HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Adopted by the Trustees on: 21.10.2026

Next Review Due: 21.10.2027

Contents

Policy Statement	Page 3
Legal and Guidance Framework	Page 4
Responsibilities	Page 3
3.1 Church Trustees	Page 3
3.2 Health & Safety Officer	Page 4
3.3 Employees, Members and Volunteers	Page 4
Risk Assessment and Risk Management	Page 4
Accident, Incident, Near-Miss and RIDDOR Reporting	Page 5
First Aid	Page 5
Fire Safety	Page 5
Emergency Procedures	Page 6
Electrical Safety	Page 6
Manual Handling	Page 6
Work at Height and Ladders	Page 7
Slips, Trips and Falls	Page 7
Lone Working	Page 7
Contractors and Maintenance	Page 7
Asbestos	Page 8
COSHH – Hazardous Substances	Page 8
Work Equipment and Other Equipment	Page 8
Children, Young People and Adults at Risk	Page 8
Accessibility and Disability	Page 9
Kitchen and Food Activities	Page 9
Lettings and Hirers	Page 9
Training, Information and Communication	Page 9
Monitoring, Inspection and Records	Page 10
Review of Policy	Page 10
Related Policies and Documents	Page 10
Appendix A – Annual Health & Safety Review Checklist	Page 11

1. Policy Statement

United Church Ferndown recognises its responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of all employees, volunteers, church members, children and young people, adults at risk, hirers, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected by the church's activities or premises.

The church is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to prevent accidents, injury and ill health and to provide a safe and supportive environment. This policy operates alongside the church's separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment, Safeguarding Policy, activity-specific risk assessments, emergency procedures and other relevant policies.

The Trustees accept overall governance responsibility for health and safety and will provide appropriate leadership, resources, competent assistance and oversight. Everyone using the premises has a part to play in maintaining a safe environment.

2. Legal and Guidance Framework

The church will have regard to applicable UK health and safety legislation and current official guidance, including, where relevant:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).
- Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981, where applicable.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), where applicable.
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.
- Relevant current guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), GOV.UK, Baptists Together and the United Reformed Church.

Fire safety is governed by the church's separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment, which should be read alongside this policy.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Church Trustees

The Trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate health and safety arrangements are established, implemented, monitored and reviewed. They will:

- Appoint a Health & Safety Officer and ensure the role has appropriate authority and support.
- Ensure adequate resources are available for health and safety measures.
- Ensure suitable risk assessments and other health and safety arrangements are in place.
- Ensure significant accidents, incidents and near misses are reviewed and appropriate action taken.
- Review health and safety performance, risk assessments and incident records at least annually and following significant change or incident.

- Ensure relevant policies and procedures are communicated to those who need to follow them.
- Ensure competent external advice or contractors are used where specialist knowledge is required.
- Ensure the separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment remain subject to appropriate review.

3.2 Health & Safety Officer

The appointed Health & Safety Officer will:

- Keep up to date with relevant legislation and official guidance.
- Coordinate and review health and safety risk assessments.
- Arrange or undertake appropriate inspections of buildings, equipment and activities.
- Monitor accident, incident and near-miss reporting.
- Ensure first-aid arrangements, signage and reporting systems are maintained.
- Coordinate with the person(s) responsible for fire safety and other relevant office holders.
- Report significant concerns to the Trustees and monitor agreed corrective actions.
- Recommend that an activity, item of equipment or area is withdrawn from use where an immediate or significant health and safety risk is identified, pending appropriate action.
- Maintain or coordinate the health and safety records identified in this policy.

3.3 Employees, Members and Volunteers

Everyone involved in church activities is expected to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.
- Follow this policy and reasonable instructions.
- Use equipment and premises appropriately.
- Report hazards, accidents, incidents and near misses promptly.
- Not undertake work for which they are not suitably competent, trained or authorised.
- Cooperate with risk assessments, emergency arrangements and safety procedures.

4. Risk Assessment and Risk Management

Suitable and sufficient risk assessments will be completed for church activities, premises, equipment and significant hazards. Assessments will identify hazards, people who may be affected, existing controls, further actions, responsible persons and review dates.

Risk assessments will be reviewed:

- At appropriate intervals according to the level of risk.
- When an activity, equipment, premises or working arrangement changes.
- Before new or unusual activities take place.
- After an accident, significant incident or near miss where the assessment may need revision.
- When information indicates that existing controls may no longer be effective.

Activities to be considered include, where applicable:

- Worship services and rehearsals.
- Children's, youth and educational activities.
- Community activities and Warm Spaces.
- Concerts, fêtes, BBQs and fundraising events.

- Sponsored walks and activities away from the premises.
- Kitchen and food-related activities.
- Cleaning, gardening and maintenance.
- Moving furniture and equipment.
- Use of ladders and other work-at-height equipment.
- Sound, lighting, AV and livestream equipment.
- External lettings and events.

5. Accident, Incident, Near-Miss and RIDDOR Reporting

All accidents, injuries, significant incidents and near misses must be reported to the Health & Safety Officer or another designated responsible person as soon as reasonably practicable.

- Appropriate first aid and emergency assistance will be provided.
- Accidents and first-aid treatment will be recorded using the church's agreed recording system.
- Significant incidents will be investigated to identify causes and preventative actions.
- Near misses will be recorded and reviewed because they may identify risks before someone is injured.
- Where an incident may fall within RIDDOR, the church will determine whether a report to the HSE is required and, where required, make the report within the statutory timescale.
- RIDDOR reporting does not replace the church's own accident and incident recording process.

6. First Aid

The church will undertake a first-aid needs assessment and provide appropriate first-aid equipment, facilities and trained personnel having regard to the activities, numbers attending, premises and risks.

- First-aid kits will be provided in appropriate and accessible locations and checked regularly.
- The location of first-aid equipment and the identity of trained first-aiders will be communicated appropriately.
- For services and events, first-aid provision will be proportionate to the identified risks and reasonably practicable staffing arrangements.
- Where a trained first-aider is not available, organisers will ensure that appropriate emergency arrangements are in place.
- First-aid treatment and replenishment of supplies will be recorded as appropriate.

7. Fire Safety

United Church Ferndown maintains a separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment. These documents set out the church's detailed arrangements for fire prevention, detection, evacuation, emergency procedures, fire safety equipment, testing, maintenance and training.

The Health & Safety Policy operates alongside those documents. Everyone using the premises must comply with the church's fire safety arrangements.

The Trustees will ensure that:

- Appropriate fire safety arrangements are maintained.

- The separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment are reviewed at appropriate intervals and when circumstances change.
- Identified fire safety actions are monitored and addressed.
- Relevant employees, volunteers and hirers receive appropriate fire safety information.
- Fire safety responsibilities are clearly allocated.
- Changes to the building, activities, occupancy or use of the premises are considered within the fire risk assessment.

Detailed fire safety arrangements are contained within the separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment and are not duplicated in this policy.

8. Emergency Procedures

The church will maintain appropriate emergency arrangements for foreseeable incidents, including:

- Serious injury or medical emergency.
- Gas leak or suspected carbon monoxide incident.
- Electrical incident.
- Structural or building safety concern.
- Severe weather or other environmental emergency.
- Serious security incident.

Fire emergencies and evacuation arrangements are covered by the separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment.

Emergency procedures will identify, as appropriate, how to raise an alarm, contact emergency services, evacuate or shelter, account for people, preserve safety and report the incident. Emergency arrangements will be communicated to relevant staff, volunteers and hirers.

9. Electrical Safety

Electrical equipment and installations will be maintained so that they remain safe to use. The church will not rely on an automatic annual PAT-testing requirement; inspection and testing frequencies will be determined by risk, equipment, environment, use, previous defects and manufacturer guidance.

- Users should carry out appropriate visual checks before using electrical equipment.
- Faulty, damaged or suspect equipment must be taken out of service immediately and clearly identified.
- Repairs and formal electrical work will be undertaken by competent persons.
- Fixed electrical installations will be inspected and tested at appropriate intervals based on risk and relevant guidance.
- Extension leads and portable equipment will be used safely and not create trip, overload or other hazards.

10. Manual Handling

- Manual handling risks will be assessed where significant.
- Volunteers and staff will be given appropriate information and instruction.

- Mechanical aids or alternative arrangements will be used where reasonably practicable.
- No one is expected to lift or carry a load beyond their capability.
- Particular care will be taken when moving chairs, tables, staging, musical equipment and other heavy or awkward items.

11. Work at Height and Ladders

- Work at height will be avoided where reasonably practicable and otherwise planned and controlled.
- Ladders and step ladders will only be used when suitable for the task and after considering safer alternatives.
- Equipment will be inspected before use and kept in good condition.
- People undertaking work at height must be suitably competent and instructed.
- High-level lighting, decorations, Christmas decorations, storage access, gutters and maintenance work will be considered in risk assessments.
- No person should improvise access arrangements, such as standing on chairs or unstable furniture.

12. Slips, Trips and Falls

- Walkways, stairs and exits will be kept clear.
- Trailing cables will be controlled and secured safely.
- Spillages and wet floors will be dealt with promptly and appropriately signed.
- Flooring, mats, lighting and uneven surfaces will be monitored and defects reported.
- Storage will be organised so that items do not create hazards.

13. Lone Working

Where people work alone in the church building, the level of risk will be considered and appropriate arrangements put in place.

- Higher-risk work should not normally be undertaken alone.
- Appropriate communication or check-in arrangements will be used where necessary.
- People working alone should know how to obtain assistance in an emergency.
- Opening and closing arrangements should take account of personal security.
- Maintenance, work at height, electrical work and other higher-risk activities require particular consideration.

14. Contractors and Maintenance

Contractors will be selected and managed proportionately to the work and risks involved.

- Appropriate evidence of competence and insurance will be obtained where relevant.
- Contractors will provide risk assessments and method statements where appropriate.
- The church will provide relevant information about known hazards, including asbestos information where applicable.
- Site access, safeguarding, emergency arrangements and areas of work will be agreed as necessary.
- Work will be supervised or monitored where appropriate.

- Electrical, gas, structural and other specialist work will be undertaken by suitably competent persons.
- Contractors remain responsible for the safety of their own work and personnel while cooperating with the church's arrangements.

15. Asbestos

Where asbestos-containing materials may be present, the church will maintain appropriate asbestos information and management arrangements. Before maintenance, drilling, cutting, refurbishment or similar work is undertaken, relevant asbestos information will be checked and provided to contractors as appropriate. No person should disturb suspected asbestos-containing material.

16. COSHH – Hazardous Substances

- An inventory of relevant hazardous substances will be maintained where appropriate.
- COSHH assessments will be completed for substances presenting a relevant risk.
- Cleaning and maintenance chemicals will be stored securely, clearly labelled and used according to instructions.
- Safety data and manufacturer's instructions will be followed where relevant.
- Appropriate PPE and ventilation will be provided where required.
- People using hazardous substances will receive appropriate information and instruction.
- Substances will be disposed of safely.

17. Work Equipment and Other Equipment

Equipment provided or used by the church will be suitable for its intended purpose, maintained in a safe condition and used by people who have appropriate information, instruction or training.

This includes, where applicable:

- Kitchen equipment.
- Cleaning equipment.
- Gardening and maintenance equipment.
- Musical equipment.
- Sound, lighting, AV and livestream equipment.
- Staging and furniture.

18. Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

This policy operates alongside the church's Safeguarding Policy. Health and safety procedures do not replace safeguarding procedures.

- Activities involving children, young people or adults at risk will follow the church's safeguarding arrangements.
- Supervision will be appropriate to the activity and identified risks.
- Equipment and rooms will be suitable and safely used.
- Emergency arrangements will consider those who may need assistance.

- Safeguarding concerns will be reported through the church's safeguarding procedures.

19. Accessibility and Disability

Health and safety arrangements will take account of the needs of people who may require additional assistance, including people with mobility, hearing, visual or other accessibility needs.

- Access and exit routes will be kept usable.
- Emergency arrangements will identify appropriate assistance where required.
- Risk assessments will consider temporary as well as permanent disabilities or limitations.
- Information will be communicated in an appropriate way where reasonably practicable.

20. Kitchen and Food Activities

Where the church provides food or refreshments, appropriate food safety and hygiene arrangements will be followed. Activities such as community meals, cafés, BBQs and fundraising events will be risk assessed where appropriate. This section does not replace any separate food safety procedures or legal requirements.

21. Lettings and Hirers

All hirers will:

- Receive appropriate health and safety and fire safety information.
- Comply with the church's conditions of hire and emergency procedures.
- Use only the areas and equipment agreed with the church.
- Keep exits and emergency routes clear.
- Report accidents, incidents, damage and hazards promptly.
- Provide appropriate supervision for their own participants.
- Ensure that their activities comply with applicable safeguarding requirements.
- Provide their own risk assessments where the nature or scale of their activities requires them.

Where more than one organisation or responsible person has duties for an activity or part of the premises, the parties will cooperate and communicate so that risks are appropriately controlled.

22. Training, Information and Communication

- Relevant employees and volunteers will receive appropriate information, instruction and training.
- Training needs will be identified according to role and risk.
- People responsible for specialist tasks will be appropriately competent.
- Fire safety training and information will be managed through the separate Fire Safety Policy and relevant fire safety arrangements.
- Manual handling, COSHH, equipment use, lone working and work-at-height arrangements will be communicated as relevant.
- Changes to health and safety procedures will be communicated to those affected.

23. Monitoring, Inspection and Records

The church will maintain proportionate records of health and safety arrangements, which may include:

- Risk assessments and action plans.
- Accident, incident and near-miss records.
- First-aid checks and records.
- Electrical inspection and testing records.
- Equipment inspections and maintenance.
- COSHH assessments.
- Contractor information and relevant insurance/competence records.
- Training records.
- Asbestos information and management records where applicable.
- Evidence that the separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment have been reviewed.

Inspection and testing frequencies will be determined by legal requirements, manufacturer instructions, competent advice and risk assessment rather than applying an automatic annual frequency to every item.

24. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, official guidance, the church's activities or premises, significant incidents, or other circumstances indicating that the policy should be revised.

The review will be led by the Health & Safety Officer and presented to the Trustees for approval. Significant changes will be communicated to relevant staff, volunteers and hirers.

25. Related Policies and Documents

- Fire Safety Policy.
- Fire Risk Assessment.
- Safeguarding Policy.
- Risk Assessments for specific activities.
- Hirer's Health & Safety / Fire Safety Summary.
- Emergency Procedures.
- Asbestos Management Information, where applicable.
- Relevant insurance documentation.
- Accident and Incident Reporting arrangements.

Appendix A – Annual Health & Safety Review Checklist

- Policy reviewed and approved by Trustees.
- Health & Safety Officer confirmed.
- Risk assessments reviewed and significant actions completed or scheduled.
- Separate Fire Safety Policy and Fire Risk Assessment reviewed and current.
- Accident, incident and near-miss records reviewed.
- First-aid needs assessment and first-aid supplies reviewed.
- Electrical safety arrangements reviewed.
- Work-at-height and ladder arrangements reviewed.
- Lone-working arrangements reviewed.
- COSHH assessments and chemical storage reviewed.
- Contractor arrangements reviewed.
- Asbestos information reviewed where applicable.
- Lettings and hirer arrangements reviewed.
- Training needs reviewed.
- Accessibility arrangements reviewed.
- Any significant building, equipment or activity changes incorporated into risk assessments.

This policy was approved by the Trustees of United Church Ferndown on 21/10/2026

Health & Safety Officer: _____

Date: _____