

**ALL SAINTS LYDIARD MILLICENT**

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

2016

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**SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Introduction**

In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus tells his followers, ‘You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill top cannot be hidden’ (Matthew 5. 14). Christians are to be a transformative presence in society bringing light and hope to others. In particular we are called to be a beacon of good practice in the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults. As Jesus says uncompromisingly, ‘If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea’ (Matthew 18.6).

Today safeguarding is at the forefront of public consciousness. In recent years we have become acutely aware of the way in which historic incidents of abuse were sometimes hidden or even tolerated. There must be zero tolerance to such behaviour. We have to put our own house in order and embody best practice in our parish. As an organisation, it is vital that we keep people safe and support survivors of abuse.

The church is a place where all sorts of people, including perpetrators of abuse, seek acceptance, redemption and forgiveness. Some perpetrators will be genuine in their repentance, but others may not be. This is why forgiveness and vigilance need to go hand-in-hand.

The Church as a whole, cares for, teaches, supports, helps and interacts with children, young people or vulnerable adults in many ways. Such interaction, in an environment of trust can be attractive to those intent upon abuse. It is a responsibility of the Church to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are not put at risk because of their involvement.

This document sets out the policy of All Saints Church, Lydiard Millicent in respect of safeguarding and caring for those people who come into contact with us.

Whilst individuals will be tasked with the oversight and implementation of the policy, in particular the Safeguarding Officer and the Vicar, the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our care is the responsibility of all church members. District Church Council members should be aware of the policy as individuals and the Council should assure itself that the policy is being followed in their parish.

The District Church Council will review and, if necessary, revise, the policy on an annual basis or whenever a change in National or Diocesan Policy occur (see Section 3 Reporting and Review).

The policy draws extensively upon the work done by The House of Bishops and the Diocese of Bristol on the development of policies and sharing good practice. Their two documents, ‘Protecting All God’s Children’ and ‘Promoting A Safe Church’, underpin this policy which should be read in conjunction with them. Copies of these and other documents (see Section 6) must be available to the Safeguarding Officer and any other person directly involved in working with children and young people in the parish.

**Principles**

All Saints District Church Councils has signed up to the following principles:

* We recognize that the abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults is a risk facing our society and community which must be managed effectively;
* We are fully committed to safeguarding, caring for and nurturing the children within our church community;
* Our commitment is both corporate and personal as individuals to monitoring adherence to this policy. Once identified, we will not permit any breach of this policy to continue;
* We will ensure that key personnel receive appropriate training for their safeguarding responsibilities and that this training is refreshed at least every three years;
* We recognize our responsibility to act upon concerns about children, young people and vulnerable adults in our community and undertake to do so with care, caution and compassion in line with best practice guidance;
* We will take considerable care in the selection and training of every person who becomes a worker with children, young people and vulnerable adults, including ordained and lay ministers, church members, volunteers and paid staff. In particular we will comply with the requirements of Safer Recruitment;
* We will make full use of the Disclosure and Barring Service and personal references amongst other tools, to check the background of each person legally eligible to have a DBS check, regardless of their background or experience;
* We will monitor changes in legislation and best practice to ensure that they are brought into our policies wherever appropriate;
* We will cooperate fully with statutory agencies during any investigation they make into allegations concerning a member of the church community;
* We will respond without delay to every complaint made, that any adult, child or young person may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation;
* We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognizes the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and/or isolation;
* In as far as we are able, we will seek to protect survivors of sexual abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse;
* We will challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust;
* We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
* We will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice.

The District Church Council recognises the importance of providing comfort and confidence to those involved in working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. A primary purpose of the policy is, by ensuring that an effective system is in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, we are able to provide protection and security for them.

**SECTION 2 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

In order to protect children and young people we must be ready to acknowledge the human propensity to evil and to draw upon the gifts of love, goodness and forgiveness to face evil. We will, in prayer, seek constantly the support of the Holy Spirit for our work with children and young people and for their safety.

Knowledge and vigilance are significant elements of safeguarding practice. Accordingly, in this section and ANNEXES B and C, we provide information on the forms of abuse and the signs of abuse.

**Definitions of Abuse (Children and Young People)**

The following definitions of child abuse are taken from ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2015) and represent the recognised categories of abuse that will be used across all organisations and agencies involved in working with children and young people:

Physical Abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in, a child.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as the overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Additional forms of abuse are also recognised as being apparent within our communities. Whilst these do not find the same level of consistent understanding or application, they are particularly relevant for the church context, as follows:

Organised/Institutional Abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Spiritual Abuse is similar to emotional abuse on many levels, in that inappropriate expectations may be imposed upon children and young people. It may involve conveying to children the consequences of sinfulness in an inappropriate manner causing them fear and manipulating them into accepting what someone is preaching /teaching /saying. To say “You won’t go the heaven if you get run over by a bus on your way home” is a form of bullying, exploitation of emotions, manipulation of young minds and a corruption of the Gospel message. For further information, see the relevant sections of national Church of England guidance, particularly ‘Protecting All God’s Children’ and ‘Responding Well’.

Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief is based in a belief in ‘possession’ and ‘witchcraft’ and is widespread throughout the UK. It is not confined to people from particular countries, cultures or religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in the UK. Nationally, the number of known cases of child abuse linked to accusations of ‘possession’ or ‘witchcraft’ is small, but children involved can suffer damage to their physical and mental health, capacity to learn, ability to form relationships and self esteem. Such abuse generally occurs when a carer views a child as being ‘different’, attributes this difference to the child being ‘possessed’ or involved in ‘witchcraft’, and attempts to exorcise him or her – either by themselves or through a faith leader. A child could be viewed as ‘different’ for a variety of reasons, such as disobedience, independence, bedwetting, nightmares, illness or disability. The attempt to ‘exorcise’ may involve severe beating, burning, starvation, cutting or stabbing, and/or isolation (physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect) and usually occurs in the household where the child lives.

**Definitions of Abuse (Vulnerable Adults)**

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. The following are taken from ‘No Secrets’:

Physical Abuse may include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse may include rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological Abuse may include emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial/Material Abuse may include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect (and acts of omission) may include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory Abuse may include racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Institutional/Organised Abuse may occur where there is poor professional practice in a setting. This may take the form of isolated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice, at one end of the spectrum, through to pervasive ill treatment or gross misconduct at the other. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems.

As in the case of definitions of abuse for children and young people, we also need to be aware of forms of abuse that are perpetrated in the name of religion, faith or spirituality that do not find consistent understanding and application outside of the church/faith environment:

Spiritual Abuse may occur when inappropriate expectations are imposed upon adults. It may involve conveying to them the dire consequences of sinfulness so causing them to accept what someone is preaching /teaching /saying through bullying and causing them to be fearful. To say “You won’t go the heaven if you get run over by a bus on your way home” is a form of bullying, exploitation of emotions, manipulation of minds and a corruption of the Gospel message.

**SECTION 3: PEOPLE AND TEAM**

**Personnel**

The District Church Council will identify and appoint a Safeguarding Officer and, if possible, an Assistant Safeguarding Officer to carry out the duties and responsibilities set out in this policy. Each position will have responsibility for the safety of all the activities of the Church. Ideally the Safeguarding Officer will have specific responsibilities for children and young people and the Assistant Safeguarding Officer will have responsibility for adults.

The District Church Council must ensure that the parish Safeguarding Officer is appointed according to Safer Recruitment Guidelines.

**Duties of the Parish Safeguarding Officer**

* To implement and monitor the Parish Policy on Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, encouraging good practice;
* In accordance with current safer recruitment diocesan guidelines, to ensure the suitability of all volunteers and District Church Council employees in regular contact with children and vulnerable adults;
* To obtain necessary criminal records checks (including verifying applications) and renew these appropriately;
* To encourage actively, volunteers and DCC employees to undertake training, and keep a record of training taken;
* To provide advice and guidance to the District Church Council and the Vicar on all matters relating to safeguarding and training thereon;
* To receive, but not to investigate, any suspicions or allegations of abuse which may arise in the church and to inform immediately and subsequently liaise with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. Concerns to be referred to statutory agencies i.e. police social case, as well as to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.
* To send and update by e mail their contact details to the Diocesan Office;
* Undertake basic safeguarding training where appropriate.

**General Responsibilities**

The District Church Council is responsible for the formal adoption of a policy and for ensuring that the policy is operated fully and properly in the parish. This should be compliant with, and incorporate the formal adoption of, the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, which is based on the House of Bishops’ Policy. Explicit consideration should also be given to specific local parish requirements.

Whilst the Vicar and Safeguarding Officer will have specific responsibilities by virtue of their role and position this does not relieve the District Church Council of their responsibility. In particular, the District Church Council must ensure that the necessary financial resources are made available for the conduct of the policy and the training of Safeguarding Officers and people working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This will include, inter alia, training, printing, travelling, computer costs and out of pocket expenses.

The Vicar has overall charge of the care of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the team and has a joint responsibility, with the Safeguarding Officer, for their protection. The Vicar must meet with the Safeguarding Officer on a regular basis to discuss and consider the matter of protection and to determine whether there are any recommendations to be made in respect of the policy or changes which are required to activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults within the parish.

The Safeguarding Officer has a joint responsibility, with the Vicar, for their protection. The Safeguarding Officer must meet with the Vicar on a regular basis to discuss and consider the matter of protection and to determine whether there are any recommendations to be made in respect of the policy or changes which are required to activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults within the parish.

The Team Child Protection Officer must establish and maintain links with the Diocesan Child Protection Team and, as appropriate, Local Authority Child Protection Officers.

The Assistant Team Child Protection Officer is responsible to the Team Child Protection Officer and the Team Rector for providing assistance to them in the conduct of the policy. In the event that the Team Child Protection Officer is unable to carry out their responsibilities these will be undertaken by the Assistant Team Child Protection Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer should be, unless impossible to achieve, someone without any direct responsibility for the pastoral care of children, young people or vulnerable adults anywhere in the team.

**Parish Safeguarding Responsibilities**

The parish accepts the prime duty of care placed upon the incumbent and the parochial church council to ensure the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care. In order to meet this responsibility, the District Church Council, on behalf of the parish will:

* Create a culture of ‘informed vigilance’, which takes children, young people and adults at risk seriously;
* Ensure that appropriate health and safety policies and procedures are in place;
* Provide appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish;
* Ensure that current Health and Safety requirements are met for all groups involving children, young people or adults;
* Ensure that appropriate pastoral care is available for those adults who have disclosed that they have been abused as children;
* Provide, as appropriate, support for all parents and families in the congregation, being particularly aware of parents whose children have suffered abuse;
* Ensure that those who may pose a threat to children and young people are effectively managed and monitored;
* Appoint a person, who may be different from the Parish Safeguarding Representative, to be a children’s advocate. (This person should be someone whom children know they can talk to about problems if they so wish);
* Display the “Childline” telephone number prominently on a notice board that is accessible to children wherever relevant activities take place;
* Ensure that all those authorised to work with children and young people, or in a position of authority, are recruited according to current Safer Recruitment Practice guidelines, and appropriately appointed, trained and supported while in post;
* Provide all personnel authorised by the DCC to work with children with a copy of the Parish Safeguarding Policy;
* Pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities, to ensure their full integration within the church community, remembering that children with disability or those for whom English is not their first language or are isolated in any way are always more vulnerable to abuse;
* Review the implementation of the Parish Safeguarding Policy at least annually, to ensure that the Parish is adhering to the practice laid down within the Policy.

Please note: legally the responsibility for ensuring safeguarding falls to the incumbent and the District Church Council. This cannot be changed by local arrangement. However, how that responsibility is discharged can vary considerably according to the context.

**Others’ Responsibilities**

Lay and ordained members of the Team are responsible for ensuring that they have a working understanding of the policy and the principles of protection set out in Diocesan guidance. The nature of their day to day roles in caring for, teaching and nurturing children and young people is such that they should be especially vigilant in respect of potential abuse.

**Officers**

**The Safeguarding Officer is:**

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Address:

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Date of appointment: ………………………………………………………………………………

Telephone: ………………………………………..

**The Assistant Team Child Protection Officer is:**

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Address:

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Date of appointment: ………………………………………………………………………………

Telephone: ………………………………………..

**SECTION 4: REPORTING AND REVIEW**

**Reporting**

It is extremely difficult for individuals such as the Vicar or the District Church Council to assure themselves on a day to day basis that the policy is being maintained effectively. The principal, but not only, means of doing so will be to receive reports from the Safeguarding Officer an at least a quarterly basis. There must also be a full report provided to the Parish at the relevant Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

The form and timing of the report will be determined by the District Church Council but the report must cover, as a minimum, the activities of the parish which involve children and young people, confirmation that the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks have been made or updated, training, confirmation that the policy is being operated and any recommendations for change or improvement.

The District Church Council will maintain records of, and notes on, discussion relating to the report. The District Church Council must make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the confidentiality of these reports or any matter contained therein is strictly maintained.

In order to permit the Safeguarding Officer to carry out their duties, the District Church Council will provide notice to the Safeguarding Officer of their Meetings so that items relating to this subject can be added to the agenda. The District Church Council undertakes, as part of this policy, to place on their meeting agenda any matter raised by the Safeguarding Officer, regardless of notice period; and grant access to their meetings (for this agenda item only) to the Safeguarding Officer.

**Review of Policy**

The District Church Council will, having adopted the policy, review the appropriateness of the policy whenever requested to do so by the Safeguarding Officer, but at least once per year. It may be appropriate to do so at the time that the report is received.

**Adoption of Policy**

The District Church Council, having adopted the policy is required to obtain the agreement of the Safeguarding Officer and the Vicar to any proposals for changing the policy locally.

This Policy was adopted by **All Saints Lydiard Millicent District Church Council** on:

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**SECTION 5: RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING**

**Recruitment**

The District Church Council are committed to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults, and the care and nurture of children within our church communities. We will carefully select, train and support all those with any responsibility within the Church, in line with Safer Recruitment principles.

This means that we will:

* Ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, consistent and transparent;
* Take all reasonable steps to prevent those who might harm children or adults from taking up, in our Churches, positions of respect, responsibility or authority where they are trusted by others;
* Adhere to safer recruitment legislation, guidance and standards, responding positively to changing understandings of good safer recruitment practice;
* Produce and disseminate practice guidance on safer recruitment for our Church, ensuring that such practice guidance is compatible, and keep it updated;
* Always seek advice from human resources personnel to achieve best possible practice;
* Ensure training on safer recruitment practice guidance;
* Introduce systems for monitoring adherence to the Churches’ safer recruitment practice guidance and review them regularly;
* Maintain documentary evidence relating to all relevant recruitments.
* DBS checks are updated at least every 5 years.

Among those included in this appointments process will be:

* All clergy who have the freehold, hold the bishop’s licence or permission to officiate in a parish;
* All accredited lay workers and Readers who hold the bishop’s licence or permission to officiate;
* Any other leaders in the church whose office of trust gives them the opportunity or the expectation that they might have regular or unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
* Those people who as part of their job supervise those working with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
* The Safeguarding Officer and Assistant Safeguarding Officer;
* All people employed by the parish who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults or who may come into regular and direct contact with them during their work;
* All volunteers who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults or who may come into regular and direct contact with them during their activities; this will include adult members of mixed age activities such as, bell ringers, choirs, servers, etc.

**Appointment of Volunteers and Employees**

Those responsible for the appointment should follow the principles outlined Safer Recruitment when seeking to appoint to a post involving direct contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Appointing to a post includes accepting people who have volunteered to help with activities involving children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Prospective appointees should:

* Be regarded as job applicants and have a defined role;
* Complete an application form;
* Name two referees, one of which may be from the current employer or previous church;
* Have an appropriate interview conducted by the person responsible for the appointment and the Safeguarding Officer or Assistant Safeguarding Officer.

If the decision is made to appoint, the appointee should:

* Provide a disclosure at the appropriate level from the Disclosure and Barring Service;
* Be offered the post subject to a probationary period;
* Have the appointment agreed by the District Church Council and confirmed once the probationary period is complete.

**Interviewing Workers and Helpers**

The purpose of the interview is to offer the opportunity to explore the applicant’s:

* Previous experience of work or contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
* Understanding and awareness of the needs of children, young people or vulnerable adults;
* Attitude toward the care and control of young people in a group context;
* Attitude toward Child Protection practice, guidelines and expectations;
* Gaps in employment history.

At interview it is useful to identify:

* The domains of the task;
* Detail of the role including boundaries and expectations;
* Who is available to offer the worker ongoing supervision and support;
* Disclosure and Barring Service processes relevant to the position;
* That the post is subject to a six month probationary period.

The interview should be briefly recorded and the applicant made aware of this fact.

**Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosures**

A Disclosure is a document containing information held by the police and government departments. It can be used by employers and voluntary organisations to make safer recruitment decisions. Disclosures are provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service, an executive agency of the Home Office. The Disclosure service offers organisations a means to check the background of job applicants to ensure that they do not have a history that would make them unsuitable for posts for which they have applied.

Disclosures will provide details of a person’s criminal record including convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer (PNC). If the position involves working with children, Disclosures will also contain details from lists held by the Department of Health (DH) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) of those considered unsuitable for this type of work. Depending upon the level of Disclosure, it might also contain information held by local police forces.

There are currently two levels of Disclosure available: Enhanced and Standard. Both levels of check involve consultation of Police National Computer records as well as registers held by the DoH and the DfES. The Enhanced level also involves consulting the relevant constabularies for any other information (force intelligence regarding ongoing investigations etc) relevant to the applicant’s suitability to work with children to be disclosed, at the discretion of the Chief Police Officer in each case. On very rare occasions this information is not disclosed to the applicant and may instead be shared confidentially with the appointing body.

Standard Disclosures are for positions that involve regular contact with those aged under eighteen, or people of all ages who may be vulnerable for other reasons.

Enhanced Disclosures are for posts which involve a greater degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults. In general the type of work might involve regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of those people.

It follows that all clergy and others with a high public profile or position of respect in the community will need to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure.

All positions will be assessed for their appropriate level of Disclosure on an individual basis.

**Training**

It is unreasonable to expect everyone involved in working with children, young people or vulnerable adults to gain the necessary level of knowledge of policies and best practice without some training.

The Safeguarding Officer should identify the training needs of people working with children and young people (or vacant posts) and review these annually. A training programme and appropriate documentation will need to be agreed annually by District Church Council.

The Safeguarding Officers will also need to identify training required by them to carry out their duties and responsibilities.

Once agreed, the training programme and practices should be implemented.

Everyone appointed to, or in, a position bringing them into contact with children and young people must receive a copy of this policy and be given good access to the documents identified in ANNEX A of this policy.

Persons who have not received training appropriate to their position within a reasonable time following their appointment should not be allowed to continue their duties until they have been trained.

Training may be formal or informal (eg on the job) but should be clearly identified as part of the training programme and monitored for effectiveness.

Training and experience from previous positions outside the parish may be accepted as adequate for the appointment subject to the approval of the Safeguarding Officer.

**SECTION 6: POLICIES AND PRACTICE**

**Policy and Practice Guidelines**

The Parochial Church Council will follow best practice guidance on the protection of children and young people. The document list at ANNEX A identifies the principal sources of current best practice.

The Safeguarding Officer will be familiar with Diocesan Policy on Child Protection, and to share with the Incumbent the responsibility for ensuring that the local policy and practice reflect any revisions that may come into force from time to time.

The Safeguarding Officer will be trained, in the event of a suspicion or allegation of abuse, to know when to seek advice from the Diocesan Child Protection Team, and when it is necessary to inform the Social Services immediately.

The Safeguarding Officer will be aware of all of the activities in, or run by, the church, know the leaders involved and understand the nature and risks of activities in which any children, young people or vulnerable adults groups are engaged.

A list of these activities will be maintained by the Safeguarding Officer centrally and provided to the District Church Council and other relevant people/bodies upon request.

**Parish Culture**

The District Church Council will endeavour to develop a culture within their parish which has the protection and nurture of children, young people or vulnerable adults at its heart

**Reporting Abuse and Dealing With Allegations**

Many people, both clergy and lay, are concerned about the reporting of alleged abuse. This is especially likely to be the case where someone has received information that amounts to an allegation of abuse, but has not been given consent to pass that information to anybody else. It should not be forgotten that those facing this difficult situation can and should seek advice from the Safeguarding Officer or the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser and/or the Diocesan Registrar on the course of action to be taken. The social services departments and police can also be approached for guidance without the need to divulge personal details.

Failure to refer could endanger a life or well being and also compromise the Church’s commitment to creating a safe environment. Responsible and informed judgement must be exercised.

Disclosure of abuse is often a process, not a one off event. People may indicate in a variety of ways over time that all is not well in their world. It is important that concerns are noted over time as these may contribute ‘jigsawlike’ to a larger picture.

* Stay calm;
* Listen carefully to what is said;
* Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others. Never promise to keep secrets;
* Allow the child/person to continue at his/her own pace;
* Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer;
* Reassure the child/person that they have done the right thing in telling you;
* Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared;
* Record in writing what was said using the child’s/person’s own words as soon as possible noting date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated.

It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for the professional protection agencies following a referral to them of concern about an allegation of abuse.

In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises from a disclosure made in confidence, it is vitally important to record the details of an allegation or reported incident.

An accurate note should be made of:

* Date and time of the incident or disclosure;
* Parties who were involved;
* What was said or done by whom. It is helpful to note actual words used;
* Any action taken by the organisation to investigate the matter;
* Any further action, eg suspension of a worker;
* Where relevant, reasons why there is no referral to a statutory agency;
* Names of child/person reporting and to whom reported.

The record should be clear and factual as it may be needed by the protection agencies investigating the incident and may, in the future, be used as evidence in court. The record should be stored securely and shared only with those who know about the incident or allegation. However, information relating to concerns that a person is at risk of significant harm should not be withheld on the basis that it is believed to be unlawful under these acts. When in doubt, advice should always be sought from someone experienced in dealing with these issues.

**ANNEX A: POLICY AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS**

1. Promoting A Safer Church (Church of England)
2. Protecting All God’s Children (Church of England)
3. Responding to Serious Safeguarding Situations (2015)
4. Risk Assessment for Individuals who may Pose Risk to Children or Adults (2015)
5. Safer Recruitment (2015)
6. Safeguarding in Religious Communities (2015)
7. Responding Well (2014)
8. Out of School Care Standards (Ofsted)

**ANNEX B: SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE)**

The following should be used as indicators only that a child may be experiencing some form of abuse. They are not exhaustive lists and should not be used as a definitive guide as to whether abuse has or is being suffered. However, in using these signs as a guide, the presence of any of these signs should cause us to stop and consider the possibility that a child may be being abused.

**Physical Abuse**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Physical Signs*** | ***Behavioural Signs*** |
| Bruises, black eyes and broken bones are obvious signs of physical abuse, but they are not the only ones. Other signs include:* injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
* untreated or inadequately treated injuries
* injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen
* bruising which looks like hand or finger marks
* cigarette burns, human bites
* scalds and burns
 | Sometimes if a child is being physically abused they may show changes in behaviour, such as:* becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed
* having trouble sleeping
* behaving aggressively or being disruptive
* showing fear of certain adults
* showing lack of confidence and low self-esteem
* using drugs or alcohol
 |

**Emotional Abuse**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Physical Signs*** | ***Behavioural Signs*** |
| * speech disorders
* delayed physical development
* substance abuse
* ulcers, severe allergies
 | * habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting) antisocial, destructive
* neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)
* passive and aggressive - behavioural extremes
* delinquent behaviour (esp. adolescents)
* developmentally delayed
 |

**Neglect**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Physical Signs*** | ***Behavioural Signs*** |
| * abandonment
* unattended medical needs
* consistent lack of supervision
* consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene
* lice, distended stomach, emaciated
* inadequate nutrition
 | * regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in class
* steals food, begs from classmates
* reports that there is no carer at home
* frequently absent or late
* self-destructive
* school dropout (esp. adolescents)
* extreme loneliness and need for affection
 |

**Sexual Abuse**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Physical Signs*** | ***Behavioural Signs*** |
| * pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
* genital discharge or urinary tract infections
* stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
* sexually transmitted infections
* pregnancy
 | * a marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically.
* a young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected
* they may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities.
* they may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age
* the child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person
 |

**ANNEX C: SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE (ADULTS)**

It may not always be obvious that an adult is being subjected to mistreatment or abuse; and it may not be appropriate to question them at the time. However there may be general indicators that something is amiss and that the adult is unhappy about their situation. Marked change in their behaviour or disclosure of concerns should be discussed with the Church Safeguarding Officer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Physical Signs*** | ***Behavioural Signs*** |
| Some general indicators that may be noticed about the vulnerable person:* covering up or rationalising, injuries or demeaning behaviours towards them
* confusion and / or denial that anything is amiss despite marked deterioration
* withdrawal from things that they normally engage with or do
* not being allowed to speak for themselves, or see others without permission
* flirtatious, precocious or expressive sexual behaviour out of character
* indications of unusual confinement e.g. closed off in a room
 | Behaviours that may be observed about the carer, family member or the person close to the adult at risk include:* getting the vulnerable person to pay for their (i.e. carer’s) shopping / petrol / tickets
* taking advantage of their naivety or trust
* attitudes of indifference or anger towards the vulnerable person
* blaming or chastising them e.g. that soiling themselves was deliberate
* aggressive or harsh behaviour (threats, insults, harassment)
* inappropriate display of affection or care
* social isolation or restriction of activity
* obvious absence of assistance or attendance
 |