

1. Policy Statement

High Street Presbyterian Church adopts the safeguarding procedures of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) as set out in:

<https://presbyterianireland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-for-northern-ireland/northern-ireland-safeguarding-procedures/pci-safeguarding-children-ni-procedures>

This policy is aligned with Northern Ireland legislation and guidance including:

- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) policies
- PCI child safeguarding policy and requirements

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people, The welfare of the individual is paramount.

2. Key Principles

In line with PCI procedures High Street Presbyterian Church will ensure:

1. There is an aligned Designated Person
2. We have robust procedures for the recruitment, checking and monitoring of staff, and volunteers working with children
3. Anyone engaging with children and young people through the church will be trained at least once every 3 years in how to recognise, respond to and report abuse as well as to understand their role in the prevention of abuse
4. The church has clear processes for the reporting of abuse and the risk of harm, both externally to statutory services and internally through a clearly identified chain of responsibility
5. Identified risks to children and young people are assessed and managed
6. Any person of risk, engaged in our ministries (for example those with a history of serious offending behaviour) is safely managed, monitored and supported
7. We have a timely, effective and sensitive approach to managing non-recent abuse disclosures
8. Children and young people from other countries are protected and cared for while engaging in our ministries and missions

9. We have appropriate ways for children and young people to voice their opinions and concerns, and be listened and responded to

10. The congregation has safe and confidential methods for managing information

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Designated Person (DP), in line with Chapter 2 of the PCI procedures:

- Receives concerns
- Makes referrals to Gateway Teams (HSC Trusts)
- Liaises with PSNI where necessary
- Maintains secure records
- Reports to the session
- Acts as part of the church safeguarding team

Our Kirk Session:

- Holds overall safeguarding responsibility with safeguarding as a standing item
- Ensures compliance with PCI and NI guidance including risk assessments as set out in Chapter 13 lol
- Provides support to the safeguarding team

Leaders and helpers:

- Follow safeguarding procedures
- Report concerns immediately
- Attend training
- Are aware of policies and know who to contact and where to find information

4. Safe Recruitment

Our congregation will follow best recruitment practices as set out in Chapter 6 and 7 of the PCI procedures and we will ensure that all leaders must:

- Complete application and references
- Complete an interview by Kirk session
- Undergo Access NI checks for roles that require these
- Complete safeguarding training
- Be recruited in line with our Church Leaders policy

No regulated activity is permitted until checks are complete and approved. The church will recheck through Access NI those in regulated activity every 3 years.

5. Responding to Concerns

If a disclosure is made our safeguarding staff will in line with Chapter 2 of the PCI procedures:

- Listen carefully
- Not promise confidentiality
- Reassure
- Record accurately
- Report immediately to DP
- Not investigate or delay.

6. Reporting Procedure (NI)

All concerns will be reported to the DP in line with chapter 3 of the procedures who will, where necessary:

- Refer to Gateway Services (Children's Social Services)
- Contact PSNI if a crime is suspected
- Follow PCI safeguarding procedures
- Emergency: Call 999

7. Confidentiality

- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only.
- Confidentiality cannot override safeguarding responsibilities.
- Speak to the PCI safeguarding team

8. Record Keeping

As a congregation we will keep:

- Accurate, signed and dated records
- That are stored securely in a locked cabinet
- Retained in line with PCI and NI GDPR requirements

9. Safeguarding in Practice

The congregation will ensure compliance with guidance around:

- Appropriate supervision ratios
- Risk assessments
- Safe premises
- Consent procedures
- Safe transportation of children

10. Digital Communication

- No private messaging with children
- Use group communication
- Maintain transparency and accountability
- Follow the church technology policy found on the church website www.hspc.org.uk

11. Allegations Against Leaders

- Report immediately to DP
- Referral to statutory agencies
- PCI Safeguarding Office informed
- Comply with PCI requirements on Emergency Safeguarding Panels

12. The management of Safeguarding Agreements (offenders and serious allegations)

In line with Chapter 14 of the Procedures, our congregation will comply with requirements on development of safeguarding agreements

13. Training

All our leaders must complete PCI safeguarding training and refresher training in line with NI expectations.

14. Code of conduct

High Street complies with the PCI standards of behaviours expected of all our leaders and those in responsibility

Each organisation will maintain its own individual code of conduct which should confirm to the standards expected of a church organisation.

15. Review

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by Kirk Session and updated in line with PCI and NI legislation.

16. Key Contacts

Our key contacts are:

Designated Person: Audrey Gordon 07779770417

Deputy Designated Person: TBC

Local SE HSC Trust Gateway: 0300 100 0300 (Emergency 028 90565444)

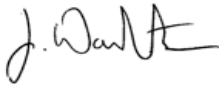
PSNI: 101 (non-emergency) / 999 (emergency)

PCI Safeguarding Office: 028 9041 7234

17. Adoption

This Policy has been adopted by the Kirk Session of High Street Presbyterian Church.

Date: 24th August 2026

Signed: 

Next review: August 2027