



Walsworth Road
Baptist Church

Staff Handbook

Walsworth Road
Hitchin
Herts. SG4 9SP

v8.4 Aug 2023

Registered Charity No: 1155718

“We are Walsworth Road Baptist Church!”

We are a friendly and all-age church family who gather in response to the love of God and the invitation of Jesus, and who live under the Lordship of Jesus and in the power of his Spirit; we are supportive of each other and welcoming of new faces; we are active and busy as a church, and are still discovering what it means to be church; we enjoy being with God and with each other in worship; we have been reading the Bible together, and encouraging each other to hear God’s voice as we do; we are strengthening our prayer life together; we have contact with more than 250 children and young people each week during term time, in a range of activities and opportunities, and our summer Holiday Clubs (and HC Xtra) are well attended, mobilise a great team and leave us exhausted but fulfilled; we have been experimenting in outreach events within the town; we are recognised as ‘the church that does the shoeboxes’, but our mission includes much more than this significant project; we are exploring what it means to be Baptist, and Baptists together, but we worship and work well with other Christians in the town, valuing one another’s varied insights and traditions, and co-operating in shared mission projects within schools and with events and Christian presence within the town centre.

During the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown many of our activities transferred/relocated online via Zoom. With the easing of restrictions most have returned to “face to face” in person meetings, but our gatherings for prayer, learning and worship are still in a hybrid form ie both in person and on line.

We are also a church that knows what it is to be disappointed, to be weak, to feel discouraged and heart-broken – and we like the line that “we are a church where it’s OK to be not OK”! We have our big questions and recognise that some won’t have answers in this life. We share each other’s burdens, and we feel one another’s hurt; with St Paul, we prayerfully long to know the power of the resurrection but believe that we too can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. We draw strength from the incarnate Christ who has walked where we walk, from the crucified Christ who has redeemed us through his suffering and death, from the risen Christ who, risen just like the morning sun, offers his life-giving peace to bewildered disciples, and from the ascended Christ who yet intercedes for us.

We do believe that the church is not the buildings – it is the people; we do however think that, through our investment in their development and improvement, our premises today are a real asset to our welcome, our witness and our work.

We are Walsworth Road Baptist Church (WRBC)!



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Ethos and Values

What We Believe

'Five Core Values' is a Baptist Union resource offered to help churches explore what it means to be a local congregation following Christ and living as a Gospel people. We have added a sixth core value, as we believe it reflects something additional and something significant about our life together in Christ at WRBC, Hitchin.

Jesus says: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength". He calls us to be a **worshipping community**, offering all to God in prayer. We seek to encounter God in our gatherings for worship and prayer and to encourage one another in our lives of personal devotion. Each service of worship and every prayer gathering is prayerfully prepared as an event and an opportunity for God to make himself known, and for us to make known his great love for us. We share each month in times of prayer for our children, young people and the church's work amongst them, and for our neighbours.

Jesus says: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you". He calls us to a **missionary community**, making known to all the redeeming love of God. In our worship we seek to respond to God's love, telling him how great he is; in our mission, we seek to respond to God's love by telling others too! We have coordinated a town-wide Christmas Shoebox Project with Link to Hope (with over 1000 shoeboxes in some of the past four years, gathered through local schools and churches). We support mission locally (Phase Hitchin), nationally (BUGB's Home Mission) and internationally (BMS World Mission) with our finance, giving away at least 10% of our annual income to other missionary causes. Having seen in recent years a number of individuals go overseas on a variety of short-term mission trips, we also had a church team (of nine people) go to Kosova in the summer of 2013.

Jesus says: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me". He calls us to be a **sacrificial community**, generously giving from all that God has given us. There is much service offered across the church family both within the life of the church and beyond, and much of it is sacrificial. The commitment to pastoral care of the church has been tested by the scale and variety of situations that we face together, but visits have been made, prayer has been shared, and meals have been provided especially to encourage the lonely and the disappointed. The generous giving of the church family has enabled us to improve, upgrade and extend the church premises substantially, and all without recourse to loans – thanks be to God!

Jesus says: "Anyone who comes to me, I will never turn away". He calls us to be an **inclusive community**, sharing with all the hospitality of God's kingdom. We are a mixed group of people with a range of diversity ethnically, age-wise, and economically; we have a group of young adults with learning difficulties regularly at worship, we seek to follow Jesus' own lead in not judging others and never turning anyone away, but we also believe in the traditional definition of marriage as the lifelong partnership of one man and one woman.

Jesus says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim good news to the poor". He calls us to be a **prophetic community**, challenging the powers that oppress, and the values that corrupt. Issues of justice and freedom abound in our world. We have been a Fair-Trade church for several years and have encouraged reflection on and practice of more sustainable lifestyles through a commitment of care for creation as well as respect for the creator. We support the work of Christian Aid, Operation Agri (especially at Harvest) and Bible Society. That we are free to worship where brothers and sisters in Christ in other lands experience persecution is a regular matter for prayer.

Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you." He calls us to be a **healing community**, to receive the wholeness of his grace to allow the restoring of our brokenness, and to be the channels of his wholeness to those we encounter. "Peace" has been the word on the very threshold of our buildings; people have come in seeking peace at times of pain and loss, (and have so often found it), and people

have gone out bearing peace for themselves and for others. To be part of God's purposes today for blessing people in our world with his wholeness is our calling and our privilege.

Personnel

Minister – minister@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Youth Worker – youthworker@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Church Worker – churchworker@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Family Worker - familyworker@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Church Secretary – secretary@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Treasurer – treasurer@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Designated Person for Safeguarding - safeguarding@wrbchitchin.org.uk

Job descriptions & person specifications for the above positions are available from the Church Secretary.

Deacons - these are Church members who are voted by the Church meeting to stand for a term of 3 years. Up to 10 Deacons and the Minister meet as the Diaconate to be the spiritual leaders and administrators of the Church. The Diaconate report back to Church meeting for information and approval of larger issues.

General Terms and Conditions of Employment

1. Terminology

1.1 In this document, the projects are described under the umbrella term 'WRBC'.

1.2 In this document, young people and adults at risk are defined in line with the WRBC Safeguarding policy, which can be found on the church website.

2. Job Title and Description

2.1 An employee's job title, job description and normal duties, the date of the commencement of employment and line manager will be detailed in their contract of employment of which these terms and conditions forms a part.

2.2 In addition to their normal duties, an employee may be required to undertake other duties from time to time.

3. Probationary Period

3.1 The first six months of employment will be probationary.

3.2 Employment may be terminated on one week's notice given in writing by WRBC at any time during this period.

3.3 An employee's performance and suitability for continued employment will be reviewed throughout their probationary period and if, at the end of the period, their performance is deemed satisfactory, their employment will be continued for either a further fixed period or an open contract basis, commencing on the expiration of the probationary period.

4. Hours of Work

4.1 The nature of WRBC's work will often lead to employees having to work irregular hours.

4.2 Overtime payments will not be made, but an employee's line manager may, at their absolute discretion, give time off to compensate for extra hours worked.

4.3 Employees will, in the course of their employment, be required to organise and attend residential activities organised by WRBC, in particular staff retreats, youth events and weekends. Notice of such residential activities will be given at least two months in advance by the employee's line manager.

4.4 Part time employees will be advised of their hours of work in their contracts of employment.

4.5 Where an employee wishes to work more flexible hours, either occasionally or regularly, they should always seek the permission of their line manager first.

5. Holidays

5.1 The holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December each year.

5.2 All full-time employees are entitled to a holiday entitlement of 25 working days, in addition to 8 bank holidays, adjusted proportionally for part time employees. WRBC may increase this allowance at their absolute discretion to reward, for example, seniority or long service. Any such increase will be notified to the employee in writing and will be effective from the following year.

5.3 For those employees starting or leaving other than at the start of the holiday year, this entitlement will be adjusted proportionally to the length of employment in the holiday year.

5.4 Holiday may only be taken at a time when it is convenient to WRBC and employees should seek their line manager's approval before booking a holiday. Employees must give at least one month's notice for every holiday requested. Holiday in excess of two weeks will not normally be approved.

5.5 To book holiday, once it has been approved by their line manager, a Holiday Booking Form (**Appendix 1**) should be presented at least one month in advance.

5.6 Holiday entitlement cannot be carried forward from one year to the next without the express permission of the employee's line manager. This will not normally be given for periods in excess of 5 days.

5.7 WRBC reserves the right to require employees to work on a public holiday in return for which the employees shall be entitled to extra holiday, equal the period worked, to be taken as agreed with their line manager.

6. Maternity and Paternity Pay and Leave

6.1 Entitlement to maternity and paternity leave is covered by statutory regulations.

7. Special Leave

7.1 Special leave is a privilege and may be granted at the Deacon's discretion, subject to operational needs and commitments. Special leave may be requested for personal reasons (e.g. funerals) or any other reasonable grounds. Special leave will be paid or unpaid depending on the reason for, and length of, absence required.

8. Other Employment

8.1 It is considered that the demands of the full-time positions within WRBC are such that it is not desirable for employees to seek any other part time employment. If full-time employees wish to take up any other concurrent employment, they must first seek the permission of the Deacons after having discussed the matter with their line manager.

9. Other Engagements

9.1 In the course of employment, occasions may arise where employees are invited to take an engagement during normal working hours related to their work with WRBC, although the engagement may not be directly related to WRBC. Permission may be given for this time to be taken as holiday but WRBC recognises that some of these engagements may be beneficial to the broader work of WRBC and may well enhance the reputation or advertise the work of WRBC. They may also benefit the employee in that they broaden his or her experience. Because of these factors, an employee's line manager may, at their discretion, allow special paid leave to be granted. If the employee is paid for the engagement, then all or part of the payment may be retained by the employee at the discretion of the line manager.

10. Periods of Notice

10.1 Unless otherwise agreed in writing an employee's period of notice is one month and this is binding on both the employee and WRBC.

10.2 WRBC reserves the right to pay salary in lieu of notice.

11. Retirement Age

11.1 Although there is no statutory retirement age, male and female staff members usually retire at 65.

12. Employee Appraisal

12.1 All employees will receive an appraisal annually. The intention of the review is to agree personal and WRBC related objectives and to identify any training or development needs.

13. Lateness

13.1 WRBC regards good time keeping as vital. If employees are likely to be more than 20 minutes late for work on any one day, they should contact their line manager. The line manager will contact any groups and personnel and postpone any relevant meetings.

14. Salaries

14.1 Employees will be advised of their salary in the letter that offers them employment.

14.2 Salaries will be paid in arrears, directly into a bank account advised by the employee on, or about, the 20th day of each month.

14.3 Salaries will be reviewed by WRBC as part of the annual budgeting cycle in October each year, and the revised salary will take effect from 1 January. Employees joining after 1 July will not normally have their salary reviewed until the October following twelve months' service. Employees will be notified in writing of any change in salary resulting from a review.

14.4 WRBC reserves the right to revise salaries at any time during the year where exceptional circumstances dictate.

15. Deductions

15.1 WRBC reserves the right in its absolute discretion to deduct from an employee's salary any sums which they may owe WRBC including, without limitation, any over payments or loans made to them by WRBC or losses suffered by WRBC as a result of an employee's negligence or breach of WRBC's terms and conditions or duties.

15.2 WRBC also reserves the right to forfeit a day's pay for each day of unauthorised absence (including leaving employment without notice or during an employee's notice period without WRBC's permission).

16. Expenses

16.1 Expenses will be reimbursed for all properly authorised expenditure provided a receipt is submitted and in accordance with the WRBC Expenses Policy. (**Appendix 2**)

16.2 Expense and mileage claims should be submitted monthly by the 15th day of the following month using the Expenses Claim Form (**Appendix 3**). These will be reimbursed into the employee's bank account on the normal pay day.

16.3 The expense system should be used for all transactions except for large purchases which should be carried out by the line manager.

16.4 Any staff seeking an exception to the rule should consult the Treasurer.

17. Authority to Commit to Expenditure

17.1 Employees can make purchases without authorisation up to a value of £50, but not totalling more than £100 in any month.

17.2 All expenditure is restricted by our budget and ultimately the amount of income we receive. This policy may therefore be limited if there are insufficient funds.

17.3 This policy applies to items bought via the internet or a catalogue as well as in person.

17.4 Where employees have used their own money, they can be reimbursed by submitting a receipt to the Treasurer. Expenditure may not be reimbursed where there is no receipt or evidence of purchase.

17.5 The Treasurer will confirm what expenditure code will be allocated and collect a receipt.

17.6 Reimbursement will normally be by bank credit but can occasionally be through petty cash at the Treasurer's discretion.

17.7 Purchases between £50 and £100 can be made only with the permission of an employee's line manager.

17.8 Purchases over £100 can only be made with the permission of the Treasurer.

18. Use and Care of Equipment

18.1 WRBC is privileged to own equipment, including portable computers for the use of employees. This raises a number of issues regarding the care and safety of this equipment both to come within insurance requirements and in order for WRBC to be a responsible steward of property.

18.2 When transporting equipment, employees should use any cases provided for the purpose.

18.3 Equipment should not be left in vehicles for long periods or overnight. If it is necessary to do so, it should be in a locked boot and out of sight.

18.4 Any damage to the equipment, however slight, must be reported to the line manager as soon as possible.

18.5 Equipment may only be loaned to a third party with the permission of the line manager.

18.6 Where these rules are not followed, employees may make themselves liable for any replacement or repair costs incurred by them or by a third party. When in doubt, employees should confirm with their line manager as to the correct procedure.

18.7 These rules are intended to ensure the proper care and safety of equipment, rather than restrict or hamper work. The aim is to ensure that WRBC works in a responsible manner with all its resources, particularly those which have a high replacement value.

19. Insurance

19.1 WRBC has arranged insurance covering its liability to employees to the limit required by law.

20. Confidentiality

20.1 Employees must not disclose any information of a confidential nature relating to WRBC during or after their employment except in the proper course of their employment or as required by the law.

20.2 Employees must not remove any documents or tangible items which belong to WRBC or which contain confidential information from WRBC's premises at any time without proper authorisation.

20.3 Employees must return to WRBC, upon the termination of their employment, all documents and tangible items which contain or refer to any confidential information and which are in the employee's possession or under their control.

21. Changes to Terms of Employment

21.1 WRBC reserve the right to make reasonable changes to any terms and conditions and will notify employees in writing of any such changes at the earliest opportunity and, in any event, within one month after such changes have taken effect.

21.2 Such changes will be deemed to be accepted unless an employee notifies WRBC of any objection in writing before the expiry date of the notice period.

22. Jurisdiction

22.1 These terms and conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law and each party agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts as regards any claim or matter arising under these terms and conditions.

23. Right to Work

23.1 In accordance with the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2006, and any legislation following from Brexit, WRBC is required to verify that employees have the right to work in the UK.

24. Pension Scheme

24.1 From 1st November 2017, it is a legal requirement that employees will be enrolled into a pension scheme. This will be in an agreed Pension Scheme which requires that employees pay a minimum of 4% of annual income into the scheme. You will have the option to withdraw from this scheme at any time.

Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

1. Grievance Procedure

1.1 WRBC recognises the importance of valuing its employees as an employer and treating them fairly in every respect. We aim to have a positive and fulfilling work environment where disagreements and problems can be openly and honestly resolved. We do also recognise that sometimes more serious issues may occasionally arise and have therefore set out a procedure to deal with them, however infrequently they may be referred to. If an employee has any grievance relating to their employment, they should raise the matter initially with their line manager. They may be required to put any such grievance into writing. When a grievance involves an employee's line manager, an employee should raise the matter with the Deacons.

1.2 Having enquired into an employee's grievance the line manager will discuss it with the employee and will then notify them of their decision.

1.3 If the decision of the line manager is not acceptable, or if it is not possible to settle the matter, an employee may refer the matter in writing to the Deacons whose decision will be final and binding.

1.4 An employee may be accompanied by an advocate of their choice during any grievance procedure.

1.5 If an employee believes that they are being sexually or racially harassed or the victim of some other form of harassment or unlawful discrimination within WRBC, they should report any incidents to the Deacons who will investigate. Their report will be treated as confidential unless an employee agrees otherwise.

2. Disciplinary Procedures

2.1 The purpose of the disciplinary procedures is to ensure that WRBC behaves fairly in investigating and dealing with allegations of unacceptable conduct or performance. Accordingly, WRBC reserves the right to depart from the precise requirements of its disciplinary procedure where it is expedient to do so and where the resulting treatment of the employee is no less fair.

2.2 All cases of disciplinary action under these procedures will be recorded and placed in WRBC's records. A copy of WRBC's disciplinary records concerning an employee will be supplied to them at their request.

2.3 Offences under WRBC's disciplinary procedures fall into 3 categories namely

- Misconduct
- Gross misconduct
- Incapability

2.4 The following steps will be taken, as appropriate, in all cases of disciplinary action:

Investigations: No action will be taken before a proper investigation has been undertaken by WRBC into the matter complained of. If appropriate, WRBC may, by written notice, suspend an employee for a specified period while the investigation takes place. If an employee is so suspended their contract of employment will continue together with all their rights under their contract including the payment of salary, but during the period of suspension they will not be entitled to access to any of WRBC's premises except at the prior request or with the prior consent of WRBC and subject to such conditions as WRBC may impose. The decision to suspend an employee will be notified to them by the Deacons and confirmed in writing.

Disciplinary Hearings: If the Deacons decide to hold a disciplinary hearing about the matter complained of, an employee will be given details of the complaint against them at least three working days before the hearing. At the hearing the employee will be given an opportunity to state their case. The employee may be accompanied by an advocate of their choice. No disciplinary penalty will be imposed without a disciplinary hearing, but a hearing may proceed in an employee's absence if they fail to turn up.

Appeals: Employees have a right to appeal against any disciplinary decision to the Deacons. They should inform the Deacons in writing of their wish to appeal within five working days of the date of the decision which forms the subject of their appeal. The Deacons, as appropriate, will conduct an appeal hearing as soon as possible thereafter at which the employee will be given an opportunity to state their case and will be entitled to be accompanied by an advocate of their choice. The decision of the Deacons, as appropriate, will be notified to an employee in writing and will be final and binding under this procedure.

3. Misconduct

3.1 The following offences are examples of misconduct:

- Bad time keeping
- Unauthorised absence
- Minor damage to WRBC property
- Minor breach of WRBC rules
- Failure to observe WRBC procedures

- Abusive behaviour

These offences are not exclusive or exhaustive and offences of a similar nature will be dealt with under this procedure.

3.2 The following procedure will apply in cases of alleged misconduct:

First warning: This will be given by the Deacons and may be oral or written according to the circumstances. In either event, an employee will be advised that the warning constitutes the first formal stage of this procedure. If the warning is verbal, a note that such a warning has been given will be placed in WRBC's records.

Final warning: This will be given by the Deacons and confirmed to an employee in writing. This warning will state that, if the employee commits a further offence of misconduct during the period specified in it, their employment will be terminated.

Dismissal: The decision to dismiss an employee will not be taken without reference to the WRBC Deacons and will be notified to the employee in writing.

4. Gross Misconduct

4.1 The following offences are examples of gross misconduct:

- Theft or unauthorised possession of any property belonging to WRBC or any employee.
- Serious damage to WRBC property.
- Falsification of reports, accounts or expense claims or documentation relating to absence from work.
- Refusal to carry out duties or reasonable instructions.
- Gross moral turpitude.
- Misuse of drugs, tobacco or other substances.
- Deliberate failure to follow WRBC's safeguarding procedures.

4.2 In the event of gross misconduct the period of notice does not apply, and employment is terminated with immediate effect. The decision to dismiss an employee will not be taken without reference to the Deacons and will be notified to the employee in writing.

5. Incapability

5.1 The following are examples of incapability:

- Poor performance
- Incompetence
- Unsuitability
- Lack of application

These examples are not exhaustive, and instances of a similar nature will be dealt with under this procedure.

5.2 The following procedure will apply in cases of incapability:

First warning: This will be given by the Deacons and may be oral or written according to the circumstances. In either event, an employee will be advised that the warning constitutes the first formal stage of this procedure. If the warning is verbal, a note that such a warning has been given will be placed in WRBC's records.

Final warning: This will be given by the Deacons and confirmed to an employee in writing. This warning will state that, if the employee commits a further offence of misconduct during the period specified in it, their employment will be terminated.

Dismissal: If a further offence occurs within the period specified in the Final Warning, the decision to dismiss an employee will not be taken without reference to the WRBC Deacons and will be notified to the employee in writing.

6. Whistleblowing procedure

6.1 WRBC aims to deal with people and organisations with the utmost respect and professionalism. However, it recognises that it is not immune from the potential for employees to act illegally, dangerously or inappropriately. Therefore, WRBC encourages any employee or volunteer to follow the whistleblowing procedure if they notice anything about which they are concerned.

Types of practice WRBC discourage include:

- Inappropriate use of WRBC money.
- Inappropriate sharing of confidential information.
- Persistent failure to comply with health and safety practices.
- Inability to appropriately safeguard young people or adults at risk.

6.2 Employees should inform their line manager immediately if they become aware that any employee is, has or is about to act inappropriately.

In cases where the malpractice is being carried out by the employee's line manager, the employee should inform the Deacons.

An employee can ask for their concerns to be treated in confidence and their request will be respected.

Employees will not be penalised for informing management about any malpractice.

When a line manager is notified of a concern, they should ensure that the concern is investigated properly and objectively. The employee reporting the concern should be kept aware of the progress of the investigation. The line manager who receives the concern is responsible for ensuring the necessary action is taken to report the concern.

6.3 If the concern is about inappropriate behaviour of an employee or a volunteer towards a young person or adult at risk, the Designated Person for Safeguarding should be informed immediately. The current Designated Person for Safeguarding at WRBC is named on Page 3 of the WRBC Safeguarding Statement, which is available on the WRBC website, and is displayed in the church entrance area.

The Designated Person for Safeguarding will contact the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS) or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for reporting allegations, immediately and take their advice on how to proceed.

CAS: www.churchsafe.org.uk: 020 7467 5216

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, LADO: 01992 555420

Sickness

1. Sickness procedure

1.1 WRBC wants to do its best to look after all employees. This means encouraging employees to take time off sick if they need it, work hard when they are at work and not work too many extra hours.

1.2 This procedure is aimed at helping all employees know what they need to do when they are sick and what their rights and responsibilities are when sick or returning to work.

2. Notification

2.1 When an employee is sick:

- The employee should phone their line manager within the first hour they are due to be in work, or as soon as is possible
- The line manager is responsible for arranging cover/cancellation of any appointments for that day.
- Where it is not possible for direct contact with the line manager to be made, the employee should contact another member of their team, who will in turn contact the line manager at the earliest convenience. It is important that the line manager has contact with the employee on the first day of sickness.
- The employee is responsible for keeping in touch with their line manager during their period of sickness absences and to keep WRBC up to date with any treatment and progress.
- If an employee falls sick during a working day, they should inform their line manager and complete the return to work procedure when they are fit enough to work.

3. Certification

3.1 All periods of sickness (of 4 hours or more) must be recorded on a WRBC Absence Form (**Appendix 4**). Absences of more than one calendar week must be evidenced with a doctor's 'fit note'.

3.2 On an employee's return to work, the line manager should ensure completion of the Absence Form and/or fit note as appropriate.

3.3 If the fit note states that an employee "may be fit for work", the employee and line manager will take a decision of whether the employee is able to work. In certain situations, it may be that WRBC is not able to provide the support an employee needs to return to work before they are fully fit. In this instance, WRBC will declare the employee unfit to work as per the statement on the fit note.

4. Return to work discussion

4.1 As part of the procedure for managing sickness absence, an employee should meet with their line manager on the first day of their return to work, following each instance of absence. The aim of a return to work discussion is to facilitate the employee's return to work and to clarify any out-standing aspects of their sickness absence.

4.2 Return to work discussions should be conducted sympathetically and in private by the line manager. A record of the discussion should be placed in the employee's HR file.

5. Monitoring

5.1 Sickness absence monitoring is the responsibility of the line manager, who will report to the Deacons on a quarterly basis.

5.2 A trigger will be raised when an employee has more than 7 days or 3 occasions of absence in a rolling twelve-month period. At this point an employee's line manager or a Deacon will meet with the employee to establish if there are any ways in which WRBC can support the employee further.

6. Medical examinations

6.1 WRBC reserves the right to require an employee to be examined at any time by an independent doctor or occupational health professional at its expense and cease pay if it is advised by the doctor that an employee is fit for work.

7. Payment during periods of sickness

7.1 If WRBC employees are absent from work due to sickness or injury and comply with the requirements listed, they will be paid statutory sick pay in accordance with provisions of the WRBC's sick pay scheme.

7.2 In addition to SSP WRBC operates a discretionary sick pay scheme as set out below: The sick pay year runs from 1 January to the following 31 December and in any year, you will be entitled to payment of salary in accordance with the following table:

Length of Service with WRBC	Sick Pay Entitlement
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Up to six months' service Six months to two years' service Two to five years' service Five to ten years' service Over ten years' service	SSP only Ten days' full pay Fifteen days' full pay Twenty days' full pay and twenty days' half pay Thirty days' full pay and thirty days' half pay
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In exceptional circumstances further payments may be made at the discretion of the Deacons.

7.3 If a Bank holiday or statutory holiday falls within a period of sickness, the day is paid and counted as a statutory holiday rather than a sick period.

7.4 If an employee is sick due to self-inflicted reasons (e.g. excessive drinking/reckless behaviour), WRBC will withhold sick pay for the period affected.

8. Phased return to work

8.1 After long periods of sickness, it may be that an employee's return to work needs to be phased. This will be decided in consultation with the employee, their line manager, the Deacons and will be at the discretion of WRBC.

8.2 In such instances the employee's pay will fall in line with the stage of the WRBC sick pay scheme which applies.

8.3 Any phased return to work strategy must be reviewed weekly by the line manager.

9. Annual leave during periods of sickness

9.1 If a period of sickness occurs while you are on leave this will normally count against annual leave entitlement rather than sick leave. Exceptions to this can be considered based on the circumstances and medical information provided to support the situation. This is at the discretion of the Deacons to ensure consistency and fairness. If a period of sickness occurs before booked leave and it is apparent that the sickness will continue over the booked leave period, employees may request the cancellation of that leave to the line manager. The absence should then be covered by an Absence form in the usual way.

9.2 Any payments of salary received in respect of a period of absence due to sickness or injury will be deemed to include your entitlement to SSP.

9.3 WRBC reserves the right to alter, amend or remove the discretionary sick pay scheme.

10. Unauthorised absence

10.1 When an employee does not provide the appropriate certification forms, their absence may be considered as unauthorised. Any unauthorised absences may result in disciplinary action being taken and pay being withheld.

11. Capability

11.1 If an employee accrues an unsatisfactory sickness record over a period of time and is therefore incapable of carrying out the work for which they have been employed, WRBC are entitled to follow disciplinary procedures in accordance with our disciplinary policy.

11.2 If an employee is absent from work for any reason (excluding annual leave) for a period in excess of 90 working days on any period of twelve months, WRBC will be entitled to terminate employment at any time by giving written notice on the date specified in the notice.

Professional Development

1. Professional Development Policy

1.1 WRBC is committed to the principle of ongoing professional development for its employees, in order to equip them for their role within WRBC and beyond. In addition to the internal training programme and external short-term courses, WRBC may support employees undertaking a programme of academic study leading to a qualification or accreditation.

1.2 Programmes must have a direct relevance to the role of the employee and must develop their professional and academic portfolio. Such courses may include Apprenticeships, Foundation Degrees, Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees and PhD's, or courses with progression to clear professional accreditation such as BACPs Counselling certificates. Priority will be given to employees pursuing a bachelor's degree or master's degree who do not already hold them, and to those appointed into roles that require these qualifications in order to carry out the work satisfactorily.

1.3 All WRBC employees who have completed one year of service, or will have at commencement of the programme, and have an adequate disciplinary record, are able to make a request to undertake a programme of academic study. Each candidate will need to prove his or her suitability.

1.4 WRBC's financial contribution to a programme is reliant on the employee working for one full year for WRBC on completion of the programme. If an employee leaves before this time they may be expected to repay the course costs and placement fees in full. If the employee chooses to leave before completion of the programme, they may be expected to pay back their training costs in full and pay a contribution to cover the study time for which they were released. Maternity leave will be an exception to this requirement, where this time period will be suspended for the duration of the maternity leave. When an employee has their employment terminated by WRBC for any reason, any retrospective payment decisions are made based on the nature of the dismissal and the timing of such an event.

1.5 Details of how to apply for a programme of academic study is given in **Appendix 5**.

2. Staff Mentoring

2.1 We believe our spiritual and moral lives are profoundly connected to the work we do and, as a result, encourage employees to find a personal mentor to provide a safe context for reflection. This includes being honest about our failings, seeking advice and prayer, and being held accountable for our actions.

2.2 Finding a mentor is primarily the responsibility of the employee who has a free choice in whom to approach. However, we suggest that the best mentors have proved to be people of the same gender who are not already close friends of the employee.

1.3 Discussions with a mentor are confidential.

3. Training

3.1 We believe in continually developing our employees as people, as well as workers.

3.2 WRBC provides a variety of practical, spiritual, safeguarding and other training courses for employees.

3.3 WRBC provides a tailored program for each individual employee, dependent on their needs in a personal development plan. Suggestions for training should be discussed with the line manager.

3.4 Training records are kept in the employee's personnel file.

3.5 A training budget will be provided by the Deacons.

4. Supervision

4.1 Supervision meetings with employees will be held with the line manager at least every half term. In addition, an appraisal will be held annually with the employee's line manager.

4.2 Supervision records are kept in the employee's personnel file.

Safeguarding

1. Safeguarding Policy

1.1 The [WRBC Safeguarding Policy statement](#) and the full [Safeguarding Policy](#) can be found on the WRBC website. The policy and procedures are revised and updated annually by the Safeguarding team. Names and full contact details of the current Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) and other members of the Safeguarding team are given in the Safeguarding Policy statement.

1.2 The DPS is contactable via safeguarding@wrbchitchin.org.uk.

1.3 The Central Baptist Association Safeguarding Officer is contactable via safeguarding@centralba.org.uk

1.4 WRBC employees are required to always adhere to the church safeguarding policy and procedures and to attend any relevant safeguarding training as requested by the Safeguarding Trustee.

2. Working with Young People or Adults at Risk

2.1 WRBC employees should be aware that young people and adults at risk may be additionally vulnerable due to their race, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, or culture. WRBC does not discriminate on any of these grounds when working with young people and adults at risk. WRBC employees should treat all young people and adults at risk with equal respect and be especially sensitive to each person's needs.

2.2 Any discriminatory incidents, offensive, violent, or unacceptable behaviour or language by employees, volunteers, young people or adults at risk will not be tolerated and complaints will be acted on promptly in accordance with the WRBC Behaviour Policy (part of our Safeguarding Policy) and the [WRBC Code of Conduct](#) (which can be found on the church website).

3. Running an Activity

Procedures for running activities with young people or adults at risk are available on the [WRBC Website](#).

4. Insurance

4.1 WRBC is required to inform its insurers when specific activities are taking place that are outside of the regular day to day commitments: for example, day trips and residentials.

4.2 Organisers of activities described in section 4.1 should arrange with their line manager for the details of their event to be sent to the insurance company at least two weeks before it is due to take place. The details must include:

- Where the activity is taking place.
- An outline of the programme, noting any activities that might be hazardous.
- Expected numbers attending.

Health and Safety

1. Responsibility for Health and Safety

WRBC recognises and accepts its responsibility to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy environment for anyone using the church premises.

At the same time WRBC expects all users of the church premises to understand that they have a responsibility to themselves and others to ensure a safe and healthy environment and to comply fully with the requirements below and as laid out in the [WRBC Health and Safety Policy](#) (which can be found on the church website). Overall responsibility and implementation of this Health and Safety Policy has been placed with the WRBC Deacons and the Health and Safety Officer. The Deacons may appoint other persons to be responsible for the daily implementation of all or part of the Policy. Copies of this policy are displayed on church notice boards.

2. Risk assessments for activities

Employees must carry out a risk assessment for all activities with young people or adults at risk. Ensuring adequate risk assessments are carried out for WRBC activities is the responsibility of the Health and Safety Officer who keeps a file copy of all WRBC risk assessments and can help you to complete one. All risk assessments must be authorised by the Health and Safety Officer prior to any event taking place.

2.1 All activities with young people or adults at risk need a written risk assessment. A risk assessment is a method of anticipating hazards or what can go wrong and ensuring adequate precautions are taken to ensure the health and safety of our employees and volunteers, those for whom we are responsible and anyone else who may be affected by our actions. Always use the WRBC Risk Assessment Form (**Appendix 6**) when doing a risk assessment.

2.2 Check if there is an existing risk assessment for the activity. There may already be a written risk assessment for activities that are repeated. In this case, you should still assess if any circumstances have changed since the original risk assessment was written and, if so, update it accordingly. You will need a new risk assessment form for each activity, even if it is using information from a previous risk assessment.

2.3 Identify the hazards. A hazard is anything that may cause harm. It may be anything that could cause personal injury, the failure or misuse of equipment being used, road accident, fire, food poisoning, insect or animal bites, aggression or a host of other hazards. When identifying hazards:

- Ensure that all parts of the activity have been included.
- Take account of the routine as well as the non-routine. E.g. what would happen if the vehicle broke down or the number of people attending was more or less than expected.
- Be systematic. Use the hazard checklist which identifies the different hazards you are likely to come across.
- Be on the lookout for anything that has not been foreseen and always add any new hazard to the check list as soon as you identify it so that it may benefit others doing their risk assessment.
- Always look at the way the activity is organised and identify critical areas of communication. Hazards are often caused solely through a misunderstanding or other failure in communication.

2.4 Hazard Examples. – a check list is given in **Appendix 7**.

2.5 Identify who might be harmed. This includes everyone in your care, other WRBC employees or volunteers and any member of the public who could be harmed. You should list them in summary: for example, employees, young people, public.

2.6 Evaluate the risks. The risk considers the likelihood and the severity of harm or injury. Consider various scenarios of what may happen and the nature of injuries or harm that could result. WRBC uses three levels of severity:

- *Minor*: This is a minor injury which does not require hospital treatment and from which the injured party will fully recover in a short time.
- *Serious*: This is any injury or ill health that may require medical treatment.
- *Major*: This is anything that may cause permanent effects or even loss of life.

Also consider the likelihood of the hazard happening. A scale of likelihood can be used and if possible, we should take precautions to ensure the likelihood of it happening is as small as possible.

2.7 Preventive and Protective Measures. Having identified the hazards and the nature and severity of harm or injury it is necessary to implement measures that will, if possible, prevent harm or injury. The risk classified as major and significant are the most important. In deciding which measures to take use the following in order of priority:

- If possible, avoid the hazard altogether

- Try to prevent the source of harm or injury. E.g. tiredness is a cause of road accidents therefore do not drive when too tired.
- Ensure the activity is matched to the age and capability of those taking part
- Reduce the severity by replacing the “dangerous” with the “non-dangerous” or “less dangerous”
- Ensure all aspects are considered: communication, organisation, interaction between different groups, weather conditions.
- Give appropriate instructions to those taking part.

The written risk assessment is complete when all hazards have been identified, preventive and protective measures have been agreed and all necessary actions have been implemented.

2.8 Recording and Approval. A risk assessment form must be completed for appropriate activities. Each risk assessment must be approved, signed and dated by your line manager. They should be kept on file for future reference.

2.9 Review and Revision. After every activity review the risk assessment to determine if it could be improved in any way. Was any risk overlooked or were the precautions too cumbersome? Pass your recommendations for amending the risk assessment to your line manager.

2.10 Ongoing Risk Assessment. There will always be unforeseen risks that need assessing as the moment arises during an activity. You should always be on the lookout for new risks and carry out a mental risk assessment on the spot. This is as important as your written risk assessment.

3. Lone Working

3.1 WRBC recognises that from time to time some employees will work in an environment where they are alone (including working from home). We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that all working environments are safe and ask that employees who wish to work in another environment, complete a risk assessment for that place of work. This risk assessment should be approved by the Health and Safety Officer.

3.2 Guidance on safe working can be found as a downloadable pdf in the HSE website. The WRBC [Lone Working policy](#) can be found on the WRBC website

3.3 The Health and Safety Officer must be kept informed of any accidents or issues identified relating to lone working. Any further training needs should be identified by the employee and if appropriate, arranged by their line manager and the Health and Safety Officer.

4. First Aid

WRBC are committed to the safety and welfare of all employees, volunteers, young people and the church family. Our first aid provision is assessed on a bi-annual basis by the Health and Safety Officer.

4.1 On WRBC premises

4.1.1 There are no legal requirements for first aid provision at WRBC for the church family, however, WRBC seek to train as many church members as practical to the HSE ‘Emergency first aid at work’ (EFAW) level. WRBC will ensure that at least one employee holds an EFAW level certificate that is always less than 3 years old.

4.1.2 WRBC will provide suitably stocked first aid boxes which will be checked regularly by the Health and Safety Officer or by a person designated by them.

4.1.3 First aid kits are available to employees and volunteers, although administration of the contents should only be through qualified First Aiders. Information regarding the incident and what action was taken should be recorded in the HSE Accident Book, located in the lower Kitchen, and a copy given to the Health and Safety officer.

4.2 With young people and adults at risk

4.2.1 When working with children and young people, first aid support is more closely controlled. Parental permission should be sought through the completion of parental permission forms, or verbally if needed for any treatment that may be given.

4.2.2 Whilst working with young people in school, young people fall under the normal care of the school system and this should be adhered to. Whilst working with adults at risk in a care home, adults at risk fall under the normal care system of the care home and this should be adhered to.

4.2.3 For one day local activities outside of WRBC, there must be a named WRBC employee or volunteer responsible for first aid for the activity and all first aid needs should be routed through them. This person must be trained to the EFAW level or above.

4.2.4 For residential activities, there must be a named WRBC employee or volunteer responsible for first aid during the residential and all first aid needs should be routed through them. This person must be qualified to the EFAW level or above.

5. Social Media

WRBC welcomes the development of new technologies for communicating and uses them to enhance its work with young people and adults at risk. However, WRBC recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable measures to ensure the risks of harm to the welfare of young people and adults at risk is minimised.

5.1 WRBC employees and volunteers should, at all times, follow the WRBC Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy, which forms part of the Safeguarding Policy.

6. Evacuation Plans

If the fire alarm sounds unexpectedly for any reason the [Fire Evacuation procedure](#) for WRBC must be followed. This can be found on the WRBC website.

Appendix 1

WRBC Holiday Booking Form

Name:	Job Title:
Holidays Requested	
From:	To:
No. days requested:	
Annual cumulative no. of days holiday requested:	
Signed (Employee):	
Date:	
Please pass to your Line Manager for Authorisation	
Authorised by (Line Manager) Name:	Signed:
Date:	

Appendix 2

WRBC Expenses Policy

Introduction

There are a number of approaches which apply throughout this document:

- All expense items being claimed must have been incurred solely in the work of the Church.
- Expenses can be claimed by any member of the Church family.
- The Church has an annual budget and all major items of expenditure are within the control of a number of specific budget holders.
- All expenses should be agreed in advance wherever possible with the appropriate budget holder.
- All expenses must be supported by a valid receipt.
- The Church is a charity and is not registered for VAT, and so VAT receipts are not required.
- All expenses should be minimised by using the most economic appropriate approach. For example, the most economic means of transport must be used for all journeys and car sharing should be used wherever practical.
- If there is any doubt about the validity of an expense, the claimant should seek advice from the Church Treasurer before incurring costs.

Travel Expenses

Mileage expenses claims must be completed using the Expenses Claim Form (**Appendix 3**).

Exceptionally, where regular mileage claims are being made, a Mileage Expense Claim Form should be kept by the individual and used throughout the year to record the annual mileage, which is required by the Inland Revenue for taxation purposes. Please note that the Income Tax year runs from April to March, and this is the period for which annual mileage must be recorded.

Mileage - It is expected that only the church minister and other employees will incur regular car travel expenses, though other people can claim under exceptional circumstances. If any claimant is required to use their own vehicle for travel on Church business, the Church will reimburse the mileage undertaken in accordance with the HMRC rates applicable for the current tax year. These rates are reviewed each year and may be changed from time to time.

Public Transport - If any claimant is required to use public transport for travel on Church business, the Church will reimburse their travel costs via the provision of accurate and complete receipts. The most economic means of transport must be used for all journeys.

Ministry Expenses

There is a number of expense items which are, under normal circumstances, only claimed by the minister and other employees and these are detailed in this section. These items each have a specific annual cost in the budget which is agreed each year by the Church Meeting.

Administration - Administration costs such as paper and printer consumables needed for church business are claimable.

Book Allowance - The provision of books for employment use is claimable in line with the agreed annual budget.

Parking - Parking by the minister and other employees on church business is claimable.

Food and Hospitality - The provision of food and hospitality by the minister and/or his family on church business is claimable.

Pastoral Fund - There is a Pastoral Fund for the provision of small gifts such as cards and flowers, as well as for urgent cases of financial need.

Resources - Worship resources needed for church services are claimable.

Miscellaneous - This is a category set aside for other ministry expenses not covered in the items above.

Ministry Expenses - Other

Visiting Preachers - The Church welcomes a number of visiting preachers each year and pays them a fixed fee as agreed from time to time by the Central Baptist Association (CBA). Travel expenses are also claimable using the approach indicated above. These expenses are calculated, receipted, and paid directly to the claimant by the Treasurer rather than being claimed through the expenses system.

Visiting Organists - The Church welcomes a number of visiting organists each year and pays them a fixed fee for each church service, wedding or funeral, as agreed from time to time by the the CBA. These expenses are calculated, receipted, and paid directly to the claimant by the Treasurer rather than being claimed through the expenses system.

Manse Expenses

Electricity - Provision of electricity to the Manse is claimable at 40% of the charged cost.

Gas - Provision of gas to the Manse is claimable at 40% of the charged cost.

Telephone - The Church undertakes to provide in full a telephone (landline) at home for the better performance of the minister's duties (with the cost of personal calls to be borne by the minister), and to fund 50% of the costs of internet access subscription.

Where such services are bundled (e.g. telephone and broadband) or where inclusive packages are used, the costs will be negotiated accordingly.

Manse Repairs - Manse repairs are claimable and should be supported by suitable receipts. As noted in the introductory paragraph, all expenses should be minimised by using the most economic appropriate approach. The Treasurer or Deacons should be made aware of any significant likely costs.

It may be that repairs can be claimed back under the Church's insurance policy for the Manse, in which case it may be necessary to check with the insurance company before commencing repairs.

Items Paid Directly by the Church

The following items are paid directly by the Church to the supply organisation and so are not normally claimed through the Expenses Policy:

Council Tax / Insurance / Water Rates

Other Expenses

There are a large number of other possible areas of expense, and the following is a list of some of the likely areas, as covered in the annual Church budget:

- Advertising and Posters
- Conferences and Literature
- Licences
- Printing/Stationery/Copying/Magazine
- Secretarial Expenses
- Subscriptions
- Web Site Hosting and Fees
- Catering
- Flowers
- Youth Work
- Building Fabric
- Gardening
- Organ and Piano Tuning
- PAT Testing

Appendix 4

WRBC Absence Form

Name:	Job Title:
Dates of Absence	
From:	To:
Total no of days:	
Reason:	
Doctor's Sickness note included? YES / NO	
Signed:	
Date:	

Appendix 5

Pursuing a Programme of Academic Study

- Employees must first discuss their proposal with their line manager, and then put their request in writing to the Deacons no later than 31st May for all programmes that will commence after September. Research into available courses should not take place during working hours.
- The written request should contain an outline of the identified course, the programme of study, the costs and the duration and study time required. Employees should also include in their written request why they feel they should be considered for this programme and what they anticipate gaining from it, together with any implications taking the programme may have on their work at WRBC. The request will be considered by the Deacons. If agreed, the Treasurer will cost it into the Annual Budget, before receiving final approval from the July Church Meeting.
- Employees will be informed in writing if their application is successful or unsuccessful, and given the opportunity to discuss this with both their line manager and if relevant, the Deacons.
- It is possible, on courses with high take up, for employees to apply at the first available opportunity and then if necessary make the decision to take up a place based on WRBC's decision which will be made when the budget is decided for the year concerned, usually in the July prior to the year commencing. Before commencing a programme of academic study, a learning agreement will be drawn up summarising the agreed terms and signed by the employee.
- WRBC will contribute up to 100% of course costs and placement fees. WRBC will not contribute to books, materials, resubmission, travel expenses and associated childcare costs. These and any other costs are the responsibility of the employee to cover and are seen as part of their commitment to the training. WRBC will release an employee for between 2 and 8 hours per week, for up to 40 weeks each year in consultation with the Deacons. It is understood that this time will often not cover the total time needed for study and therefore the employee will be expected to find the rest of the required time outside of their working hours. If a programme is expected to take more than 16 hours study a week in total, it is unlikely that WRBC will allow such a programme, as it will detract from the quality of work an employee is able to deliver. Due to the nature of the work cycle at WRBC from time to time employees will be asked to miss study time for WRBC events such as team retreats. Study days count as a normal working day. If an employee wishes to take holiday on a study day, it counts as a booked day of holiday and must be pre-booked as such.
- The employee needs to be able to prove that they are able to perform to the highest of their abilities in their remaining practice at WRBC and if are unable to do so, funding maybe withdrawn. This will be reviewed on a termly basis and be discussed both in appraisal and supervision. If for any reason the employee fails their studies, they may be required to either repay WRBC for the course costs or to pay for their own resubmission to continue with the programme. If for any other reason the employee needs to suspend their studies this should be agreed in advance with the Deacons. If the employee is disciplined on any form of gross misconduct, misconduct or incapability the employee runs the risk of having their training privileges terminated.

Activity Risk Assessment Template

XXX

Venue:

Safety equipment:

Fire plan: WRBC Fire evacuation plan (on [Church website](#))

First Aid Arrangements: First Aid kit in Lower Kitchen, list of First Aiders displayed in RJ room & Lower Kitchen

How you will meet ratios or any other info about the event:

Risk assessment carried out by: XXX on XXX

Please also refer to: XXX

		SEVERITY →		
		1	2	3
LIKELIHOOD ↓	1	LOW - 1 -	LOW - 2 -	MEDIUM - 3 -
	2	LOW - 2 -	MEDIUM - 4 -	HIGH - 6 -
	3	MEDIUM - 3 -	HIGH - 6 -	HIGH - 9 -

Activity/area	Who may be harmed and how?	Like-likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Current Actions	Further action required	By Whom	When

Action	Name	Signature	Date
Agreed by Line Manager			
Shared with team members			
Saved on the WRBC website			

Appendix 7

Hazard examples for Risk Assessments

In identifying the hazards in a Risk Assessment, take account of the following checklist:

- Animals
- Bunk beds
- Camping gas
- Collision with moving object
- Collisions between people
- Corrosive agents
- Driving
- Falls from a height
- Fights and aggression
- Fire
- Fireworks
- Flammable liquids
- Glass and other sharps
- Hand tools
- Illness/sickness
- Insects
- Knives
- Lifting and carrying
- Lost people
- Lost keys/money/property
- Machinery and equipment
- Medicines
- Missing buses, trains
- Roads
- Scalding water/steam
- Slips and trips
- Toxic/poisonous substances
- Trapped by tide or rising water
- Unhygienic toilets
- Vehicle breakdown
- Water