



# **Policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

This policy statement on safeguarding children and adults in the Church was adopted by St Stephen's and St Wulstan's PCC at their meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The PCC recognises the need to safeguard the children, young people and adults in our care and guard against the possibility of any form of abuse of children, young people and adults by persons acting in the name of our parish. We aim to create a safe environment for the nurture and development of children, young people and adults, in order for them to feel valued and confident to ask for support and help.

As part of their commitment to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults, the PCC also agreed to adopt all of the House of Bishop's safeguarding policy and practice guidance and The Church of England – Birmingham's procedures for their implementation as detailed in the "Promoting a Safer Church: Parish Policy Statement".

## Principles:

We believe that every person has a value and dignity which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God's own image and likeness. Christians see this potential as fulfilled by God's recreation of us in Christ. Among other things, this implies a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore to protect them from harm.

### We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children<sup>1</sup>, young people<sup>2</sup>, and adults<sup>3</sup>.
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people, and adults, including when they are vulnerable<sup>4</sup>.
- The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of "informed vigilance" as to the dangers of abuse and where victims of abuse can disclose it and find support.

### Therefore, we will:

- Safely recruit all those with any responsibility for children, young people or vulnerable adults within the church, in line with our safer recruitment policy, including the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
- Train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond appropriately to abuse.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse, and respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately.
- Seek to support and work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with him/her an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.
- Seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

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<sup>1</sup> The word child/children will be used in this document to refer to any person under the age of 11.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase young person/people will be used in this document to refer to any person between the ages of 11 and 17, or those outside of this age range who are currently in the care of our youth group structures. i.e. those who have had their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, but are still members of the youth group.

<sup>3</sup> The phrase adults will be used as in this document to refer to any persons over the age of 18, including vulnerable adults.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase "vulnerable adult" will be used in this document in line with The Church of England Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, Section 6, which defines a 'vulnerable adult' as a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired. However, we recognise that any adult can be "vulnerable" due to the specific circumstances, and want to take steps to protect people especially in these situations.



- Offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children, young people and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Require all regular hirers of our premises to have their own safeguarding policy and procedures, to provide us with an assurance that these are implemented and to provide us with a copy of these.
- Review this policy annually (usually at our meeting in November).



# Code for safer working practice

1. Guidelines for individual leaders.
2. Additional guidelines for overall leaders.
3. Responding to safeguarding concerns:
  - a. what to do if you suspect a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk or has been abused
  - b. imminent risk
  - c. reporting.
4. Guidelines for good practice for church activities for children, young people and vulnerable adults:
  - a. special needs
  - b. consent
  - c. registration
  - d. record keeping
  - e. recommended staffing levels
  - f. safe environment
  - g. safeguarding training
  - h. e-safety
  - i. spiritual abuse
  - j. drivers.
5. Important telephone numbers.

## Terminology used in this code:

- The term 'overall leader' is used to refer to the person with overall responsibility for a group or activity, who is answerable to the PCC.
- The term 'leader' is used to refer to any person (including overall leaders) working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

## 1. Guidelines for individual leaders

### You should:

- treat all people with respect and dignity;
- ensure that your own language, tone of voice and body language is respectful;
- always work within sight of another adult;
- ensure another adult is informed if a child, young person or vulnerable adult needs to be taken to the toilet;<sup>5</sup> Toilet breaks should be organized for children in our care for more than 2 hours;
- ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults know who they can talk to if they need to speak to someone about a personal concern;
- respond warmly to a child, young person or vulnerable adult who needs comforting, but make sure there are other adults around;
- ensure that children, young people and their parents/carers are aware that children's and young people's groups may sometimes include activities which require light physical contact eg. football or hockey;
- administer any necessary First Aid in the presence of another adult;

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<sup>5</sup> This is referring to those who need to be escorted to the toilet area. You must not go into the toilet with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.



- obtain consent for any photographs/videos to be taken, shown or displayed;
- record any concerns, incidents, behaviour or disclosures from or regarding a child, young person or vulnerable adult and give the information to the Parish Safeguarding Officer, or if they are implicated, the Vicar. Sign and date the record;
- always share concerns about the behaviour of another leader with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, or if they are implicated, the Vicar. Sign and date the record.
- ensure any health and safety requirements are adhered to;
- maintain an awareness, at all times, of what is taking place and who is present;

**You should not:**

- initiate physical contact. Any necessary contact (e.g. for comfort, see section below regarding appropriate use of touch) should be initiated by the child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- invade a child, young person or vulnerable adult's privacy while washing or toileting;
- play rough physical or sexually provocative games;
- use any form of physical punishment;
- be sexually suggestive about or to a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- touch a child, young person or vulnerable adult inappropriately or obtrusively;
- have any form of sexual relationship, including online, with a child or young person;
- scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child, young person, or adult;
- permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing or bullying;
- show favouritism to any one person or group;
- encourage a child, young person, or vulnerable adult in any infatuation with you;
- give lifts to children, young people or vulnerable adults on their own or on your own;
- smoke tobacco or use e-cigarettes in the presence of children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- drink alcohol when responsible for children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- share sleeping accommodation with children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- invite a child, young person or vulnerable adult to your home alone;
- arrange social occasions with children, young people or vulnerable adults outside organized group occasions;<sup>6</sup>
- allow unknown adults access to children, young people or vulnerable adults. Visitors should always be accompanied by a known person;
- allow strangers to give lifts to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

**Appropriate use of Touch**

Church groups and activities should provide a warm, nurturing environment for children, young people and adults, whilst avoiding any inappropriate behaviour or the risk of allegations being made.

In order to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, and to avoid spurious allegations, we are careful about our use of touch. All physical contact should be a response to the child, young person or vulnerable adult's need, not the need of the leader. All leaders must work within sight of another adult.

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<sup>6</sup> There may be occasions where it is appropriate for this to happen, eg. with family members, close family friends or godchildren. If you are unsure, consult with the Vicar, Children's worker, Youth worker or Day Centre Leader as appropriate beforehand.



The below table is not intended to be exhaustive,<sup>7</sup> but gives some guidance about how touch can be used appropriately for different age groups. At all ages it is not appropriate to touch private areas (areas which would be covered by a swimsuit).

Age group	Appropriate use of touch	Inappropriate use of touch
Creche (0-3 years)	Holding babies. Holding hands to lead around. Lifting in and out of a high chair or sit-in toy. Arm around shoulder to comfort.	Sitting toddlers on lap/knee. Kissing. Stroking. Hair brushing. Hugging. Applying sunscreen.
Scramblers (3-4 years)	Holding hands to lead around. Arm around shoulder to comfort.	As above. Carrying.
Climbers (4-7 years)	Arm around shoulder to comfort.	As above. Holding hands to lead around.
Explorers (7-10 years)	Administering first aid. Light touch/contact involved in a game/sport.	As above. Arm around shoulder to comfort.
Pathfinders (10-14 years)	Administering first aid. Light touch/contact involved in a game/sport.	As above.
Cross Section (15-18 years)	Administering first aid. Light touch/contact involved in a game/sport. Handshake/fistbump greeting.	As above.

Very rarely it may be necessary to restrain a child or young person who is harming him/herself or others. Only force that is proportionate and reasonable should be used, and a parent/carer informed as soon as possible. All such incidents should be recorded and reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Leaders must be prepared to act or speak out if they think any leader is behaving inappropriately.

### Toileting and Baby-change

Leaders can escort children, young people and vulnerable adults to the toilet area, but must not go into the toilet with them.

We do not change babies' nappies or assist with using potties. If a baby needs to be changed or assisted in toileting a parent or carer must be called to do this.

## 2. Additional guidelines for overall leaders

In addition to the above the overall leader should:

- undertake risk assessments with appropriate action taken and record kept;
- keep register and consent forms up to date;
- allow space for children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk – either formally or informally;
- liaise with Parish Safeguarding Officer over good practice for safeguarding;
- always inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer of any specific safeguarding concerns that arise;
- The safeguarding co-ordinator will liaise with the diocesan safeguarding adviser.

<sup>7</sup> For example, touch may be more appropriate when working with children with special educational needs.



### 3. Responding to safeguarding concerns

#### a. What to do if you suspect a child, young person or adult is at risk or has been abused

Do not try to deal with any safeguarding concerns on your own. Always tell your Parish Safeguarding Officer straight away, or if they are not available or are implicated, speak to the Vicar, or contact the Bishops' Safeguarding Adviser.<sup>8</sup> Even if you are not sure if child abuse is involved, if you have concerns about a child, you should still contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer straight away, or if they are not available or are implicated, speak to the Vicar, or contact the Bishops' Safeguarding Adviser.

It may not be appropriate or possible to record a safeguarding disclosure as it is being made, however you should always make notes about a safeguarding incident or disclosure as accurately as possible, as soon as possible. These should cover what has happened, in what context, and anything that seemed particularly significant. Quote the child, young person or adult's words exactly where possible. Remember to sign the record and add your name, the affected person's name, and the date.

The following points are helpful if you find yourself in this situation:

- if a child, young person or vulnerable adult asks to talk in confidence do not promise confidentiality – you have a duty to refer a child/young person who is at risk to the statutory agencies;
- always explain that you may have to get other people to help, and why;
- stay calm;
- listen to the child, young person or vulnerable adult attentively;
- allow the child, young person or vulnerable adult to speak freely;
- do not press for information;
- do not ask leading questions e.g. "Is that bruise from when your Dad hit you?";
- tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they are not to blame for anything that has happened;
- reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they were right to speak out;
- try to explain what will happen next in a way the child, young person or vulnerable adult can understand;
- reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that he or she will continue to receive support during the difficult time to come.

#### b. Imminent risk

- If you encounter a child, young person or vulnerable adult in a situation where they are in imminent danger, you should act immediately to secure their safety. Seek the assistance of the police and then contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer who will make a referral to Local Authority Social Care.
- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult needs emergency medical attention, this should be sought immediately and directly from the emergency services. Parents/carers, if available, should be kept fully informed.

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<sup>8</sup> Contact details for the Bishops' Safeguarding Adviser can be found on the safeguarding information board or in Section 5 of this document.



### **c. Reporting**

The Parish Safeguarding Officer will report concerns/allegations reported to them to the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser as soon as possible (on that day) in the following cases (in some cases this may also need to be reported to statutory agencies):

- the abuse/concern happens at an activity approved by the PCC
- a leader or overall leader has, or is alleged to have, committed abuse in church or in another context
- there is a concern that a church officer's behaviour may lead to abuse
- someone known to have been convicted of a sexual or serious violent offence (including domestic violence) is attending an activity approved by the PCC
- there is a potential for damage to the church's reputation.

## **4. Guidelines for good practice for church activities for children and young people**

### **a. Special needs**

We welcome everyone to our groups and activities and work hard to accommodate their needs in any way possible. Discriminatory language or behaviour is never acceptable. Someone with special needs can be especially vulnerable to bullying and disrespectful behaviour and sometimes to harm. All leaders need to be conscious of this and should ensure that any person with special needs knows who they can approach about any concerns.

### **b. Consent**

Where consent is required, it must be obtained from a parent or person with parental responsibility. In the case of a vulnerable adult, consent from another source may be required. A record of who has given consent for any specific activity will be kept in accordance with our Privacy Notice.

### **c. Registration**

A registration form will be completed for every child, young person or vulnerable adult who attends groups or activities, and these records will be processed and stored in accordance with our Privacy Notice. The form will be updated annually.

### **d. Record keeping**

All records which contain personal data will be stored and processed in accordance with our Privacy Notice.



### e. Recommended staffing levels

Our minimum staffing levels for children and young people's groups are given below. More help may be required if children or young people are being taken out, are undertaking physical activities or if circumstances require it.

0-3 years	1 leader for every 3 children.
4-8 years	1 leader for every 8 children.
Over 9 years	1 leader for the first 8 children/young people, then 1 extra leader for every further 12 children/young people.

Each group must have at least two leaders and ideally there should be at least one male and one female. If small groups are in the same room then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.

Young people who are being encouraged to serve by helping with groups should always be overseen by an appointed leader who will be responsible for ensuring that good practice and safeguarding procedures are followed and that the work they are doing is appropriate to both their age and understanding. It must be noted that young people serving as leaders are still counted as young people, and as such should not be counted as a leader for the purposes of the ratios set out above or relied upon as the second "adult" in a room – they should always be in addition to this.

Adult guests/speakers who visit on one or two occasions must be supervised by an appointed leader. If an adult is expected to visit on more than 2 occasions in any academic year, they will be subject to the standard safer recruitment process.

### f. Safe environment

The Childline telephone number and other important safeguarding information is displayed prominently in the St Stephen's church building.

A risk assessment must be undertaken for each activity, and in greater detail for unusual activities.

Insurance, First Aid kit and fire precautions are checked and a Health and Safety Check is completed regularly with reference to the following minimum standards (these refer to the St Stephen's church building):

- Meeting places are warm, well-lit and well-ventilated. They are kept clean and free of clutter.
- Toilets and hand basins are easily available with hygienic drying facilities.
- Appropriate space and equipment are available for any intended activity.
- Because food is regularly prepared on the premises, the facilities are checked by the Environmental Health Officer.
- Drinks are always available.
- Groups have access to a phone in order to call for help if necessary.
- Adults are aware of the fire procedures. Fire extinguishers are regularly checked and smoke detectors linked to an integrated alarm system are fitted throughout the premises. A fire drill is carried out annually.
- A First Aid kit is available in the foyer. The contents of the First Aid kit are stored in a waterproof container and be clearly marked. The contents will be checked and refreshed in line with expiry dates.
- All staff are encouraged to have some First Aid knowledge.



- A list of First Aiders in the church family has been compiled and is on the wall in the kitchen next to the First Aid kit. (Removed) All accidents must be recorded in the accident book which is available in the kitchen.

#### **g. Safeguarding training**

All leaders and group leaders must undergo safeguarding training at least once every 3 years. Copies of Certificates of completion will be kept, in accordance with our Privacy Notice, by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

#### **h. E-safety**

As part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people, youth and children's leaders at St Stephens do not communicate with young people using mobile phones, and do not add them as 'friends' on social media.

We want the young people in our 14-18s group to be able to take responsibility for managing their own commitments to church groups, rather than having to try to communicate through their parents/carers. To aid in this there is a church mobile phone which can be used for leaders to communicate with young people. (Removed information about Cross Section Facebook page) 14-18s group members and their parents/carers will be given the phone number for a mobile phone which is owned by the church (07988612525), so that they can text the number to let leaders know if they cannot make it to the group, or if they are running late. The phone will normally be locked in the church office, and if it is taken off-site it will be signed out by the person using it.

#### **i. Spiritual abuse**

Within churches, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority or leadership and oppressive teaching. These result in children, young people and vulnerable adults experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour is alleged it will be immediately investigated in the same way as other kinds of abuse, and as in the case of other kinds of abuse, if the allegations are substantiated, the leaders in question will be immediately suspended from their position. Any investigation will be done in co-operation with the appropriate authorities, including statutory agencies.

#### **j. Drivers**

- All those who drive children, young people and vulnerable adults on church-organized activities must be over 21 and have held a full and clean driving licence for at least two years, and never have been convicted for any serious road traffic offence.
- Drivers who are not youth and children's leaders or approved outside contractors (e.g. Shencare) must be recruited for the task according to the safer recruitment process.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state to drive i.e. not over-tired; not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness.
- Drivers must disclose to the overall leader and/or safeguarding officer if they are at all concerned that they may not meet the above requirements.



**Private car**

- Children and young people must not be transported in a private car without the prior consent of their parents/carers.
- All cars that carry children, young people and vulnerable adults must be comprehensively insured for both private and business use.
- All cars that carry children, young people and vulnerable adults must be in a roadworthy condition.
- All children, young people and vulnerable adults must wear suitable seat belts and use appropriate booster seats.
- When transporting children and young people, there should be a non-driving adult escort (who is not the spouse of the driver). If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child or young person on his or her own, the child or young person must sit in the back of the car.

**Minibus**

The driver of a minibus must know the up-to-date regulations for its use and have had a trial drive.



## 5. Important Telephone Numbers

Police	101 or 999 for emergency
NSPCC Helpline	08088005000
Local Authority Social Care – Adults	01213031234      Out of Hours: 01216754806
Local Authority Social Care – Children	01213031888      Out of Hours: 01216754806

### Diocesan and Parish contacts

Vicar	Chris Hobbs	01214720050
Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator	Helen Buckley	07870617551
Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor	Steph Haynes	07342993844
Day Centre Leader	Jean Phillips	01214773045

