



Hand to Mouth

Safeguarding Policy

Index

Enabling children to explore Christianity and reflect on their own spiritual journey

- Safeguarding Statement
- Child protection policy
- Code of conduct
- Complaints, concerns and compliments policy
- E-safety and Photography policy
- Physical intervention policy
- Recruitment of Ex Offenders
- Risk Management and Assessment
- Safe recruitment policy
- Volunteer policy
- Vulnerable Adults

Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of us all. Hand to Mouth recognises its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Act 1989. Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child/young person.

It is difficult to acknowledge sometimes that abuse can happen within our working environment but any group or organisation working with children needs to be alert to the possibility of abuse occurring. It is the responsibility of us all to put the welfare of children and young people first and to recognise behaviours that can put children at risk.

We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives, such as domestic abuse or substance misuse.

We aim to create a safe and respectful environment within which children and young people can thrive and Hand to Mouth can operate with the help and security of clear guidance. We can on rare occasions fail to achieve this, but we continue to try.

These guidelines are for the use of all staff, trustees, volunteers and other visitors. The guidelines can be shared with schools, parents, and carers of the children and young people to whom we offer a service.

Child Protection Policy

1. STATEMENT

Hand to Mouth is made up of volunteers and paid staff. We believe that everyone, of all ages and creed are of equal value and worth in the sight of God and aim to follow Biblical principles in all that we do. Therefore

- we commit ourselves to the nurture, protection and safekeeping of all, especially children and young people
- it is the responsibility of each one of us to protect children and young people from physical, sexual and emotional abuse and to report any abuse suspected or discovered
- we are committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with children and young people. We will provide appropriate supervision and recognise mutual accountability.

All children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse.

- **physical injury** – includes hitting, burning, throwing or suffocating a child;
- **emotional abuse** – the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child. It can involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger;
- **sexual abuse** – this involves enticing or forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities and encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **neglect** – this is defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, which is likely to result in damage to the child's health and development.

2. RESPONDING TO A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

The Manager at Hand to Mouth acts as a Child Protection Coordinator should we need to respond to a child protection concern. The Manager will:

- ensure that policies and procedures are implemented effectively
- liaise with the Authorities where appropriate
- coordinate support for staff members and volunteers affected by a child protection concern
- ensure that all workers and managers have training in child protection issues and with dealing with a child protection concern
- review policies and procedures annually or in the light of new government legislation or guidance

If a Hand to Mouth worker believes there are concerns about a child or young person, these must be raised with the school concerned and our Manager. An appropriate course of action will then be agreed.

3. REPORTING A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

All Allegations of child abuse must be reported. Initially this will be to the School Head, who then has a duty to inform Child Protection teams. The allegation may then be investigated by one or all of the three different agencies:

- The local authority social services department
- The police (Family Protection Unit)

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- The NSPCC

Hand to Mouth staff will work co-operatively with these bodies.

4. GUIDANCE ON CHILD DISCLOSURE

DO

- Stay calm and listen carefully to what is being disclosed.
- Offer support without making promises that you can't keep.
- Reassure the child that they were right to disclose and that the abuse was not their fault.
- Make a written record using the child's words as soon as possible and keep this in a secure place.

DO NOT

- Project your own feelings through words, actions or non-verbal expressions.
- Use emotive words such as 'rape', 'incest', 'beatings' etc.
- Ask leading questions. Let the child tell you at their own pace in their own words.
- Promise that 'everything will be alright now'.

5. GUIDANCE ON RECORDING INFORMATION

Good record keeping is essential in everything that we do but particularly important in the matter of reporting abuse. Always keep a record of observations and concerns.

1. Record all conversations with the child, parent, carer, colleagues or school.
2. Make clear the source of any information you record.
3. Avoid the use of subjective language - keep records as factual as possible.
(fact not opinion)
4. Where you have to make a statement which is opinion or feeling then make this clear.
5. Make clear statements about action taken.
6. State whether the child or family is aware of the record.
7. Date and time and sign all records clearly.

6. STAFFING

Hand to Mouth is committed to the recognition of each individual's abilities, skills, experience and qualifications. However all paid and volunteer positions will have a full **Disclosure and Barring Service check** and that any offer of a paid or volunteer position will be subject to the receipt of a satisfactory CRB check.

These disclosures will be

up-dated every 2-5 years in accordance with current guidance.

Hand to Mouth employees/volunteers must seek not to be left in sole charge of a child/children unless first agreed by the head teacher or acting Head of the school concerned.

7. TRAINING IN CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

All staff and volunteers are required to undertake child protection training within 6 months of their start date and this has to be updated at least every 3 years. Staff who work directly with children or families will also have to undertake further training via the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) training courses in Kirklees or the Diocese of Wakefield. It is the responsibility of team manager to ensure that these training requirements have benefit.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Government guidance encourages the passing on of confidential information even without a child's consent or against a child's wishes, where a child is at risk of significant harm.

Whenever there are concerns around the abuse or neglect of children and young people, appropriate referrals will be made in line with the West Yorkshire Inter-agency Safeguarding Procedures. However, confidentiality and trust is important, therefore we will endeavour to do so, by supporting the child, or their family that this is the 'right' course of action. Where no agreement can be achieved, we will advise them of our intention and offer the appropriate support needed.

Records of any 'concern that has been raised' will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and be kept locked and secured in the office of Hand to Mouth.

9. West Yorkshire Inter-agency Safeguarding Procedures

1. In the first instance, report to the HTM worker/Manager
2. The 'alerted person' (worker/Manager) has a duty to report any concern to the appropriate person. This will always be the Head of the School or Nominated Child Protection Officer within the school.
3. They will then carry out any required investigation and that is the end of our responsibility.

Nb. In the event of not being able to seek advice, the diocesan safeguarding adviser can be contacted.

If the concern that has been raised is against one of HTM staff or volunteers then the following should occur

1. In the first instance report to the most senior HTM worker available.
2. If that is not possible or you have concerns about talking to them, then you must refer the matter to the Chair of HTM.
3. You should also submit a written statement supporting your reasons for concern.
4. The Diocese of Leeds – Safeguarding Adviser, Jenny price, will be consulted
5. The Chair or Manager will then carry out a full investigation and ascertain whether that person should continue to work within HTM
6. The alleged abuser may be referred to the ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority)

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Code of Conduct

Hand to Mouth commits to encouraging a safe, supportive and productive working environment. This can only happen when everyone cooperates and agrees to suitable standards of conduct.

The following are acts which Hand to Mouth considers unacceptable. Any employee found engaging in these acts will be subject to disciplinary action, as stated in the disciplinary policy:

- Being absent from work without a valid reason
- Wilfully damaging, destroying or stealing property belonging to fellow employees or the company
- Engaging at any time in conduct which could harm anyone in the working environment, or damage or bring into disrepute the good reputation Hand to Mouth has built over the years
- Refusing to follow or failing to carry out the reasonable instructions of a supervisor
- Ignoring work duties or wasting time during working hours
- Coming to work under the influence of alcohol or any drug, or bringing alcoholic beverages or drugs into the working environment
- Intentionally giving any false or misleading information to obtain a leave of absence
- Using threatening or abusive language towards anyone within the working environment
- Smoking contrary to UK law
- Wilfully or habitually violating health and safety regulations
- Failing to wear clothing conforming to standards set by the company
- Being late or taking unexcused absences from work
- Not taking proper care of, neglecting or abusing company equipment or tools
- Using company equipment or any materials in an unauthorised manner

Complaints, Concerns & Compliments

It is the intention that all complaints and compliments will be received positively and dealt with promptly. They will be used to develop and improve the service that we provide. To this end, we actively seek your thoughts and hope that you will help us to enhance our service through making your comments constructive.

Complaints

If you have a complaint, please tell us. We want to know. Please write down your complaint and sign and date it.

Please send your complaint to:- The Trustees of Hand to Mouth
Lord Street Mission
3 – 13 Lord Street
Huddersfield
HD1 1QA

Your complaint will be treated as quickly as possible and will be confidential. Receipt of your complaint will be acknowledged immediately.

Within a reasonable period (28 days or sooner), two members of the Trustees will examine your complaint.

The Trustees will also talk to anyone else involved in the complaint. They will then write to everybody concerned, saying what they intend to do about the complaint.

Concern's & Compliments

Sometimes, you may have thoughts or concerns that aren't complaints; we want to hear these too. We are happy to receive any comments or good ideas you may have about our service. We want to improve and develop our service. So please let us hear them. Also if you don't understand something please ask.

Our Staff are here to help.

Any of the staff at Hand to Mouth will be pleased to explain our complaints procedure or answer any questions for you.

E-safety and photography Policy

Laptops, computers and IT equipment

In the office:

Hand to Mouth staff and volunteers are able to use laptops and computers made available to them by Hand to Mouth. They may also use their own IT equipment provided it is PAT tested and deemed safe.

In school:

Hand to Mouth do not recommend the use of personal or Hand to Mouth laptops within school, however there may be circumstances that necessitate their use at the discretion of the manager.

No member of staff should go on any websites that have any sexual or explicit content, or content that may be deemed harmful to children. If this happens accidentally a record must be made on the 'IT website inappropriate use log' and reported to the manager. The site must then be removed from the history of the computer so that it would not be easily found again.

Staff and volunteers using their own laptops in the work environment must ensure that this procedure is carried out *even if in their own homes*.

Laptops used in school must not be left unattended without being 'locked'. A password protected screen saver would be sufficient. Confidential information must not be made available to others.

Any IT equipment used in the office or school must be PAT tested annually.

Memory sticks containing confidential material must be kept in a secure place.

Hand to Mouth staff and volunteers must not take photographs in school without the permission of the head teacher and the manager.

Photographs must not be used for any reason without permission of the school.

Photographs of children used on publicity must be of such quality that distinguishing features cannot be seen, unless permission has been given from parents/carers.

Photographs of children must not be taken with mobile phones or any other personal mobile device.

Physical Intervention Policy

Hand to Mouth staff and volunteers are not trained in physical intervention so should not be required to physically intervene with any child or adult. In the event that the severity of an incident is such that intervention is unavoidable, recording as set out in the Child Protection Policy section 5 should be carried out.

If a child is showing behaviour that you feel could result in physical intervention being required, a member of school staff must be called for. Within the confirmation of a booking with school it is requested that the school provide us with a named person responsible for intervention of any kind.

If a member of school staff requires emergency help you should find the nearest adult from the school in order to follow that particular school's policy and procedures. Other children must not be put at risk. It may be appropriate to send a child for help.

If a member of staff or volunteer witnesses or is unavoidably involved in anything distressing they must be given the opportunity to take respite from their timetable. This must not breach confidentiality.

The head of the school and Hand to Mouth manager must be informed as soon as possible.

Recruitment of ex-offenders Policy

Hand to Mouth are committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer and this policy aims to ensure that ex-offenders receive fair treatment throughout their experience of recruitment and employment within our organisation.

- Hand to Mouth recognises our social responsibility and position within the community. We appreciate the role that continuity of employment can play in the rehabilitation of ex-offenders when matched to appropriate posts. A criminal record is not an automatic bar to employment with this organisation. The specific details of each ex-offenders case will be considered on an individual basis. In each instance, we will determine whether a candidate has the skills and experience for the post, taking account of the impact of the criminal record upon the needs of the post.
- We will ensure that application forms for positions where Disclosures will be requested contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of a successful application, so that the applicants are aware of the situation.
- To assist us in this assessment, all applicants will be asked to provide details of unspent criminal records at the initial application stage. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, details of spent convictions will be requested from applicants for posts which are considered exempt from the Act due to the responsibilities of the role, predominantly posts which include working with children and/or vulnerable adults. The following question will be entered on all application forms where we are eligible to ask exempted questions – 'Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or received a caution, reprimand or warning?'
- We will, at all times, exercise extra vigilance and diligence when recruiting to these posts and will undertake relevant criminal conviction checks as part of our recruitment and employment action when appropriate. Where details of spent convictions are required, they will be obtained in conjunction with the applicant and member of staff via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Hand to Mouth will adhere to the DBS Code of Practice at all times and, as required by the DBS, a copy of the Policy on the Recruitment and Employment of Ex-Offenders will be made available to all applicants and staff who undergo a criminal records check.
- All information received as part of this process will be treated as highly confidential and in line with Hand to Mouth policy regarding the security, storage and retention of applicant and staff criminal records information, as required by the DBS.
- Once in employment, staff should inform their line manager, in confidence, of any changes to their circumstances affecting their criminal records

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status, in order that the impact upon their suitability to undertake their role may be reviewed.

- At interview, Hand to Mouth aims to ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offence or other matter that might be relevant to the position sought and could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- Hand to Mouth will make every subject of a Criminal Record check aware of the existence of the DBS code of practice and make a copy available on request.
- Hand to Mouth undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- We will make the applicant aware of our policy and ensure that relevant statements are made during the application process

This policy will be reviewed prior to the AGM of this organisation and presented for approval if amendments are made.

Risk Management & Assessment

As part of the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Hand to Mouth has carried out Risk Assessments and produced policies and procedures to ensure that we provide a safe working environment. Every activity that is carried out regardless of where carries a degree of 'RISK'. Therefore, whatever we do within our work and its delivery needs careful consideration for health and safety of all parties concerned.

Carrying out a risk assessment is a straightforward activity that needs to be written, so all parties can have the action needed communicated clearly.

Therefore the following actions are required:

1. Identify Risk

Simply walk through the 'job' and review all activities, the equipment, the condition of the environment. During this walk, identify any hazards that could cause harm to your colleagues or you. Involve as many people as possible and get feedback.

2. Assess and evaluate the risk

Should be done as a team effort, and it should be assessed in the following manner.

- The nature of the activity
- The outcomes of the activity which may be beneficial/harmful
- The likelihood that the outcomes will occur
- The safeguards that can be taken to reduce the seriousness of the risk and/or the likelihood that the risk will occur
- The length of time for which the risk will be allowed to run before review

Outcomes

- These can be both positive or negative
- Benefits can mean significant opportunities to the client or positive benefits to others
- Losses can be physical harm to themselves, property or others, or embarrassment or distress
- Value of Risk – this can be high (likely/dangerous) or low (unlikely/minor injury)

3. Reduce the risk

Having identified the risk, action needs to be considered that would reduce the risk whilst allowing the client to benefit from the activity/opportunity. This could include consideration of the environment, use of equipment, levels of supervision, additional training, improving safety aspects.

4. Re-evaluate the risk

This needs to be reviewed at pre-determined regular intervals. The higher the risk the more frequent the reviews of the risk area, will need to be.

Risk usually occurs when a change of environment, activity, circumstances occurs but it is not limited to change.

5. Documentation

The risk assessment should be evidenced. It is a working document, so all staff need to know of it and the action required within it.

6. Involvement

Areas of concern should be identified and discussed within the staff team. The assessment should be reviewed at frequent intervals, particularly when a 'change' or 'event' occurs. Areas of concern should be assessed for risk using the approved documentation.

In order for risks to be managed, it is important for all assessments, plans, policies and procedures to be carried out by staff. Therefore, staff have a duty to read and follow all requirements, to attend and participate in staff meetings and to keep records and assessments up to date and relevant, and are encouraged to make observations and contributions.

BE REALISTIC when considering risk assessments

Safe Recruitment Policy

SAFE RECRUITMENT

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any staff or volunteers who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded. The following standards will be followed where possible:

- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two referees which will be taken up.
- Hand to Mouth is committed to the recognition of each individual's abilities, skills, experience and qualifications. However all paid and volunteer positions will have a full **Disclosure and Barring Services check** and that any offer of a paid or volunteer position will be subject to the receipt of a satisfactory DBS check. These disclosures will be up-dated every 2-5 years in accordance with current guidance.
- All prospective workers (paid and unpaid) should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour;
- Nobody should start work before references have been received. Referees should be reminded that references should not misrepresent the candidate or omit to say things that might be relevant to their employment;
- All appointments to work with children will be subject to an agreed probationary period;
- New members of staff should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description;

These guidelines and all Hand to Mouth Policies are available to everyone and will be fully discussed as part of the induction process.

Volunteer Policy

1. STATEMENT

- Hand to Mouth is a Christian charity working in schools sharing God's love with children and adults. Though Hand to Mouth have a number of paid employees, in order to deliver our work in schools it is essential that we have a team of volunteers working alongside us. A wide range of Christian volunteers (varying in age and cultural background) are needed to support children with reading and understanding as they access 'An Amazing Journey into a Holy Space' and RE days. Volunteers are also invaluable for preparation of materials. Volunteers are not used to replace paid employees.

1. RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of volunteers from any recognised Christian denomination is, wherever possible, through local church/clergy recommendation. All volunteers are required to hold a current DBS certificate or equivalent. A record of contact details is kept with the volunteer's permission. These details are not shared with any other organisation. All volunteers are required to follow Hand to Mouth safeguarding procedures.

2. INDUCTION

Volunteers are given a copy of Hand to Mouth guidelines for the work they are going to be carrying out. A clear explanation of what is required is given by the member of staff.

3. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Supervision and advice will be given by a member of paid staff. Wherever possible, volunteers are not left on their own with children. Any concerns that a volunteer may have should be referred to the member of Hand to Mouth staff.

4. EXPENSES

A volunteer may be reimbursed reasonable expenses such as travel.

5. INSURANCE

Volunteers are covered by Hand to Mouth's Public Liability insurance. Volunteers travelling in staff cars are covered by the drivers own business insurance.

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Risk assessments are carried out for each journey.

In the unlikely event of an accident the member of staff will report immediately to the manager and complete an incident/accident report form.

2. GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Volunteers follow the same grievance and disciplinary procedures as paid employees (see Grievance and Disciplinary policy).

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers follow the same confidentiality regulations as paid staff (see Safeguarding Policy).

Vulnerable Adults Coming soon