

Safeguarding Policy

**Working together to safeguard children
and vulnerable adults**

Last reviewed - June 2025

Next review date - June 2026

Contents:

Page	Section
3	Overview & adoption of policy
4	Details of the place of worship
5	Introduction and our commitment
6	DSL and DDSL
7	Preventing Abuse (including recruitment)
10	Responding to allegations of abuse and safeguarding concerns
14	Pastoral Care
15	Appendix 1: Church safeguarding statement (for display)
17	Appendix 2: Definitions of abuse
19	Appendix 3: Code of conduct
21	Appendix 4: Reporting disclosures and safeguarding concerns - form
22	Appendix 5: Information Held on Children and Young People
23	Appendix 6: General Good Practice Guidance
26	Appendix 7: Camps and other residential activities
30	Appendix 8: Vulnerable adults policy
31	Appendix 9: List of group leaders
32	Appendix 10: Online Safety Policy, including Social Media and Consent
34	Appendix 11: Policy on recruitment of ex-offenders
35	Appendix 12: Acceptance of Policy

Overview and adoption of policy

This policy was agreed by the WHBC Elders and Deacons.

- We are committed to supporting our parents and families
- As leaders of the church, we are committed to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of all, especially children and vulnerable adults
- We recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and everyone in contact with children, their families and vulnerable adults has a role to play
- We are committed to following the agreed procedures and statutory guidelines
- This policy will be reviewed annually and after any applicable change in the law.

If you have any concerns for a child, or in relation to any safeguarding matter, then feel free to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for this church, or to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads if the DSL is unavailable:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Carole Short (07939 871922 / caroleshort59@outlook.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Duncan Goodwin (07534 857924 / duncpgoodwin@gmail.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Liz Richardson (07532 008500 / lizr.20@gmail.com)

Date of policy review: 30th June 2025

Date of next policy review: 30th June 2026

Signed (by the WHBC Elders)



Elder
Tim Wilson

Date 27/7/25



Elder
Simon Phillips

Date 27/7/25



Elder
Dan Norman

Date 27/7/25



Elder
Peter Butler

Date 27/7/25



Elder
Russell Ikin

Date 27/7/25

Details of the place of worship

Name of Church: Wheelock Heath Baptist Church (WHBC)

Address: Hassall Road, Winterley, Cheshire CW11 4RJ

UK Charity Number: 1148102

General Email address: churchadmin@whbc.co.uk

Senior Leader Name: Tim Wilson

Senior Leader Contact Telephone / Email: 07831 289833 / timwilson@whbc.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Carole Short

Designated Safeguarding Lead (contact details): Telephone: 07939 871922

Email: caroleshort59@outlook.com

The following is a brief description of WHBC and the type of work / activities we undertake with children and adults who have care and support needs:

Wheelock Heath Baptist Church is an independent evangelical church with a membership of about one hundred. Sunday services are held at 10.30am and 6pm every week. Regular children's and teenagers' clubs, for a range of ages, taking place during school term-time, and other less frequent activities, eg. a Holiday Bible Club is held during August. WHBC works closely with Grace Church Sandbach (GCS).

The WHBC church leadership consists of the Elders and Deacons, who are all trustees of the WHBC Charity, and thus are ultimately responsible for safeguarding. The named trustee for safeguarding is Peter Butler.

The work at WHBC with vulnerable adults involves friendship and companionship, some appropriate help and support as required, including transport, but does not include specific WHBC meetings for this group.

Introduction

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual, spiritual, emotional, domestic and coercive abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.” As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

This policy, and the attached practice guidelines, are based on the ten safeguarding standards published by Thirtyone:eight (<https://thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards/>)

The following Safeguarding Policy and Statement aims, to not only meet the requirements of ensuring a safe environment for those accessing activities in WHBC but to also build an open culture where:

- those who lead do so by example,
- we are committed to the safeguarding of all
- those that work or volunteer are safely recruited and trained for their roles.
- the values of WHBC are embedded in its day-to-day actions and behaviours of its people
- there is open communication
- we relate effectively with, and value, children and young people, whilst ensuring their protection within church activities
- we encourage and support parents/carers
- we have a system for dealing with concerns about possible abuse

Positions of Trust

All adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are in a position of trust. All those in positions of trust need to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they have because of this relationship.

It is vital that all workers ensure they do not, even unknowingly, use their position of power and authority inappropriately. They should always maintain professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

As of April 2022, it is illegal for those in Positions of Trust in a faith setting to engage in sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old under their care or supervision.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

This is the name given to the person within the church to whom all issues and incidents connected with safeguarding are referred, and who has been delegated to that role by the WHBC Trustees.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has four main elements:

- To ensure that the WHBC's Safeguarding Policy is familiar to everyone working with young people & children and that it is being followed
- To be the person to whom any incidents, queries or concerns connected with safeguarding are reported
- To be WHBC's liaison officer with outside authorities
- To be involved with the WHBC church leaders in the decision-making if incidents should arise

Workers within WHBC need to be constantly encouraged to report all their concerns and suspicions to the nominated DSL listed below:

The DSL is: Carole Short (phone: **07939 871922** / email: **caroleshort59@outlook.com**)

The role of **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** is to cover holidays or sickness of the DSL, or if the DSL is not contactable for any reason. They would be an alternative contact if there is a safeguarding issue, or if an accusation is made against the DSL, or someone close to them. They support the DSL, and to share the workload as required.

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL):

The male Deputy DSL is: Duncan Goodwin (Mob. **07534 857924**
email: **duncpgoodwin@gmail.com**)

The female Deputy DSL is: Liz Richardson (Mob. **07532 008500** email: **lizr.20@gmail.com**)

It must be recognised that the person appointed DSL, or either one of DDSLs, could himself/herself be the subject of incidents or allegations. This possibility would exist whoever was appointed to the office. In such circumstances he/she should be relieved from his/her responsibilities and treated in the same way, as would any other WHBC member.

Preventing Abuse

Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse, or abuse against an adult, is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

To safeguard those in WHBC we adhere to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and have as our starting point Article 19, which states:

1. Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

Also, for adults, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, with particular reference to Article 5: *No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

Detailed definitions, signs and indicators of abuse can be found in APPENDIX 2.

Recruitment of paid workers

The Leadership will ensure all paid workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidance on safe recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description / person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form
- Those short listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained, and followed up where appropriate
- A self-declaration form and disclosure and barring check (DBS) has been completed where necessary
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified
- A suitable training programme is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Recruitment of volunteers

In summary, the Leadership will ensure all volunteers regularly working with children will have a disclosure and barring check (DBS) and will have signed a volunteer declaration agreeing to this safeguarding policy.

- Volunteers will already be involved in the general life of WHBC or Grace Church Sandbach. Potential volunteers may either be approached or volunteer themselves to work with children's activities in the Church. All volunteers are approved by the leadership of WHBC or GCS (the Elders) and are subject to current legislation, i.e. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Checks which are currently rechecked every three years. A DBS from another source will be accepted, subject to necessary checks.
- Wheelock Heath Baptist Church will comply with the DBS code of practice, which is available for download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>, or will be sent to applicants upon request.
- A designated leader should supervise a new volunteer regularly and give support as required. Any concerns will be discussed with the elders who will make a final decision as to the suitability of a volunteer continuing in a certain activity. If appropriate WHBC will seek to support volunteers and direct their abilities into other areas of church life.
- No person who is known to have previous offences against children or vulnerable adults, will be appointed as a worker with infants, children or young people.
- A register of all volunteers in Children's activities will be maintained by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and stored securely.
- As members of WHBC we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and, to ensure as far as possible, the well-being and safekeeping of all children and young people who attend the church.
- It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, sexual and mental abuse of children and young people and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- We recognise that the protection of children is the responsibility of the whole church.
- WHBC will be responsible for supporting, resourcing and training those who volunteer with children and young people and for providing supervision.
- Each volunteer and paid worker shall be given a copy of the agreed Safeguarding policy, either by email or a paper copy. Having read the policy, all volunteers must sign and agree to adhere to the requirements. The DSL will maintain a list of those who have signed.
- It is the responsibility of the group leader (see Appendix 9) to inform Designated Safeguarding Lead of prospective new volunteers to allow a DBS to be completed prior to them starting to volunteer.
- It is the responsibility of the group leader (see Appendix 9) to ensure that all volunteers they are responsible for are given a copy of this policy, that the Code of Conduct in Appendix 3 is completed, signed and returned to the DSL.
- All confidential correspondence of a delicate nature will be dealt with by the Elders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Codes of Conduct

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers are issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs as part of this Safeguarding Policy, and will be given clear expectations about what is expected of them both within their job role and out. (see Appendix 3)

Safeguarding training

The WHBC Leadership is committed to ongoing safeguarding training, developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding issues to help protect everyone. All our workers and volunteers will receive induction training from their group leader and undertake recognised safeguarding training every three years, or when commencing their role. A list of those who have received Safeguarding training will be kept by the DSL.

The Leadership will also ensure that children and vulnerable adults are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern. (see pages 11 and 12)

Guidelines for Good Practice

As a church working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, at WHBC we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable volunteers and workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false or unfounded accusation. See Appendix 6 for general guidelines for working safely with children.

Partnership working

The diversity of organisations and settings in our society means that there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines with regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets Thirtyone:eight's safeguarding standards.

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.

Leaders of groups remain responsible for any visiting speaker, or other visitor to their group, to ensure that the WHBC Safeguarding Policy is adhered to and that no visitor is left alone with young people.

Responding to allegations of abuse and safeguarding concerns

Under no circumstances should a volunteer, worker or church leader carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Follow procedures as below:

How to Respond to a Child Wanting to Talk About Abuse

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following may help:

General points:

- show acceptance of what the child says (however unlikely the story may sound)
- keep calm
- try to look at the child directly
- be honest
- tell the child you will need to let someone else know – don't promise confidentiality
- even when a child has broken a rule, they are not to blame for the abuse
- be aware that the child may have been threatened or bribed not to tell
- never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let them know that you are always ready to listen.

Helpful things that may be said or shown:

- I believe you (or showing acceptance of what the child says)
- Thank you for telling me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

Things which should not be said:

- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- False promises
- Statements such as "I am shocked and don't tell anyone else."
- "You can tell me. I can keep a secret".

How to conclude:

- Again reassure the child that they were right to tell you and show acceptance
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens (the DSL may have to consider referring to Social Services or the Police to prevent a child or young person returning home if they consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Contact the DSL
- Consider your own feelings and seek pastoral support if needed
- Remember confidentiality and do not discuss the allegations outside of those concerned.

Afterwards:

- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within an hour of being told), writing down exactly what the child said, write what you said in reply to the child, when he/she said it and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. description of activity).

- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all handwritten notes securely, even if these have been typed subsequently. Use the Responding to Abuse Worker's Actions Sheet (see Appendix 4).
- Report your discussion as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead person (DSL), or to one of the Deputy DSLs in the absence of the DSL. If you cannot make contact, please go directly to one of the WHBC Elders.
- You should not discuss your suspicions or allegations with anyone other than the DSL, deputy DSLs or Elders.
- Once a child has talked about abuse a decision should be made about whether or not it is safe for the child to return home to a potentially abusive situation. On rare occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact Social Services and/or police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

For your information, a copy of the Responding to Abuse form is included at Appendix 4. Every group leader will have a copy of the form with their register.

Documenting a concern

The worker or volunteer should make a report of the concern in the following way:

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to:

DSL / Safeguarding Coordinator: Carole Short

Contact Telephone: 07939 871922

Contact Email: carolshort59@outlook.com

The above person is nominated by the WHBC Leadership to act on their behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of neglect or abuse, including referring the matter on to the statutory authorities. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should contact the appropriate agency or they may first ring the thirtyone:eight helpline for advice and instruction.

In the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, then the report, in the first instance, should be made to one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, who should inform the DSL at the earliest opportunity.

The male Deputy DSL: Duncan Goodwin (Mob. 07534 857924 email: duncpgoodwin@gmail.com)

The female Deputy DSL: Liz Richardson (Mob. 07532 008500 email: lizr.20@gmail.com)

If the suspicions implicate any of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputies, then the report should be made in the first instance to:

- The named WHBC Safeguarding Trustee, (or another Elder, in their absence) AND
- **thirtyone:eight** PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. Tel: 0303 003 1111. Option 2

Anyone with a concern may also contact Social Services or the police.

Name of local authority: Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Tel: 0300 123 5012, option 3 **Out of hours Tel:** 0300 123 5022

Website Address: www.cescp.org.uk

Adult Social Services

Tel: 0300 123 5010 **Out of hours Tel:** 0300 123 5022

Website Address: <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/staying-safe/community-safety/safeguarding-adults-at-risk.aspx>

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern
 - Trustee responsible for safeguarding (Peter Butler) who may need to liaise with the insurance company or the charity commission to report a serious incident.
 - Designated officer or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) if the allegation concerns a worker or volunteer working with someone under 18.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.
- The WHBC Leadership will support the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.
- It is, of course, the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight, although the Leadership hope that members of WHBC will use this procedure. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement that the WHBC Leadership demonstrates its commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The role of the DSL, or DDSL in the absence of the DSL, is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern about a child:

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse.

If a child has a physical injury, a symptom of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or a Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL, will:

- Contact Children's Social Services (or Thirtyone:eight) for advice in cases of deliberate injury, if concerned about a child's safety or if a child is afraid to return home.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so, having contacted Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- For lesser concerns, (e.g. poor parenting), encourage parent/carer to seek help, but not if this places the child at risk of significant harm.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, offer to accompany them. In cases of real concern, if they still fail to act, contact Children's Social Services direct for advice.
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.

Allegations of sexual abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the DSL, or a Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL, will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department Duty Social Worker for children and families or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if for any reason they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference.

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult needs protection:

Suspensions or allegations of abuse or harm including:- physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse, coercion.

If there is concern about any of the above, DSL, or a Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL, will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Identify support services for the victim i.e., counselling or other pastoral support
- Contact Thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Liaise with Children's Social Services regarding the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to a designated officer formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or vulnerable adults. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with vulnerable adults

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services in regards the suspension of the worker
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to vulnerable adults. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide, not the church.

Pastoral Care

Supporting those affected by abuse

The WHBC Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and to give support to those who have been affected by abuse (current or historic) who have contact with or are part of WHBC.

Working with offenders and those who may pose a risk

When someone attending WHBC is known to have abused children, is under investigation, or is known to be a risk to vulnerable adults, the WHBC Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. These boundaries will be based on a risk assessment and through consultation with appropriate parties.

See Appendix 11 for more detail.

Appendix 1: WHBC Church Safeguarding statement

(To be displayed in a prominent place)

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS POLICY STATEMENT

Name of Place of worship: Wheelock Heath Baptist Church (WHBC)

The following statement was agreed by the leadership on: _____

- WHBC is committed to the safeguarding of children, and vulnerable adults, and ensuring their well-being.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent harm or abuse to children and vulnerable adults in all their recognised forms.
- We recognise the personal dignity and rights of adults and children and will ensure all our policies and procedures will reflect this.
- We believe all people should enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of WHBC.
- We undertake to exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with children and vulnerable adults.
- We believe every child and adult should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that all those we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are experiencing significant harm.

We are committed to:

- Following statutory and specialist guidelines in relation to safeguarding children and adults WHBC will ensure that all workers will work within the agreed procedure of our safeguarding policy.
- Implementing the requirements of all relevant legislation including, but not limited to: - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, Equality Act 2010 and referring concerns about vulnerable adults to the local authority under the Care Act 2014.
- Supporting, resourcing and training those who undertake this work.
- Ensuring that we are keeping up to date with national and local developments relating to safeguarding.
- Ensuring that everyone agrees to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by WHBC.
- Supporting those in WHBC who are affected by abuse.

We recognise:

- Children's Social Services has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a child. Adult Social Care has lead responsibility for investigating all allegations or suspicions of abuse where there are concerns about a vulnerable adult.
- Where an allegation suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed then the police should be contacted as a matter of urgency.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

We will review this statement and our policy annually.

If you have any concerns for a child or adult, then speak to the DSL, or a Deputy DSL in the absence of the DSL. The three people named below have been approved as Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for WHBC.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Carole Short (07939 871922 / carolshort59@outlook.com)

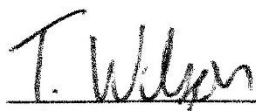
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Duncan Goodwin (07534 857924 / duncpgoodwin@gmail.com)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Liz Richardson (07532 008500 / lizr.20@gmail.com)

A copy of WHBC's policy can be seen on the WHBC website (whbc.co.uk)

Signed by leadership of WHBC (Elders)

Tim Wilson



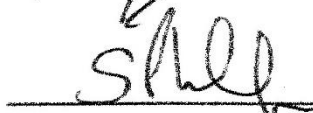
Date 27th July 2025

Peter Butler



Date 27th July 2025

Simon Phillips



Date 27/07/25

Russell Ikin



Date 27 July 2025

Dan Norman



Date 27 July 2025

Appendix 2: Definitions of Abuse

REMEMBER that if you become aware of a possible abusive situation you must report your suspicions. The definitions of child abuse recommended as criteria for registration by the Department of Health, Working Together under the Children Act 2004 are as follows:

Types of abuse

- **Physical:** actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child.
- **Emotional:** actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.
- **Sexual:** actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature. Sexual exploitation represents the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos or family roles.
- **Neglect:** the persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Additionally, a guide published in July 2018 "Working together to safeguard children" gives the below definitions of safeguarding:

Safeguarding and promoting welfare of children is defined as

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

For information about the types and signs of abuse, see <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect>

Further Definitions of Abuse

- **Spiritual:** Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it. However, holding a theological position is not in itself inherently spiritually abusive, but misuse of scripture, applied theology and doctrine is often a component of spiritually abusive behaviour.
- **Domestic:** Domestic abuse involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality). The abuse can involve, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional, violent, threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour. In April 2021 it became mandatory to report domestic abuse to adult social care, who are responsible for any investigation. The Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub can be contacted on Tel. 0300 123 5101. They partner with Cheshire Without Abuse, Tel. 01270 250390.
Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse between two personally connected individuals who are aged 16 or over. In this case social services should be informed and matters discussed with their schools as required.
- **Coercion:** The government says controlling or coercive behaviour is:
 - acts designed to make a person feel inferior and/or dependent by keeping them apart from friends, help and support. It can include taking advantage of their money and things they have, stopping their independence, and controlling what they want to do.

- an act of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim.

With regard to Vulnerable Adults you should also refer to Appendix 8.

Appendix 3: Code of conduct

The Wheelock Heath Baptist Church's behaviour code for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of all workers (staff and volunteers).

The code of conduct aims to help protect vulnerable adults, children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from those in positions of trust, and to reduce the risk of unfounded allegations of abuse being made.

The role of workers (staff and volunteers)

When working with children and young people or vulnerable adults, you are acting in a position of trust for WHBC. You will be seen as a role model and must act appropriately.

Good practice

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness, and have proper regard for individuals' interests, rights, safety and welfare
- Work in a responsible, transparent and accountable way
- Be prepared to challenge unacceptable behaviour or to be challenged
- Listen carefully to those you are supporting
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse, spiritual abuse or sexual abuse (including inappropriate physical contact such as rough play and inappropriate language or gestures)
- Seek advice from someone with greater experience when necessary
- Work in an open environment – avoid private or unobserved situations
- Follow policies, procedures and guidelines and report all disclosures, concerns, allegations, and suspicions to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Don't make inappropriate promises particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Do explain to the individual what you intend to do and don't delay taking action

Unacceptable behaviour

- Not reporting concerns or delaying reporting concerns
- Taking unnecessary risks
- Any behaviour that is or may be perceived as threatening or abusive in any way
- Passing on your personal and/or social media contact details and any contact that breaches WHBC Online Safety policy (Appendix 10)
- Developing inappropriate relationships
- Smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal substances
- Favouritism/exclusion – all people should be equally supported and encouraged

Breaching the Code of Conduct

If you have behaved inappropriately you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (particularly in the case of paid staff where the Elders will consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead, as appropriate). Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you may be asked to leave Wheelock Heath Baptist Church. We may also make a referral to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority children's or adult's social care departments or DBS. If you become aware of a breach of this code, you should escalate your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or to DDSL in the absence of the DSL, who will inform the Elders.

Each person must sign the form at Appendix 12. This includes a declaration of acceptance of this Code of Conduct.

Whistle Blowing

As a place of worship, we will follow the principles contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Therefore, we expect that all employees (paid or voluntary) will report improper actions and omissions. Whilst all malpractice and acts of discrimination will be investigated, it is especially important that suspicions of abuse are immediately reported to the DSL.

Appendix 4:

Reporting disclosures and safeguarding concerns - form

ONCE COMPLETED a copy of this form MUST BE handed to the church Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Name of Child/Young Person/Vulnerable Adult:.....

Address:.....

.....

Date of Birth:.....

Name of Person Reporting Event:.....

Contact details:

Date:..... **Time:**.....

Sequence of Events/Actual Words Used/Observations

Action Taken:

Name of Person Contacted (ideally DSL):.....

Date:..... **Time:**.....

Notes:

Signed:.....**Print name**.....

(Continue overleaf if necessary)

Appendix 5: Information Held on Children and Young People.

Children and Young People (YP) may attend the appropriate group without applying beforehand. At their first attendance they will be given a form for General Information and Consent (see relevant form) to be filled in by their parent/guardian. The information that will be kept about them will include:

- full name
- date of birth
- address
- contact telephone number
- alternative contact telephone number
- details of regular medication, medical problem or disability which may affect normal activity including allergies
- permission for child to receive appropriate emergency treatment, (if parent/guardian is not contactable)
- permission for photos to be taken & possibly displayed in Church literature (e.g. website, noticeboards)
- signature and consent
- parent/guardian responsible for completing form

This information on each child and young person that attends each activity will be kept in the church building and will be available for parents to view their own children's details, if they should so wish.

Appendix 6: General Good Practice

All leaders within Children & YP activities at WHBC should be aware of the following:

- be alert to the potential of abuse
- be aware of the signs & symptoms of abuse, both physical symptoms and behavioural symptoms
- be alert to sexual or other behaviour or knowledge that is inappropriate to age
- listen to children and young people when they talk to you and to others
- do not ask leading questions but pick up on and ask about physical or behavioural signs eg “Those cuts look painful. How did they happen?” or “You’re quiet tonight. Is everything Ok?”
- If you receive a disclosure through being proactive (eg saying to a child that those bruises look painful, asking how he got them and him then disclosing that his father hit him with his belt again) stop your questions at the disclosure. Be there for the child if they want to talk about it, but do not probe any deeper. It could cause distress and/or confusion for the child. Pass the information on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL, in the absence of the DSL.

Even if you only suspect abuse, pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

i) Discipline Guidelines

The aim of discipline within a group of children and young people is to ensure that the behaviour of one or more of that group does not disrupt the enjoyment of the whole group.

Avoid treating children harshly and too severely. Be friendly with them, while maintaining an attitude of respect towards them, and requiring respect from them.

If a child does behave badly, respond in a calm and controlled way. Avoid shouting at children or humiliating children.

Refrain from any physical forms of discipline

Look out for bullying and children being ‘picked on’. Act decisively to prevent such behaviour.

When correcting a child, have another volunteer/paid worker with you if possible, and keep a written record of what you said. Challenge the child to better behaviour and encourage any strong points. Any future accusations or criticisms can be more easily dealt with if there is a record of what actually happened. Inform parents/guardian of child’s behaviour and actions of volunteer to handle incident.

ii) Direct Work

A volunteer/paid worker should not be alone with a child. However, in the event of this being necessary or helpful, a volunteer/paid worker should seek to remain visible and/or audible, i.e. leaving doors open, or making use of the glass panelling in doors. Where this is not possible, the volunteer/paid worker should inform other volunteers/paid worker as soon as possible.

Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling) and a young person is being seen on their own, then the volunteer/paid worker must ensure that others know the interview is taking place and that someone else is around in the building.

All personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child whilst also accepting that some children have special needs.

Volunteers/paid workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.

The privacy of children must be respected and questionable activities avoided, e.g. rough/sexually provocative games and comments.

iii) Guidance on touch

Keep everything public.

Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's.

Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.

Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.

Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.

Team members should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other by pointing out anything, which could be misunderstood.

iv) Guidance on social media

Please refer to the Online Safety Policy, and see Appendix 10.

v) Transport

A volunteer/paid worker must ensure that any arrangements he/she has for transporting children are with the knowledge of the team/leadership and have parental approval.

Where private cars are used to transport children and young people, drivers must ensure that:

- the vehicles are road worthy
- there is adequate insurance (with written confirmation)
- the maximum capacity is not being exceeded
- seat belts are used at all times & the correct car seats are used for children who require them

Where mini-buses are used to transport children and young people, the above recommendations apply. Drivers must also ensure that luggage is stored safely and securely and that they have undergone relevant driver training. For further information see

www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/practitioners/minibus-code-of-practice.pdf

It is inappropriate for adults to regularly offer lifts to children/young people to and from activities unless agreed with parents

It is better that 2 adults travel with the children where possible

Appendix 7: Camps and Other Residential Activities

The organisers recognise that where workers from other organisations are joining the camp there is a need for clarity with regard to all child protection matters because they may have their own safeguarding policy and procedures. It is expected that sending organisations agree that:

- All allegations of child abuse will be referred to the Camp Safeguarding Lead or their deputy, one of each sex. If the suspicions in any way implicate both the Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Lead, then Children's Services or the sending organisation's Safeguarding Lead should be contacted in accordance with the safeguarding policy. Thirtyone:eight could also be contacted for advice on 0303 003 1111.
- The Camp Safeguarding Lead has responsibility to action all allegations or suspicions of abuse. If the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Lead then the matter should be reported to the Deputy Lead.
- The Safeguarding Lead has the authority to contact either Children's Services local to the child's home, Children's Services or the Police local to the Camp and/or Thirtyone:eight for advice.
- Allegations will be dealt with on a 'need to know' basis only.
- If allegations involve a child or worker from a sending organisation then the leader of that church or a nominated person (i.e. their Safeguarding Lead) will be informed. It is expected they will keep confidence and not investigate the matter themselves.
- Should a sending organisation have other reporting mechanisms, this will be discussed and an agreement made between with that church/organisation.

General Safety

It is the responsibility of the workers to always know the whereabouts of every child, young person or vulnerable adults, including monitoring access on and off the site.

Safety rules should be applied as appropriate (e.g. keeping clear of tent guy lines). All workers should keep a daily log of camp activities and any significant incidents recorded in the logbook.

All those going on the holiday must complete a Health Information and Consent form and all those below 18 years of age and not be allowed to participate in any activity without the written consent of the parent/carer.

Electrical Equipment

Camp organisers should ensure all equipment taken by the organisation for the trip has been PAT approved (Portable Appliance Inspection). Any appliance with a plug attached is classed as a portable appliance. (WHBC electric equipment is PAT tested in line with legal requirements.)

If young people wish to bring devices with them that will be running off mains electricity, such as a hairdryer, they should be used in conjunction with the policies of the residential venue (e.g. Youth Hostel) where they are staying. Always encourage the use of battery-operated equipment where possible.

Fire Safety

The organisers should have a fire safety procedure, which should include the following:

- Everyone should be warned of the danger of fire. If the holiday is in a building then everyone must be made aware of the fire exits. Ideally a fire drill should be practised on the first day of the camp/holiday.
- When using a building as a residential facility, ensure that the fire alarm is audible throughout the accommodation and that all signs and exits are clearly visible. It should also comply with fire regulations.

- In the case of an emergency, ensure measures are in place to alert children, young people, and vulnerable adults, taking into account those with disabilities (e.g. a child with a hearing impairment).

First Aid

There should be at least one worker who holds a recognised and valid First Aid Certificate.

The First Aider should ensure that on the site of the holiday camp:

- First Aid boxes are available and their location known.
- Written records are made of all accidents and injuries.
- They have the name and telephone number of the local GP practice to hand, and the distance and location of the nearest hospital with an Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department.
- They have access to medical consent forms for all those on the camp.
- Any medication being stored on a child's behalf is kept securely and is always available to the child. (E.g. Don't arrange a trip away from the camp without taking the child's inhaler if they have asthma.)

Adventurous Activities

No child should participate in adventurous activities without the written consent of the parent/carer.

The organisers should ensure that workers engaging in such activities are properly trained and qualified and that the correct ratio of staff to children is met

At an activity centre or for an organisation whose own staff undertake such activities, if the activities come within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996, the Camp Organisers should ensure that the premises are licensed.

Food Safety

Those with responsibility for food should possess the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate and be aware of food safety (preparation, handling and storage, disposal of waste etc.)

Sleeping Arrangements

Arrangements for residential holidays and camps should be considered carefully. They should be age-appropriate, provide security for the child, and considered safe for children and workers. Parents/Carers should always be made aware of the sleeping arrangements before the event.

Insurance

There should be adequate insurance cover for all eventualities such as personal accident (e.g. death or disablement), lost or stolen property and personal liability. If the trip is at a centre it is also important to establish that there is appropriate Public Liability Insurance.

Useful Contacts

British Safety Council
National Safety Centre
174 Hammersmith Road,
London
W6 7JP
Tel: 0203 5108355

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
Tel: 0121 248 2000
Email: [enquiries @rospa.com](mailto:enquiries@rospa.com)

NSPCC
0808 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk

i) Church Statement

Wheelock Heath Baptist Church recognises that taking care of children who are away from home involves taking responsibility for their well-being at all times, being prepared for every eventuality, anticipating situations where there is harm and taking steps to minimise risks.

ii) Safeguarding Issues

These will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The policy for camps and other residential activities remains the same as the policy for the regular activities of the church.

iii) Appointing Volunteers

Where these are different to the volunteers of the regular church activities, the appointment procedure will be the same as that set out in Section: *Recruitment & Screening of Volunteers*. Any speakers from outside of Wheelock Heath Baptist Church will be asked to send a copy of their current DBS certificate to the WHBC DSL prior to attending the camp. They will also be asked to read and sign a copy of the safeguarding policy in advance.

iv) Supervision of Group Activities at Camp

- It is the responsibility of all workers to know the whereabouts of all children and young people who are on camp
- Everyone on camp will be warned of the danger of fire. If the camp is in a building then everyone will be made aware of the fire exits.
- The safety of the building, chalets, or tents will be considered and rules applied as appropriate
- Safety with respect to other users of the site and non-residents to the camp will be evaluated

v) Documentation

- Parents/carers of all children must have completed a General Information and Consent Form.
- No child may participate in any extra-ordinary activity without the written consent of the parent/guardian.
- All incidents requiring medical intervention must be recorded together with details of action taken & signed and dated by the Camp Leader.

Appendix 8: Vulnerable adults policy

Definition

Adults at risk is defined by the Charities Commission (December 2017) as those over the age of 18 who:

- Have need for care and support
- Experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect
- Are unable to protect themselves
- Have an illness affecting their mental and physical health
- Have a learning disability
- have drug or alcohol related problems
- Are frail

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of everyone to prevent physical, emotional, sexual, domestic, spiritual abuse and coercion, and neglect, or exploitation of vulnerable adults and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

Reporting

The reporting procedure is the same as documented in the Safeguarding Policy (Appendix 4).

Further Information

Please use the below link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance>

Appendix 9: List of group leaders

Leaders & Groups

Little Fishes, Parents & Tots - Natalie Wilson

Explorers - David Ainscough

Wheelers - Liz Richardson

YP (Young People) - Ben and Liz Griffin

Holiday Bible Club (HBC)- Liz Richardson

YP Camps - Ben and Liz Griffin

Creche - Natalie Wilson and Katherine Phillips

Sunday school - Russell Ikin

Group Leaders – paperwork required

At every meeting, where children and young people are attending, Group leaders should have a copy of this policy, a copy of the form on Appendix 4 and a signed consent form for each child and young person.

Appendix 10: Online Safety Policy

Thirtyone: eight Online Safety definition:

Online safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate and access the Internet; often referred to as Information and Communications Technology. An online safety policy should be adopted and adapted to reflect all communications between WHBC's workers and children (those under 18 years of age).

Policy guidelines for Church Workers/Volunteers

- Generally, maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and their children.
- Use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal.
- Be warm and friendly, but do not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Be clear and explicit about information that you need to share; don't abbreviate or short-cut your communications.
- Be circumspect in your communications with children to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Do not share any personal information with children, or request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which might be appropriate as part of your role.
- Only give personal contact details to children that are within the public domain of the church / organisation, including your mobile telephone number.
- If children want you to have their mobile phone numbers, e-mail addresses or similar, and communicate with them this way, make sure that their parents know and have agreed.
- Only make contact with children via a parent or carer for reasons related to the work of WHBC
- Where possible use equipment provided by WHBC to communicate with children.
- Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed.
- Ensure WHBC domain name/logo appears with every Internet post made by a church computer user. Any user may thus be viewed as a representative of WHBC while conducting business on the Internet.
- Email should only be used to communicate specific information. (e.g. times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- Email History should be kept and dated.
- When using email/internet for communication with children, it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-5pm. Where working with children outside normal office hours workers should seek advice from their leader but there should be no email communication after 9pm.
- Use of skype and any other web camera or visual communication via the internet should only be used in line with this Safeguarding Policy.
- Workers should refrain from using such methods on a one-to-one basis as they cannot be recorded. (It can be used for conference calls and is considered appropriate if a project or group uses a web camera/Skype in a group environment for project purposes, and has clear aims and objectives for its use).

Social Media Guidelines

- All social media interaction between workers, paid or voluntary, and children under 18 shall be limited to monitored/administrated groups.
- Social media groups shall work within the demands of the Safeguarding policy.
- Any private messages may be recorded for safeguarding purposes.
- Any safeguarding concerns/allegations arising from social media shall be referred onto the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All users of social media must be above the minimum age limit i.e. 13 for Facebook, 16 for WhatsApp.
- Workers should ensure their privacy setting ensure the highest levels of security in order to restrict children being able to see any more than what is relevant to communication within the group
- It is good practice for social media groups to provide links to statutory authorities such as CEOP, to enable children to report online abuse. (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)

Consent for photographic images and videos online

- Photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will endeavour to prevent children from being easily identified.
- Children's full names will not be used on the website in association with their photographs.
- Permission will be sought before any images are taken or displayed and images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought for and how the image will be stored if not destroyed. If the intention is to use an image on the internet this must be clearly stated and further permission must be acquired if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated.
- Use of images will reflect diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance and where children are involved permission should be sought in line with the photographic guidelines.

When responding to concerns of abuse please refer to our 'Online Safety Flowchart' at

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/media/m31lv3aq/flowchart-online-safety.pdf>

Appendix 11: Policy on recruitment of ex-offenders

Having a criminal record does not necessarily bar a person from working with Wheelock Heath Baptist Church.

At Wheelock Heath Baptist Church we welcome applications from all born-again believers who have a clear testimony of conversion, are in good standing with an evangelical church and are able to cope with the physical and spiritual demands of working in Wheelock Heath Baptist Church.

Our WHBC policy states that DBS checks will be required for members who work with children and/or vulnerable adults in church activities.

Failure to reveal conviction information at the time of an application, which subsequently shows up in a disclosure check, is in itself grounds to refuse the person concerned entry to Wheelock Heath Baptist Church activities, since it tends to raise questions about the veracity of other information on the application form. This decision will only be made after discussion with the applicant to ensure that there are no extenuating circumstances. The WHBC leaders will make a final decision regarding suitability of any person, whether paid worker or volunteer. A written record will be kept of reasons for the decision.

Previous convictions revealed at the time of their application will only be taken into account in so far as they are directly relevant to the position sought or the validity of their testimony of conversion. No decision will be taken to exclude an applicant on the grounds of a criminal conviction without first discussing the conviction with the applicant, taking in to account its nature, its age, the age of the applicant at the time of the offence and the sentence handed down.

Wheelock Heath Baptist Church will comply with the DBS code of practice, which is available for download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice> or will be sent to applicants upon request.

Appendix 12: Acceptance of Policy

Acceptance and Declaration

I confirm that I have read the WHBC Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by all the expectations outlined in it.

Name: _____

Contact details: Phone _____

 Email _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form should be returned to the DSL.