Anytown Baptist Church  
Policy Handbook

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Changes since last review

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# Introduction

## About Anytown Baptist Church

### Vision Statement

At Anytown Baptist Church ….

### Governance

Church Members meet together in a Church Members’ Meeting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and under the Lordship of Christ to discern the mind of God in the affairs of the church.

Church Members’ Meetings are held at regular intervals through the year and are an opportunity to consider and review routine matters associated with the life of the church including issues related to church membership, the appointment and dismissal of the Trustees, the approval of the budget, with opportunities for considering proposals from the Trustees or other Members for the development of the church and the advancement of its purpose through its activities.

The Trustees are responsible for the governance of the church and the fulfilment of the purpose through its activities acting according to the will of God as discerned by the Church Members’ Meeting and subject to any specific or general directions of the Church Members’ Meeting.

### Conflicts of Interest

The Trustees will make decisions based only on what’s best for the charity. Personal interests, or the interests of people or organisations connected to board members, will not be allowed to influence these decisions.

There are two common types of conflict of interest:

* Financial conflicts - when a trustee or person or organisation connected to them could gain financial benefit from a decision.
* Loyalty conflicts – when a trustee or person or organisation connected to them also has other responsibilities that mean they might not be able to make decisions that are best for the charity.

A potential conflict of interest may also occur when a trustee has a connection to another organisation or person that the Church has a financial, or other working arrangement with, either as a close family member or as a trustee, member of staff or other position of responsibility within another organisation.

When a trustee has a conflict of interest they will remove themselves from any meeting where that issue is being discussed and will take no part in any decision on that issue.

## Purpose of this Handbook

This Handbook provides the policies and guidelines for Workers and Members that are necessary to:

* achieve our aims and objectives and to allow us to operate in a way that respects our Christian faith;
* provide appropriate levels of protection for children and adults at risk who take part in our activities;
* meet legal requirements in relation to Employment, Health and Safety, Data Protection, etc.;
* safeguard our assets;
* ensure the efficient running of our activities.

All Workers, Members and Trustees must adhere to these policies and guidelines. Failure to do so could have implications for the church. Violation of these policies could result in a Member being asked to leave.

## Glossary of Terms

The following terms used throughout this Handbook have specific meanings and are defined here to avoid confusion:

**The Church** – Anytown Baptist Church

**Staff –** Employees and Ministers

**Employees** – people who are paid to work for the church and are not Ministers

**Minister(s)** – ordained members of staff who are office holders not employees

**Volunteers** – are those people who carry out a specific role within the church without being paid

**Workers** – Staff and Volunteers

**Trustees** – are made up of the Deacons and Minister(s)

**Deacons** – the group of members responsible for the management of the church’s affairs

**Leadership Team** – comprises the Deacons and Ministers

**Members** – those who have been accepted as member of the church according to the Governing Document

# Safeguarding



In fulfilling its vision, the Church:

* welcomes children and adults at risk into the life of our community
* may run activities for children and adults at risk
* may make its premises available to organisations working with children and adults at risk

The Church recognises its responsibilities in safeguarding all children, young people and adults at risk, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. We are committed to the nurturing, protection and safekeeping of all associated with the church and have adopted the following policies:

* Prevention and reporting of abuse and responding to concern   
  It is the duty of each church member and each member of the wider church family to prevent the physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children and young people and the duty of all to respond to concerns about the well-being of children and young people and to report any child abuse disclosed, discovered or suspected. The Church will fully co-operate with any statutory investigation into any suspected abuse linked with the Church.
* Safe recruitment, support and supervision of workers   
  The Church will exercise proper care in the selection and appointment of those working with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary. All workers will be provided with appropriate training, support and supervision to promote the safeguarding of children.
* Respecting children and adults at risk   
  The Church will adopt a code of behaviour for all who are appointed to work with children and young people so that all children and young people are shown the respect that is due to them.
* Safer working practices   
  The Church is committed to providing a safe environment for activities with children and young people and will adopt ways of working with children and young people that promote their safety and well-being.
* A safe community   
  The Church is committed to the prevention of bullying of children and young people. The Church will seek to ensure that the behaviour of any who may pose a risk to children and young people in the community of the Church is managed appropriately.

The Church will appoint a Safeguarding Trustee to oversee and monitor implementation of the policy and procedures on behalf of the Church's charity trustees and a Designated Person for Safeguarding to advise the Church on any matters related to the safeguarding of children and young people and take the appropriate action when abuse is disclosed, discovered or suspected.

A copy of this policy statement will be displayed permanently on the church noticeboard [and church office] ]and is available on our church website].

Each worker with children and/or adults at risk will be given a full copy of the safeguarding policy and procedures and will be asked to sign to confirm that they will follow them. A full copy of the policy and procedures will be made available on request to any member of, or other person associated with the church.

The policy and procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually, and any necessary revisions adopted into the policy and implemented through our procedures. The policy statement will be read annually at the church AGM, together with a report on the outcome of the annual safeguarding review.



### Recognising, Responding and Reporting Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused in a range of settings, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. There are many ways in which people suffer abuse. More information and our full procedures are in Appendix 1.

### Safe Recruitment, Support and Supervision

As a church, we are committed to safer recruitment practices. When recruiting Workers, the following process will be applied:

* We will develop a clear role profile, person specification and application form;
* When advertising a role which involves working with children or adults at risk we will make it clear that any appointment is subject to a DBS check;
* All applicants will be asked to complete an application form and include the names of two referees;
* Shortlisting of applicants will be carried out by at least two people, including the line manager or group leader directly overseeing the role being recruited for;
* Interviews will be carried out by at least two people, including the line manager or group leader;
* References, a Self Disclosure Form and an enhanced DBS check will be completed satisfactorily before the appointed person starts in their role.

In addition to the above checks an applicant’s UK residency status and/ or right to work in the UK will be checked when recruiting Employees.

The Church is aware that under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence for anyone disqualified from working with children or adults at risk to knowingly apply, accept or offer to work with children or adults at risk. We are also aware that it is a criminal offence to knowingly offer work with children or adults at risk to an individual who is so disqualified or to knowingly allow such an individual to continue to work with children or adults at risk.

#### Appointment and Supervision

The church’s safeguarding policy and procedures will be discussed with the applicant and they will be required to sign their agreement to adhere to them. All Workers will have a role description and clear lines of accountability to a leader and the leadership team.

Employees will also have an assigned supervisor whom they will meet with regularly to discuss work and address any issues or areas of concern. There will be a probationary period of six months in the role before any paid appointment is confirmed.

There will also be regular team meetings to review procedures, share concerns and identify other matters that may need clarification and guidance.

#### Training

All Workers will attend BUGB Excellence in Safeguarding training at least once every four years. Where a Worker is successfully recruited but has not yet been able to attend the training, they will be given a copy of the Baptist Union of Great Britain’s Gateway to Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding booklet and asked to complete the relevant sections. Additional specialist training will also be arranged where needed, for example, in First Aid.

#### Young helpers under 18 years of age

In law, young people under the age of 18 are children and cannot be treated as adult members of a team. Training and mentoring will be given to ensure that they are helped to develop and hone their skills, attitudes and experience. Young helpers will always be closely supervised by an adult leader and never given sole responsibility for a group of children. When considering ratios of staff to children, young helpers will be counted as children, not leaders. Our safeguarding procedures apply to a young helper in the same way they do to any other person. Parent/carer permission will be sought for young helpers to attend an event or help with a children’s group just as you would for any other person under 18 years of age.

### Safer Behaviour

The Church will treat everyone the respect and dignity that is due to them regardless of age or gender. Details of guidelines for all Workers are included in Appendix 1

We will endeavour to ensure that no one is left working alone with children, young people or adults at risk. Where there are insufficient leaders for groups we will reconsider whether we can run the group safely or whether it is possible to combine or rearrange groups. Where we run a group with only one Worker we will leave Internal doors open.

No person under 18 years of age will be left in sole charge of any children of any age and children or young people attending a group will not be left alone at any time.

If a child or adult at risk wants to talk on a one-to-one basis we will try to hold the conversation in a corner of a room where other people are present or leave a door open.

The only adults allowed to participate in children’s and adult at risk activities will be those safely appointed and appropriately trained.

### Safer Communication

A Worker’s role description will include an acknowledgement and approval of technologies such as email, social networking and mobile phone communications as a legitimate means of communicating with young people. It will also include the expectations of the Church in relation to their use. On the general consent form, parents/carers must sign to agree that the young person can receive such communications.

Young people will be made aware of the protocols that Workers follow in relation to electronic communications and have a right to decide whether they want a Worker to have their contact details and should not be pressurised otherwise. It is not appropriate to use these communication methods with children aged 11 years and younger.

Email should be limited to sharing generic information, for example, to remind young people about activities. If email is being used, Workers will ensure that they are accountable by copying each message to a leader or trustee.

Instant messaging should be kept to an absolute minimum. Workers will save any significant conversations and keep a log stating with whom and when they communicated.

Mobile phones will primarily be used for the purposes of information sharing. Any significant conversations/texts will be saved and any concerns will be passed on to a leader or trustee.

Workers will not take photos of children, young people or adults at risk unless permission is sought in advance and will not store such photos on personal phones.

Workers will not send private messages to children on social networks and will only use an account that is solely for children’s/youth work communications and separate from their own personal account. Workers will not accept ‘friend’ or ‘following’ requests from children on their personal account, nor seek to be ‘friends’ or a ‘follower’ of any child known to them in a church context.

### Adults at risk

Those who work with adults at risk may become involved in some aspects of personal finance - collecting pensions or benefits, shopping or banking, etc. If handling money for someone else, Workers will always obtain receipts or other evidence of what has been done and ensure that church their personal finances are kept separate. Any gifts received will be reported to the trustees, who will decide whether or not the gift can be accepted.

We will not canvass for donations from those adults who may be at risk, such as the recently bereaved.

If someone alters their will in favour of an individual known to them because of their church work or pastoral relationship, it will be reported to the trustees. Workers will not act as Executors for someone they know through their work or pastoral role. Expert legal advice will be sought on matters such as Power of Attorney and Appointeeship to ensure that the situation is clearly understood and is the most appropriate course of action for the adult at risk.

# Employment



## Equal Opportunities

The Church is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all fields of its activity in conformity with this Policy Statement.



### Definitions

* **‘Protected Characteristic’** refers to gender, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, disability, age, gender reassignment or religion or belief.
* **‘Direct Discrimination’** is where a person is treated less favourably than others are, or would be, for a reason related to one or more of the ‘Protected Characteristics’.
* **‘Indirect Discrimination’** occurs where an individual is subject to a provision, criterion or practice which one protected group finds more difficult to comply with than another (even though the provision is neutral)

### Policy Statement

The Church is an equal opportunities employer and will seek to ensure that:

* every applicant for a job and every employee has the right not be treated less favourably as a result of one or more Protected Characteristics except in relation to religious belief. where being a Christian or complying with a requirement related to religious belief, is an occupational requirement having regard to the ethos of the Church and the nature of the employment or the context in which it is carried out;
* persons already employed will be made aware of the provisions of this policy;
* the application of any recruitment, training and promotion policies will be solely on the basis of job requirements and the individual's ability and fitness for that work;
* all persons responsible for the selection, management and promotion of employees will be given information and/or training to enable them to minimise the risk of discrimination;
* appropriate training will be provided to enable employees to perform their jobs effectively and uphold the commitment to equality of opportunity;
* encouragement is given to all employees to take advantage of opportunities for training;
* any age limits imposed for entry to training will be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim and will not unnecessarily exclude certain groups of employees;
* recruitment, literature and advertisements will not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants as against another unless there is an occupational requirement which will be clearly stated and the application of that requirement is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim;
* applicants for posts will be given clear, accurate and sufficient information through advertisement, job descriptions and interviews, to enable them to assess their own suitability for a post;
* the requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with the Church; promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff participate fully in the workplace;
* employment policies and procedures will be kept under review, in appropriate cases by formal monitoring routines, to ensure that they do not operate against the Church's Policy Statement;
* where it appears that the Church's Policy Statement is not being observed, the circumstances will be investigated to see if there are any policies or criteria which exclude or discourage employees and, if so, whether these policies and criteria are justifiable;
* appropriate action will be taken where necessary to redress the effects of any action, policy or criteria which are found to have unjustifiably limited the observance of the Church's Policy Statement;
* particular care will be taken to deal with any complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic;
* a criminal record is not in itself a bar to being appointed to any post, only relevant offences will be taken into account when appointing to a post where a DBS check is required.

## Working with Ex-Offenders

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants’ suitability for positions of trust, this church undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information received.

We welcome people to serve the Church on the basis of the right mix of talent, skills, character, potential and call of God, including those with criminal records.

Only where an applicant is applying for a post that requires an enhanced or standard DBS check will they be required to provide one as part of the application process.

A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to a person serving with children and young people or vulnerable adults. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

In order to protect the confidentiality of those with criminal records we will access Disclosures through Due Diligence Checks.

We will invite the Baptist Union’s National Safeguarding Officer to advise us in the appointment process when necessary, and we agree to act on their advice for the protection of children and young people and adults at risk.

## Whistleblowing

Anytown Baptist Church is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability.

An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable Workers to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. Where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the Church then we will ensure that this can be disclosed without fear of reprisal.

The Trustees recognise that the Public Interest Disclosure Act, gives legal protection to Employees against being dismissed or penalised as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. The Church has endorsed the provisions set out below to ensure that no members of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

This policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It covers concerns which are in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but might then lead to other procedures e.g. disciplinary. These concerns could include:

* Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
* Failure to comply with a legal obligation or Statutes
* Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment
* Criminal activity
* Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
* Attempts to conceal any of these

It is not designed to question financial or business decisions taken by the Church nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under harassment, complaint, disciplinary or other procedures.

Protection will be provided to any Employee who discloses such concerns provided the disclosure is made:

* in good faith
* in the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person (see below). It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case, malicious or wild allegations could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

Anytown Baptist Church will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

## On-going Management and Development



### Terms and Conditions of Service

The Church will treat all Workers equally and create a working environment which respects their diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Terms and conditions of service for employees will comply with anti-discrimination legislation. This includes the provision of benefits such as flexible working hours, maternity, parental and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems and dress code.

### Induction

When a new Employee joins the Church he or she will be welcomed by their line manager or another member of staff who has been given this responsibility, shown round the premises, introduced to other members of the team and given an induction appropriate to the job role they will undertake. The briefing will also include details of the sickness, expenses, leave, hours of attendance, security arrangement and training; and a review of this Policy Handbook.

The induction procedure will take place within two months of the individual joining the Church (unless justifiable reasons have been recorded). A record confirming the content and the date of the individual’s induction will be kept on the individual’s personnel file.

### Support and Supervision

Where appropriate, Employees will have regular support and supervision meetings with their line manager. The purpose of support and supervision meetings is to enable both the Employee and their manager to discuss and progress work-related matters and to resolve any issues that may have occurred.

#### Appraisals for Employees

All Employees will receive regular annual appraisals undertaken by their identified manager. The aim of appraisals is to discuss with individual employees the effectiveness of their work. They should involve objective setting and be tailored to the skills of the individual. Appraisals are also used to record training and development needs. Summaries of the actions proposed as a result of these discussions are to be recorded for future reference.

The appraisal procedure is not to be used for disciplinary purposes, however where there are areas for development, these should be identified and remedies worked out. It is very important during these discussions that the employee is able to put across their point of view and express any differences of opinion they may have. It must be stressed however that actual or perceived difficulties should be aired as soon as possible and never wait to be raised during a performance review.

#### Appraisal for Ministers

We recommend that our Ministers use the Guided Self Appraisal framework provide by the Baptist Union. This guided self-appraisal places the main responsibility with the Minister who will ask someone to work voluntarily as a guide during the process of the appraisal. It enables the Minister to take stock of strengths and calling, to spend time thinking about the work and demands of ministry and provides an opportunity to reflect upon their own personal spiritual journey, where this is leading and whether there are areas that may need strengthening.

At the end of the self-appraisal, the minister will be encouraged to devise strategies for meeting the needs that have been discovered during the process and will be helped to identify appropriate resources.

Throughout the process, the minister remains in control. Although the guide may want to encourage a particular course of action, it remains an option for the minister to accept or reject this guidance. Similarly, the minister may decide that they do not want to seek information from the local church nor share the outcome of the appraisal with the Church or the Regional Minister.

#### Managing volunteer performance

All volunteers will be made aware of the expectations of the role for which they volunteer.

The Church aims to ensure that all its volunteers are adequately supervised and supported to work to the performance and behavioural standards required. The Church is committed to addressing any issues in performance, behaviour or attitude via support and supervision. The management of volunteers within the Church will be fair, transparent, objective and respectful.

Although formal appraisals will not be carried out, reviews may take place from time to time with volunteers to ensure that any issues are being raised and addressed and also to solicit their input on any areas for improvement in the running of the Church.

### Performance Management Process

Should any problems arise with employees’ performance, they will be dealt with under the process outlined in Appendix 2 and the employee will be made aware in writing of the particular issue and of each stage of the process, what it will entail and who will be involved. In the case of volunteers this is not a disciplinary process but should a volunteer be believed to have acted in a manner that has affected or could seriously affect the Church or its activities, the process outlined in Appendix 2 will be followed.

An employee can be accompanied to any meeting by someone from the Church (either another employee or volunteer) at any stage of the process, but their role will be as a supporter, not an advocate.

## Disciplinary Action

Our Disciplinary procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees of the Church to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and performance in their ministry/work. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all. This procedure applies to all employees of the Church and will normally be followed where a breach of discipline occurs but the procedure is not contractually binding upon the Church and is for guidance only.

Where possible, matters will be dealt with informally, but where the matter is more serious either a capability hearing or a disciplinary hearing will be held (see Appendix 2).

* No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated.
* No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct for which an individual may be dismissed without notice or payment in lieu of notice.
* An employee will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed.
* The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct warrants such action.

## Grievance

The Church realises the importance of good working relationships. For this reason, it aims to establish an atmosphere in which problems can be discussed and resolved by encouraging open communication. The Church also believes that it is in everyone’s best interest to ensure that employee’s grievances are dealt with quickly and fairly and that a grievance procedure enables individuals to raise issues with management that affect them in the workplace.

The Church will try to resolve, as quickly as possible, any grievance which an employee may have about their work or about actions of the Church, the Members or the employee’s colleagues. The procedure is non-contractual but applies to all employees who should familiarise themselves with its provisions.

Where Ministers have a grievance the Church will use the Baptist Union procedure entitled “Grievance Procedures for Baptist Ministers in Pastoral Charge”, found at [https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=111426and view=browser](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=111426&view=browser).

In the event that an employee submits a grievance during a disciplinary procedure, the Church may at its discretion, decide whether to suspend the disciplinary procedure in order to fully consider the grievance, or to deal with both procedures concurrently, where the issues are related.

In appropriate circumstances, the Church may suggest mediation as a means of addressing a grievance. Mediation may take the form of a neutral mediator, assisting parties to reach an amicable outcome to a grievance. Mediation will usually take the form of an open session between all affected parties and the mediator at which each party will state its case, followed by a series of meetings between each party and the mediator.

## Flexible Working

The Church will consider requests from employees for flexible working, which could include part-time work, working from home or job-sharing. To be eligible an employee must have been continuously employed for 26 weeks at the point of making the request.

The employee must specify in a written application the change in their contract that they seek and the date on which they would like the change to be implemented. The employee must also specify the effect that they think the change will have on the Church and suggest how these effects could be dealt with. Each employee may only make one application per year.

The Church will aim to handle the request as quickly as possible and will in any event deal with the whole process, including any appeal, within a three-month period. Once a written request has been received, the Church will arrange to meet with the employee, and the employee has the right to be accompanied. The application will be considered carefully but may be refused due to the burden of additional costs, a detrimental effect on the ability to meet ‘customer demand’, the inability to reorganise work among existing staff and a detrimental impact on quality or performance.

The Church will give their decision to the employee in writing. Where the decision is to refuse the application, we will state which of the grounds for refusal are considered to apply, explain why those grounds apply in relation to the application, and advise the employee of their right to appeal. An employee does have the right to appeal against the employer's decision.

If a flexible pattern of working is agreed this will be confirmed formally. Once a flexible arrangement is agreed, the employee does not have a right to revert to the previous arrangement. However, a trial period will normally be arranged in which the new arrangements can be tested, providing an option to return to the previous way of working.

## Parental Leave



### Maternity Leave

Statutory Maternity Leave is 52 weeks and is made up of:

* Ordinary Maternity Leave - first 26 weeks
* Additional Maternity Leave - last 26 weeks

A member of staff is not required to take 52 weeks but must take at least 2 weeks’ leave after a baby is born.

Usually, the earliest date Maternity leave can start is 11 weeks before the expected week of childbirth and will automatically start:

* the day after the birth if the baby is early
* automatically if the member of staff is off work for a pregnancy-related illness in the 4 weeks before the week that the baby is due

Pregnant members of staff will be given paid time off work to attend appointments for antenatal care.

Statutory maternity pay will be paid at the rate of 90% of the employee’s normal weekly earnings for the first six weeks and at a flat rate up to 33 further weeks.

In order to claim maternity pay a member of staff must have:

* 26 weeks’ continuous service up to and including the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth;
* Become pregnant and have reached or given birth before reaching the start of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth;
* Have started a period of maternity leave
* Average weekly earnings for the 8 weeks up to and including the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth equal to at least the lower earnings limit for the payment of primary class one national insurance contributions.
* Given 28 days’ notice to the Church of the date when she expects liability for statutory maternity pay to begin or if 28 days’ notice was not reasonably practicable, such lesser notice as was practicable;
* Produced medical evidence of the pregnancy and of the expected week of childbirth.

### Paternity Leave

Fathers who have completed 26 weeks’ continuous service ending with the week preceding the fourteenth week before the expected week of childbirth may take two weeks’ paternity leave within 56 days of a child’s birth and will be paid statutory paternity pay or 90% of the employee’s normal weekly earnings if that is lower.

Fathers must give the Church 28 days’ notice of their intention to take paternity leave.

### Shared Parental Leave

Staff may be entitled to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) where they are the parents of children born or adopted after 5 April 2015.

Staff can start SPL if they’re eligible and they or their partner end their maternity or adoption leave or pay early. The remaining leave will be available as SPL. The remaining pay may be available as ShPP. (ShPP is paid at the same rate as SMP). Sometimes only one parent in a couple will be eligible to get Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). This means that they can’t share the leave.

Eligible staff can take SPL in up to 3 separate blocks. They can also share the leave with their partner if they’re also eligible. Parents can choose how much of the SPL each of them will take.

For example, a mother could end her maternity leave after 12 weeks, leaving 40 weeks (of the total 52 week entitlement) available for SPL. If both the mother and her partner are eligible, they can share the 40 weeks. They can take the leave at the same time or separately.

SPL and ShPP must be taken between the baby’s birth and first birthday (or within 1 year of adoption).

To qualify for SPL, the child’s mother (or adoptive parent) must be eligible for either maternity leave or pay, Maternity Allowance or adoption leave or pay

The member of staff must also:

* have worked for the Church continuously for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the due date (or date they are matched with their adopted child)
* still be employed by the Church while they take SPL
* give the Church the correct notice including a declaration that their partner meets the employment and income requirements which allow the employee to get SPL

### Adoptive Parents

Parents who adopt a child will be entitled to one year’s adoption leave commencing either on the date on which the child is placed for adoption or on a date no more than 14 days before the expected date of placement.

To be eligible for adoption leave, a parent must have completed 26 weeks’ service by the time they are matched with a child.

Where a couple jointly adopt, only one of them will be entitled to take adoption leave but the other parent will be entitled to take statutory paternity leave.

The member of staff must give the Church notice of their intention to take adoption leave within seven days of being notified of having been matched with a child.

Statutory adoption pay will be paid for 39 weeks at the same flat rate as statutory maternity pay.

### Ordinary Parental Leave

Employees with at least one year’s continuous service are entitled to take unpaid parental (called ‘Ordinary Parental Leave) for the purpose of caring for the child if they are the parent of a child who is under 18 years old, or if they have adopted a child under the age of 18. Employees may take a maximum of 18 weeks’ unpaid parental leave. The employee’s right to take leave lasts until a child’s 18th birthday. Ordinary parental leave is available for each child. If an employee has, for example, two children under the age of 18, he or she may take 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave in respect of each of those children.

Leave can be taken in blocks or multiples of one week (unless the child has a disability in which case leave may be taken in blocks of one day) and employees may be required to give notice of their intention to take leave. Employees may only take four weeks’ leave in any twelve-month period and leave may be postponed by the Church for up to six months where the work of the Church would be unduly disrupted. However, leave cannot be postponed when the employee gives notice to take it immediately after the time the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption.

## Time Off for Dependants

Employees are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off in order to take action which is necessary:

1. to provide assistance on an occasion when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
2. to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
3. in consequence of the death of a dependant;
4. because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of the dependant;
5. to deal with an incident which involves a child of the employee and which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which no educational establishment which the child attends is responsible for him.

This right does not arise unless the employee informs the Church of the reason for their absence as soon as reasonably practicable and tells the Church how long they expect to be absent.

For these purposes, a dependant means a spouse, a child, a parent, or a person who lives in the same household as the employee, otherwise than by being his employee, tenant, lodger or boarder.

For the purposes of (a) and (b) above, dependant also includes any person who reasonably relies on the employee for assistance on an occasion when the person falls ill or is injured or assaulted or to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury.

For the purpose of (b) above, dependent includes any person who reasonably relies on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care.

## Retirement

*The Church does not have a fixed retirement age. This position will be reviewed periodically with a view to introducing a fixed retirement age if this would reflect the needs of the Church and providing the change can be objectively justified.*

*Staff are free to retire when they wish to do so and will not be pressurised into retiring because they have reached, or are approaching, a certain age.*

*The Church encourages all staff to discuss their short, medium and long-term plans as the need arises. We may also want to initiate these discussions with staff in order to plan for the needs of the Church.*

*If a workplace discussion does take place, we will aim to make it as informal as possible. We will not assume that staff want to retire just because they are approaching a certain age and will not make discriminatory comments, suggesting that they should move on due to age.*

*We will not make generalised assumptions that performance will decline with age, whether due to competence or health issues. If there are problems with performance or ill-health, these will be dealt with in the usual way, through the Capability procedure or Sickness Absence procedure.*

*Once a member of staff has decided to retire, they should give at a minimum the notice they are obliged to under their contract or terms of employment.*

## Staff Pensions

*All staff who are aged between 22 and State Pension Age and who earn over the automatic enrolment earnings trigger (as defined annually by the Government) will be offered membership of the Baptist Pension Scheme. There are two sections which the member of staff can choose between (more details will be provided at the time of making a choice).*

* ***Ministers and Staff section,*** *which requires higher levels of contribution and offers death and income protection benefits.*
* ***Basic section,*** *which has lower levels of contribution but does not provide income protection benefits.*

*A member of staff choosing not to join either of these sections, will be auto-enrolled into the National Employment Savings Trust - Government Pension scheme (NEST). Further details will be provided at the time the member of staff is making their choice. The member of staff will have the option to opt out from this scheme, in which case they will be automatically re-enrolled every 3 years (again with an option to opt out). If they remain in the scheme the contributions will be in line with the requirements of the scheme.*

*Staff aged between 22 and State Pension Age who earn above the lower level of qualifying earnings as set by the Government but below the automatic enrolment earnings trigger, will be admitted to the scheme of their choice (as described above) on request, but this will not be automatically offered and auto-enrolment will not apply.*

*Other members of staff (i.e. those under age 22, aged over State Pension Age or earning below the lower level of qualifying earnings) will not be entitled to a pension provided by the Church.*

# Finance



## Reserves

The Church is reliant for our income on free will offerings, supplemented by the proceeds of hiring out of the premises. If income were to drop suddenly or expenses to increase unexpectedly, reserves would be needed to cover the income lost less whatever savings could quickly be made from other expenditure. If the fall is a longer-term loss of income, more significant cuts in expenditure would need to be made. Reserves would be needed to tide us over the period in which these cuts could be put into place.

*[We will hold the greater of the following two calculations:*

1. *One month’s budgeted expenditure.*
2. *The difference between the budgeted levels of expenditure based on nine months of any costs associated with employees/ministers, six months’ worth of giving to Home Mission Fund and BMS World Mission, three months’ worth of all other budgeted items, and six months of our budgeted income from offerings and tax reclaims]*

The amount will be calculated each year when the budget is set for the following year.

If our reserve levels fall below the required amount, we will consider deferring/ceasing certain items of expenditure.

## Spending limits

The Deacons can approve expenditure of up to *£xxxx* on any single item. Expenditure above this amount will normally require church meeting approval. The exception is an emergency repair to the church building, manse or equipment that cannot wait until the next church meeting. In this case details of the expenditure should be presented to the next church meeting.

Expenses approved in the church budget (e.g. insurance) will not require further church meeting approval.

Three quotations should normally be obtained for any new item of work or equipment to be purchased where the expenditure is over *£xxx*.   The deacons will agree which provider to use (this will not necessarily be the cheapest in all cases).

Work may be agreed with less than three quotes:

* Where there is an existing relationship with a local provider and no concerns have been raised about previous work
* An emergency repair.
* Work where only one or two providers are willing and able to provide a quotation.

## Authorisation

*xxxx* of the Deacons will be designated as authorised signatories on all church accounts. The Treasurer will normally be one of these and will be the main contact for the accounts.

All cheques, direct debits and standing orders will require two signatures.

All on-line payments, except for transfers between different BRBC accounts, will require to be set up be one signatory and authorised by another. Transfers between Anytown Baptist Church accounts can be done by a single user.

Any cheques or online payments to an authorised signatory or a family member of an authorised signatory should be signed/approved by two other authorised signatories.

# Health and Safety

The church recognises and accepts its responsibilities for providing a safe and healthy environment with a view to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all those who use the Church premises.

For this reason, the Church will take all necessary steps within its power to meet its responsibilities, in so far as is reasonably practicable by, among other arrangements:

* the maintenance of the Church premises in a condition that is safe and without risk to health, and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks;
* the provision and maintenance of furnishings and equipment which are safe and without risks to health;
* assessing the risk to the health and safety of those who use the Church premises;
* ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
* the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of those who use the Church premises;
* the provision and maintenance of a proper environment for all Workers that is without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare;
* consulting where necessary with all Workers on the implementation of any changes to this policy;
* ensuring that adequate funds and resources are made available for carrying out this policy.

The Church will appoint a Health and Safety Officer who will work with the Trustees and paid staff to ensure this policy is implemented, but the Trustees remain responsible for the formulation of the policy and for the issuing of supplementary policy statements where necessary. The Health and Safety Policy will be adopted annually by Members at the Annual General Church Meeting.

The Health and Safety Officer will:

* carry out appropriate risk assessments (these to be reviewed annually) of the Church's premises and activities and report to the Trustees as necessary;
* co-ordinate the implementation of the Church's Health and Safety Policy (including Fire Safety);
* carry out investigations of any accidents and recommend measures for preventing their recurrence;
* ensure that accident and other appropriate records are maintained and returned to the appropriate bodies;
* ensure that all appropriate arrangements are made for first aid;
* ensure that all relevant Food Safety legislation is complied with;
* ensure that safety training courses are arranged, as may be necessary or desirable, so that specific legal requirements are adhered to and that any changes in such requirements are complied with and communicated to employees, leaders, helpers and volunteers as necessary;
* ensure that, where necessary all relevant safety regulations are prominently displayed and that all emergency procedures notices are exhibited and clearly visible at all times;
* ensure that access to and from emergency exits and fire equipment are not impaired and that corridors and stairs are kept free from obstructions other than of a temporary and partial nature.

All Workers will:

* take reasonable care of their health and safety, and of the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by a person's acts or omissions while working or helping;
* as regards any duty or requirement imposed on the Church or any person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, co-operate with the Church so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with;
* ensure that they shall not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of health, safety or welfare, in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions;
* make themselves familiar with and conform to the Health and Safety Policy of the Church at all times;
* observe all safety rules, procedures and codes of practice at all times, and in particular, be fully conversant with the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire or any other emergency;
* conform to all the Food Safety regulations that are applicable to themselves;
* co-operate with the Church to enable it to carry out the duties and requirements under the provision of all health and safety regulations, including participating in any training if called upon to do so;
* report to the Church's Health and Safety Officer all accidents or hazardous occurrences or dangers whether persons are injured or not as soon as is reasonably practicable;
* ensure that all working equipment and materials used by them are in a safe and serviceable condition and that no cables or wires are left in such a position as to be likely to cause anyone to trip;
* have regard to the possible consequences of their actions on the health, safety and welfare of all those persons who at any time and for whatever purpose may or will use the Church premises.

# Data Protection

We are committed to protecting personal data from being misused, getting into the wrong hands as a result of poor security or being shared carelessly, or being inaccurate, as we are aware that people can be upset or harmed if any of these things happen.

Appendix 3 sets out the measures we are committed to taking as an organisation and, what we will do to ensure that we comply with the relevant legislation.

In particular, we will make sure that all personal data is:

* processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
* processed for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;
* adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purposes for which it is being processed;
* accurate and, where necessary, up to date;
* not kept longer than necessary for the purposes for which it is being processed;
* processed in a secure manner, by using appropriate technical and organisational means;
* processed in keeping with the rights of data subjects regarding their personal data.



## Policy statement

Anytown Baptist Church is committed to protecting personal data and respecting the rights of our data subjects; the people whose personal data we collect and use. We value the personal information entrusted to us and we respect that trust, by complying with all relevant laws, and adopting good practice.

We process personal data to help us:

* maintain our list of church members;
* provide pastoral support for members and others connected with our church;
* provide services to the community including organisations using our premises;
* safeguard children, young people and adults at risk;
* recruit, support and manage staff and volunteers;
* maintain our accounts and records;
* administer gift aid claims;
* promote our services, activities and events;
* maintain the security of property and premises;
* respond effectively to enquirers and handle any complaints.

This policy has been approved by the church’s Trustees who are responsible for ensuring that we comply with all our legal obligations. It sets out the legal rules that apply whenever we obtain, store or use personal data.



We will handle personal information of all data subjects of the Church in line with the procedures outlined in Appendix 4 which set out the legal rules that apply whenever we obtain, store or use personal data.

All Workers who collect or handle any personal data on behalf of the Church, will be required to have read this policy and are required to comply with it.

Companies who are appointed by the Church as a data processor are required to comply with this policy under the contract with us. Any breach of the policy will be taken seriously and could lead to us taking contract enforcement action against the company, or terminating the contract. Data processors have direct obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), primarily to only process data on instructions from the Church and to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk involved.

Our Data Protection Trustee is responsible for advising Anytown Baptist Church and its staff and members about their legal obligations under data protection law, monitoring compliance with data protection law, dealing with data security breaches and with the development of this policy.

### Training and Guidance

We will provide general training at least annually for all staff to raise awareness of their obligations and our responsibilities, as well as to outline the law.

We may also issue procedures, guidance or instructions from time to time.

# Risk Management

The Trustees of the Church recognise that there are potential risks in all our activities and will seek to identify mitigating factors to reduce the risk where possible. The Trustees will maintain a risk register that list these risks, their likelihood and impact the actions to be taken to mitigate them and the person(s) responsible for ensuring the actions are carried out.

The risk register will be reviewed regularly to assess any changes and ensure action are being taken.

# Information Technology



The Church understands the good that comes from electronic communications and social networking. It is not our desire to create consternation or dampen creativity when it comes to the use of these media. At the same time, we recognise the tremendous potential for hurt and misunderstanding that go with these media.

The aim of this policy are to promote the professional, ethical, lawful and productive use of Church information technology (IT)

Church IT is provided for business use.

Use of any Church IT for personal reasons (including e-mail and the web) is only permitted in accordance with the guidance in this policy.

The Church reserves the right to monitor any aspect of its IT in order to protect its lawful business interests. Information gathered from such monitoring may be used to instigate or support disciplinary proceedings.

Users should have no expectation of privacy when using Church IT.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Depending on the severity of the breach, this may include:

* An informal warning from a manager
* A formal verbal or written warning for misconduct
* Dismissal for gross misconduct
* Criminal proceedings
* Civil proceedings to recover damages

The Church will keep a record of all owned equipment (laptops, projectors, audio / visual equipment etc). Such details will include make and model of the equipment, date of purchase, purchase price and serial number(s).

All Church owned equipment may be subject to audit (including all stored data) at any point in time by the Church Secretary or other person(s) appointed by the Trustees.

Details of how Church IT equipment may be used can be found in Appendix 5.



# Lettings



*The Church will actively seek to use the halls for any activity that primarily furthers the aims of the Church (as set out in our Governing Document). Any other lettings are a bonus. The Church will not actively market the premises, nor provide the sort of services that a commercial company would.*

*We will not let out the premises to any groups whose aims are contrary to the Church's purpose.*