texts can also be used as a means to encourage young people if it is appropriate e.g. 'hope exam goes ok'.
3. If it turns into a conversation, communications should be ended. You can suggest discussing the subject further at the next event or, if you are concerned about the young person arrange to meet up to talk further (within the usual child protection parameters).
4. Consider the use of one-way texting application services (eg. textanywhere.com)

Note: Guidelines on church and ministry websites are contained in the full policy document on the matters summarised on this sheet.

# Grace Bible Fellowship Church Attendance Agreement

## Introduction and Key Conditions

1. The purpose of this Agreement is to enable \_\_\_\_\_ (“the individual”) to participate in worship in Grace Bible Fellowship (“the Church”) whilst ensuring the safety of children and adults at risk. Children are anyone under the age of 18 years.
2. The individual can worship in the Church only if the following conditions are met. Worship means attending church services and midweek meetings.
3. If the individual chooses **not** to keep the following conditions he/she is choosing not to attend worship. In such circumstances the safeguarding officer will advise the probation officer and/or other professionals involved with the individual.

## Being in the Church and Contact with other People

4. The individual will not be allowed:
  - to be in a situation where he/she is alone with children or adults at risk;
  - to enter rooms/ shared areas, inside or outside church premises, where he/she could be alone with children or adults at risk.
5. The individual will not be allowed to take up **any** post, position of trust, responsibility or leadership in the Church. This is to ensure that adults and children within the Church do not view him/her as having a position of trust or authority.
6. This includes any duty or responsibility on behalf of the Church which gives lone access to church premises and contact with children or adults at risk. It also covers duties or activities off church premises for any organisation or individuals where the individual may be viewed as representing the Church.
7. When attending a service the individual will sit in a designated place in the church; The Safeguarding officer and/or a nominated person will discretely monitor the individual including if the individual needs to use other facilities such as the toilets. The individual will not place himself in the vicinity of children. However, should any child or adult at risk sit near the individual this will be closely monitored by the nominated person.
8. For the duration of this Agreement it is agreed that the individual will decline any invitation to visit members’ homes for house groups or other church activities where there are children or adults at risk in that home.

## Sharing Information with Others

9. It is accepted that there are a limited number people within the Church who will need to be informed confidentially of the circumstances of the individual. This group will be kept to a minimum and will be provided with only the appropriate amount of information required to ensure the safety of all in the Church and support for the individual.
10. It is agreed that contact will be made with the Probation Service, as and when necessary, for example if the individual does not comply with the conditions of this Agreement, or his/her behaviour or information suggests that there may be an increased risk of harm to others.

## Duration and Reviews of the Agreement

11. There is no time limit for how long this Agreement will last. It will apply for as long as the individual wishes to worship at the Church.
12. There will be regular and formal reviews of this Agreement held with the individual, Church representatives and those working with the individual from the Probation Service.
13. If there are concerns about the compliance of the individual with this Agreement a review meeting can be called at any time.

## Support and Pastoral Care

14. For the duration of this Agreement, pastoral care will be provided by [insert name of elder/pastor].

Signed .....

(Print name of individual) .....

Date .....

Signed on behalf of the Church by: .....

(Print name) .....

Date .....