Information and Disclaimer

This Template Health and Safety Policy and the accompanying Guidance Note have been prepared on behalf of the Baptist Union of Scotland ("BUS") by a member of one of our BUS churches who has significant experience in Health & Safety, and who is also a Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

It is hoped that churches will find the Template Policy and the Guidance Notes to be helpful. However, nothing contained in the Template Policy and/or the Guidance Notes should be regarded as containing specific advice to any particular church. Each church is responsible for deciding on its own Health and Safety Policy, and should take whatever advice it considers to be necessary in that connection. Neither the author of the Template Policy and the Guidance Notes nor the BUS can accept any liability arising out of the use by a church of the Template Policy and/or the Guidance Notes.

[Insert Church Name] | Health and Safety Policy

Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent

[Insert Church Name]

We are committed to the Health, Safety and Welfare of our church members, staff, volunteers, and members of the public that use our premises.

Our aim is to ensure that our church premises are maintained as a safe place to work and worship for everyone and that all persons connected with our activities are kept safe from harm, so far as reasonably practicable.

We aim to prevent work-related injuries and ill health.

We will ensure the safety of all persons connected with our activities and keep our premises in a safe condition by carrying out scheduled inspections, risk assessments and by maintaining all equipment and facilities.

This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply to ensure we have fulfilled our statutory duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all associated regulations.

We would ask that you help us maintain a healthy and safe work and worship environment by reporting hazards, accidents and dangerous occurrences.

We would ask that you look after any safety equipment or Personal Protective Equipment provided by us that we consider necessary for your Health & Safety and to follow safety instructions and signs.

We would like to remind you that you are responsible for your own safety and the safety of others who use these premises.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary.

Name: [Insert Full Name]

Role: [Insert Role – e.g., Church Health & Safety Coordinator / Minister / Trustee]

Signature: _____

Date: [Insert Date]

2 Organisation and Responsibility

This table outlines the key roles and responsibilities for health and safety within the church.

Role	Responsibilities
Church Leadership Team	Overall responsibility for implementing this policy and ensuring the arrangements set out within this policy are maintained.
Health & Safety Lead	Coordinates inspections, risk assessments, incident reporting, and policy reviews.
Safeguarding Officer	Overseeing safeguarding policies and practices, including handling concerns and reporting incidents. Providing guidance on safeguarding best practices and legal obligations. Ensuring that staff and volunteers comply with safeguarding requirements, including background checks.
Employees & Volunteers	Follow safety procedures and use protective equipment Report hazards, faults, and incidents promptly Participate in relevant training (e.g., fire safety, manual handling) Avoid misuse of safety equipment or procedures
Contractors	Work in a safe manner at all times and comply with relevant health & safety legislation Provide insurance and risk assessments where required Follow church safety procedures and cooperate with staff Maintain equipment in safe condition and notify the church of any subcontractors
Congregation & Visitors	Act safely and responsibly while on church premises Report hazards or concerns to staff or volunteers Follow safety signage and evacuation instructions

3. Arrangements

This section sets out the general arrangements for managing all aspects of health and safety and dealing with specific risks within our church.

3.1	Accident Reporting

We will record details of any accidents that occur. We will report to the enforcing authority and keep records of certain accidents to employees, volunteers, and members of the public in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

Accident Book / Records of any accidents are located: **[insert location]**

3.2	Asbestos

We will take steps to identify the presence of asbestos in our buildings and, if so, assess any risk from it. We will then implement any plan to manage that risk.

We will also provide relevant information to others who might need it (e.g. building contractors).

We will keep records of the checks, assessments and plans we have made

3.3	Church Buildings

We will ensure that the fabric of our buildings is regularly inspected to make sure it remains safe.

Defects will be repaired as soon as is practicable.

Where necessary, temporary measures will be taken to prevent danger until permanent repairs can be made.

A check is made of all glazing in the building to ensure that any glass in windows below waist height, and in doors and beside doors below shoulder height, is of a safety material or is protected against breakage.

Lightning conductors will be checked and tested by a competent contractor every 5 years.

3.4	Church Grounds

We will ensure that the church grounds, including boundary walls and gates, are kept in good repair.

Where appropriate, trees within our grounds will be inspected by a competent person and have any necessary work carried out to make them safe.

Headstones, tombs and monuments will be checked regularly to ensure they are properly maintained.

3.5	Contractors

Anyone entering church premises for the purpose of carrying out work, other than an employee or voluntary worker of the church, will be regarded as a contractor. All contractors, including the self-employed, must abide by the following:

- Have their own Health & Safety policy (where required by law) and provide a copy.
- Have appropriate public and employer's liability insurance in place and provide a copy.
- Comply with all requirements of this health and safety policy and cooperate with us in providing a safe place of work and a safe system of work.
- Maintain all plant & equipment in good condition
- Where the contractor wishes to use sub-contractors or other persons other than their own employees this must be notified to the church

3.6	Construction work

Where maintenance, refurbishment and restoration work is planned for our church, we will identify what we need to do to ensure the safety of all those concerned before work starts. We will also determine if we have any responsibilities under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and comply with these if necessary

3.7	Display Screen Equipment

Where our employees and volunteers regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more we will analyse workstations to identify precautions, implementing these as necessary. We will also provide information, training, eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed

3.8	Electrical Safety

Misuse and abuse of electricity is a significant cause of fires and injury. Faulty electrical equipment can kill.

We will ensure that any electrical system, fixed machine, or portable appliances is inspected, tested, and maintained by someone who is competent to prevent danger. Any defective equipment will not be used until it is repaired or replaced.

Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) - every five years the fixed electrical wiring system is to be inspected and tested by a NICEIC / Select registered competent electrical contractor.

PAT testing will be carried out at regular intervals by a competent person and records will be kept, any defective items will be removed from use.

All employees and voluntary workers must observe the following:

- Visually check all electrical equipment before use
- Report all faults immediately to the health and safety coordinator.
- Do not attempt to use or repair faulty equipment.
- Electrical equipment should be switched off and disconnected when not in use for long periods.
- Extension cables / leads should be so positioned and so protected that they do not constitute a tripping hazard and are not subject to damage.
- No person is to make any alterations to the electrical installation without prior agreement.
- Do not overload sockets or extension leads.

3.9	Environment and Sustainability

We will consider environmental impacts in our health and safety practices, including safe disposal of waste, energy-efficient lighting, and reducing use of hazardous substances.

3.10	Event Safety

For any public events, we will carry out specific risk assessments, ensure crowd control measures are in place, and provide adequate first aid and fire safety arrangements.

3.11	Fire Safety

We will fulfil our obligations under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Fire Safety (Scotland) regulations 2006 by undertaking the following measures:

Carry out and record a suitable Fire Risk Assessment,

Regularly inspect our fire detection system including call points & sounders'

Maintain suitable fire-fighting equipment,

Carry out regular fire evacuation drills and implement any learnings.

If a fire is discovered:

- Immediate raise the alarm by activating the nearest call point.
- Contact the emergency services on 999.
- Evacuate the premises.

On hearing the alarm:

- Leave the area immediately and gather at the Assembly Point.
- Do not stop to collect any personal belongings.
- Await the emergency services and do not return to the building until instructed.

3.12	First Aid

First aid kits are available within the building and are clearly marked. If the contents of any first aid kit is used, then this must be reported to the person in charge.

First aid should only be administered by suitable trained and competent persons.

First aid kits will be checked monthly by the Secretary to ensure that the contents have not been used, that none of the contents have expired and that no medicines or other preparations are contained within the kit

First aid kit is located here: **[insert location]**

3.13	Gas safety

Gas boilers and any other gas equipment will be maintained and checked annually by a competent Gas Safe registered gas installer. Any defects found will be corrected immediately and we will keep records of the checks made

3.14	Hazardous Substances inc. COSHH

Where possible, the use of hazardous substances has been eliminated. Where this is not possible, hazardous substances are locked away and only used by persons with the appropriate experience.

All hazardous substances (identified by an orange warning symbol) will be assessed for safety using a COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessment.

This will be completed and will be reviewed annually.

Hazardous substances must not be decanted into unmarked containers.

Please ensure that you follow the manufacturer's guidance and the COSHH assessment.

Ensure that you are familiar with the precautions that you might need to take in the event of an emergency involving the substance.

3.15	Information, Instruction and Training

We will provide any necessary information and training for our employees and volunteers in a timely manner. We will keep a record of what is provided. We will also give relevant information to contractors and self-employed people who may need this to complete their work safely.

3.16	Lifting Equipment
We will ensure that any lifting equipment is properly maintained and thoroughly examined periodically by a competent person.	
3.17	Lighting
In order to ensure that the church is adequately lit, regular inspections to be carried out ensuring that all lights in church, are working and are replaced as necessary. The necessary safety precautions will be followed for replacing bulbs at high levels.	
3.18	Lone Working
We will identify circumstances where our employees and volunteers work alone, and implement suitable precautions to ensure their safety	
3.19	Manual Handling
Our policy is to eliminate the need for manual handling as far as reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to avoid the need to move loads, we will carry out risk assessments and make use of lifting aids, including trolleys, lifts and hoists as far as possible. The necessary training will be given to all those employees and voluntary workers who are required to undertake manual handling. Only those persons who have received the appropriate training are authorised to undertake manual handling tasks. We will avoid the need for lifting or carrying heavy objects as far as is possible. Where this is not practical, we will make use of lifting aids (such as, trolleys) or other precautions including team lifting.	
3.20	Oil Storage
Where we store large quantities of oil, heating oil for example, we will take adequate precautions to ensure that oil cannot leak into the ground or any water course. This may include the provision of a double skinned plastic tank, an adequate bund, regular checks and proper maintenance etc.	
3.21	Plant and Machinery
You must not operate any plant or machinery if you have not been trained and authorised to use it.	

Items of plant & machinery must only be used for its intended purpose.

Plant & machinery must be safely isolated / switched off before any adjustments are made.

After carrying out maintenance and adjustments, all guards must be replaced before the machinery is used

Before using any item of plant or machinery, a pre-use check must be made to ensure it is in safe working condition, correctly adjusted and that there are no loose nuts, bolts or other defects

The appropriate personal protective equipment must be worn when operating any item of plant or machinery.

Persons under the age of 18 may not use hand tools and are not permitted to operate any power-driven item of plant or machinery

Ladders may only be used when they can be safely secured. This may necessitate the use of ladder ties or a two-person operation

Any defect or damage found to any item of plant or machinery must be reported to the health and safety coordinator

Any plant or machinery to be regularly maintained and a schedule kept of maintenance requirements

3.22	Preparation of Food

We will ensure that on those occasions when we prepare food we use a clean and disinfected work surface, utensils and equipment.

We will store food in such a way as to avoid contamination, provide hand-washing facilities and suitable arrangements for the disposal of food waste.

All persons preparing or handling food in the kitchen will receive adequate supervision, instruction, and training.

Records of training will be kept within the church files.

3.23	Risk Assessments

To ensure we stay compliant with Health & Safety legislation we will assess the risks arising from our activities and to address hazards identified we will complete risk assessments.

We will record our findings, implementing any necessary precautions. We will review and revise these where we suspect that they are no longer valid.

Risk Assessment

{Insert person} will identify hazards and perform a Risk Assessment. The outcome of this assessment will be recorded and kept in the Health and Safety Folder. The significant findings of this assessment will be made available to Staff and Volunteers through information, instruction and training.

Where actions are needed to reduce or eliminate risk, the Minister will decide a time scale by which the corrective actions are to be completed. This will be based on the principle of "As Low As Reasonably Practicable".

Any person discovering a hazard must inform the Minister as soon as possible. In the case of serious and immediate danger, the correct emergency procedures must be followed.

3.24	Safeguarding

We will implement measures to ensure that additional protections are in place to create a safe environment for children, elderly individuals, and adults at risk.

This includes:

- Evaluating the safety of all church areas accessible to vulnerable groups.
- Ensuring that activities, especially those involving children or adults at risk, have appropriate supervision and safeguards in place.
- Requiring a minimum of two adults to be present during children's activities, where feasible.
- Conducting background checks on all employees and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults.
- Providing health and safety training for employees and volunteers.
- Providing special consideration in situations where adults at risk may need additional assistance.
- Ensuring that all concerns about adult abuse or neglect are reported to the Safeguarding Officer.

Responding to Concerns

In cases where a concern is raised regarding the welfare of a child, young person or an adult at risk or where concerns are raised regarding the conduct of any person working with vulnerable groups, the following actions must be taken:

- Any suspicion or allegation of abuse or harm will be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Officer.
- The Safeguarding Officer will act in line with the church's safeguarding procedures and, when appropriate, will report the incident to the relevant authorities (e.g., social services, police).

- Confidentiality will be maintained, and personal information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

The church will communicate safeguarding policies and procedures to all staff, volunteers, and congregants as necessary.

3.25	Slips, Trips and Falls

In order to reduce as far as is reasonably practicable the risk of slips, trips and falls, taking account of any difficulty the frail, elderly or disabled may have in negotiating access.

We will make periodic checks to ensure that floors, coverings, steps and pathways remain in good condition, free from obstruction and that any precautions (such as, hand rails, lighting) remain adequate.

Particular note to be made of moss, algae and leaves on paths.

Any defects to be reported and repairs carried out.

We will have arrangements in place to manage pathways in winter weather.

3.26	Water Hygiene / Legionella

We will assess the risk of Legionella in our water systems and implement control measures such as regular flushing, temperature checks, and professional inspections where necessary.

3.27	Working at Height

Where possible we will try and avoid the need for work at height. Where this is not practicable, we will ensure that any work is properly planned to identify suitable precautions.

We will make sure that these are implemented, including the provision of any training and checks to ensure the safety of any equipment used.

Only contractors or competent volunteers approved by the church may work at high levels, subject to the necessary safety provisions being in place. A high level is any level where an injury could result from a fall.

3.28	Work Equipment

Any work equipment (including any hand tools) we provide will be suitable, in good condition and properly maintained. Where necessary, some equipment (such as, ladders) will be regularly checked to make sure they are safe. We will keep records of any checks we make.

Reviewed **[Insert Date When Policy Was Last Reviewed]**	