



# **SAFEGUARDING**

## POLICY & PROCEDURES

### **YOUTH LEADERS & CHILDREN'S WORKERS**

## Introduction

The care and protection of children, young people (the phrase 'young people/person' means any individual aged 14 to 17 years old) and vulnerable adults, (section 6 Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 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...") involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church. Everyone who participates in the life of the Church has a role to play in promoting a Safer Church for all.

### Children and Young People are an important part of our Church today.

- They have much to give as well as to receive.
- We will listen to them.
- As we nurture them in worship, learning, and in community life, we will respect the wishes and feelings of children and young people.

We are grateful for the dedication of our volunteers. They enable our children to learn about Jesus and to take their place in the life of the Church. These guidelines are intended to help our volunteers to ensure that our children have a safe and enjoyable experience of Church life. The guidelines are also intended to reassure parents who do not yet know the Church well.

Every volunteer and employed Church staff member who regularly cares for, supervises or is in sole charge of children is required to hold a DBS disclosure certificate (from October 2009, this procedure is overseen by the Independent Safeguarding Authority).

## Recommended good practice

### Adult / Child Ratios

Guidance recommends the following ratio of leaders to children according to their age:

- For 0 to 2 years      1 leader to every 3 children (1:3)
- For 2 to 3 years      1 leader to every 4 children (1:4)
- For 3 to 8 years      1 leader to every 8 children (1:8)
- For over 8s          1 leader for the first 8 children followed by 1:12  
(i.e. 32 children would require 3 leaders)

### Facilities

Toilets	The ideal is 1 toilet and 1 hand basin per 10 children
Warm and Clean	Group areas should be warm, adequately lit and ventilated. High standards of cleanliness should be maintained.
Special Needs	Be able and willing to accommodate children with special needs. Be aware of access to the building and toilet facilities.
Entrances and Exits	Should be well lit and easily accessible.
Registration	Social Services need to register premises where activities take place for more than 2 hours in any one day or if a holiday club runs for more than 6 days a year.

### More than one leader

There should always be more than one leader for any group. (If possible have at least one male and one female leader if the group is mixed).

### Time alone

Minimise time alone with any child or young person. If it is vital to be isolated with an individual ensure that another leader is informed of where you will be and why. If possible remain in the view of another leader. Try never to be behind a closed door but if necessary tell someone that you are there.

## Administration

Keep an up-to-date register and record of children, their parents and contact phone numbers, attendance and other specific information (such as asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, allergies etc).

## Insurance

Most existing parish insurance covers indoor activities for children and youth. PCCs need a record of any other activities that may take place and it must be checked that insurance cover is adequate.

## Relationships with children - know the limits

*Do not engage in any of the following:*

- invading the privacy of children when they are showering or toileting
- rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in fun
- inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- any scapegoating, ridiculing, or rejecting a child or young person

Do not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

Do not invite a child or young person to your home alone: invite a group, or ensure that someone else is in the home. Make sure the parents know where the child is.

Do not share sleeping accommodation with children or young people if you take a group away.

Do learn to control and discipline children without using physical punishment.

## Touch

Touch is an important part of human relationships: for example, it can be necessary to stop a young child from hurting herself or himself; it can also be a natural way of responding to someone in distress. However, everyone working with children should be sensitive to what is appropriate and inappropriate physical contact, both in general terms, and in relation to a specific individual. Leaders need to be conscious of situations in which their actions, however well intentioned, could be misconstrued by others or be harmful.

## Good Practice with Colleagues

If you see another member of staff acting in ways which might be misconstrued, be prepared to speak to them or to your supervisor about your concerns. Leaders should encourage an atmosphere of mutual support and care which allows all workers to be comfortable enough to discuss inappropriate attitudes or behaviour.

## Health and Safety

- All leaders should know the location of the nearest telephone.
- Adults must be aware of the safety / fire procedure. A fire drill should be carried out regularly. Fire extinguishers should be available and regularly checked.
- Children with infectious illnesses must not attend.
- No smoking should be permitted near the areas children will be in.
- Children should submit a health form before an activity. Take health forms when going offsite.
- Accidents should be recorded with a note of any action taken and signed by the leader involved.
- A first aid kit should always be available and its location must be well-known.
- No medication should be administered without written parental consent. One leader should ideally be a first-aider.
- A responsible adult should make sure that the premises are open in good time.

## Transport

If at all possible do not give lifts to children and young people on their own other than for short journeys. If they are alone ask them to sit in the back seat. Check that insurance covers the vehicle and passengers.

**Seat belts must be worn.**

## Finance

If money is collected, account of this should be given to the PCC.

## Volunteers

Volunteers, particularly those under the age of 18, should never work unsupervised and should be given clear guidance and support.

## Casual Visitors

Casual visitors i.e. those who have not been authorised by the Church as leaders or helpers, should not have access to children without the presence of an adult who is deemed to be responsible for the group.

## Communication

Clergy, the PCC and parents should be clearly informed of all the activities in which children and young people may take part on church premises or through the church in any way.

## Good Practice of Workers

Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watch language, tone of voice and where you put your body.

## Images

When using photographic images of people in Church publications and websites the following is a good practice protocol advised by the National Safeguarding and Youth Officers. The legal position relating to this area is currently under review by the Court of Appeal, who have taken the view that in one case it was at least arguable that a child photographed in a public place has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

The guidance below goes beyond the current definitive legal position, which allows for images of anyone in a public place to be published as long as the photography is not intrusive.

- We wish to demonstrate love for our neighbour by respecting his or her privacy and not causing any embarrassment.
- We want to promote and encourage the Church's work with people of all ages, through the appropriate use of images and video reflecting the diversity of Church activities in our publications.
- When we take someone's photograph or film them for publication/distribution they should always be aware that we are doing it. Awareness can be assumed if:
  - People are attending a photo call.
  - The intention of taking photographs or filming is included in the invitation to the event and people are given the choice to opt out.
  - *In all other circumstances permission should be sought at the time the photograph is taken and a chance to opt out must be given.*

Even given the 'assumed awareness' of the circumstances listed above, specific permission should be sought for images of individuals (a person may be happy for a large group photo, but not an individual one). Specific permission should also be sought where it is the intention to name any person shown in the photograph in an accompanying caption or article.

***Photographs submitted for publication where young people are recognisable and there is insufficient evidence that their consent has been obtained should not be published. Permission should not be assumed, even if images have been submitted for publication.***

Further written consent will be required from young people and their parents/carers if photographs or film are to be used in other ways.

Clearance forms should be stored with photographs or film for future reference.

## Electronic Communication

This policy relates to electronic communication which includes internet, e-mail and mobile phone. It is acknowledged that many young people find this means of communication the preferred means. However, electronic media create a number of opportunities for unmediated one-to-one communication unless vigilance is maintained to ensure that this does not happen.

*The guiding principles must be:*

- When one-to-one communication has taken place with a young person, the worker should tell someone immediately. It may well be that there is no inappropriate content within the correspondence; the principle is to create a basic accountability.
- When a worker sends an e-mail or text to a young person, they should blind copy it to a third party within the organisation, again creating accountability. We should be explicit that the information is to be shared, therefore we must tell the young person as well.
- In developing an internet site consider the use of firewalls - who can access this site?
- Ensure that there is a person with sufficient knowledge to 'spot-check' the history of parish computers to identify improper use.
- Bear in mind the potential for one-to-one communication and try to ensure all communication is in a group context.
- On social networking sites such as Facebook or Bebo the presumption must be that adults are not added as friends on a child's or young person's site.
- Do not place a child's or young person's testimony on a site without the express written consent of the person with parental responsibility.
- Exercise caution when using images of children and young people on any internet site. As with any other images, do not name the individual child or young person and whenever possible, obtain consent from the person with parental responsibility.

## Consent forms

A 'General Consent Form' is used annually to register each member of any children's group for the normal activities of the group and at the group's normal meeting times, as publicized to parents and carers. However, special permission must be obtained for activities which fall outside these parameters.

The parish office has specimen consent forms, which can be adapted for specific purposes, such as trips and outings. The following elements should be included in the adapted consent form:

Written permission must be obtained whenever children are taken off the premises in which the group normally meets. The consent form should be headed with the title, date, and destination of the trip or outing. As well as the information requested in the 'General Consent Form' a consent form for trips and outings should ask for the following:

- Details of any infectious illness or disease with which the child has had contact in the last 3 weeks.
- Any medication required during the trip or outing.
- Specific consent for each activity to be undertaken during the trip or outing (if swimming is involved, there should be a series of yes/no questions to establish the child's competence e.g. 'Is your child able to swim 50 metres?')
- Consent to the transport arrangements, which should be clearly described either on the form or in the accompanying letter about the trip or outing (nb check licences and insurance of private drivers).
- A confirmation that a parent or adult with parental responsibility has read the information about the outing or trip in the accompanying letter and gives permission for the child to take part.

The accompanying letter should give details of timings for departure and return, and arrangements for getting updated information if there is an unavoidable delay in return. The date, destination, cost and transport arrangements should be detailed, together with a list of items to bring, contact numbers at the venue and the mobile number of one of the leaders (if possible). A deadline for reply should be stated

and it should be emphasised that no child who has not provided a signed consent form will be allowed on the trip. (The consent forms should be taken on the trip and copies also left at church – never settle for a verbal message of consent by phone or conveyed by a child.) If there are any hazardous activities involved in the trip, list those in charge of such activities and their qualifications.

*N.B.: At the planning stage, check with the church insurers that you will be covered for the proposed activity; and begin the process of collecting consent forms well in advance as it will be a case of 'No consent, no trip!'*

## **Defining abuse**

We do not expect to see any form of abuse taking place in our community. That makes it all the more necessary for us to be aware of the danger signs that abuse may be taking place.

*Abuse and neglect are defined in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2010.*

- **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 or development
- **Physical abuse:** hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to 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.
- **Sexual abuse:** this involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including physical penetration and non-penetrative sexual acts.
- **Spiritual Harm:** Church communities must be particularly vigilant to identify the inappropriate use of any religious belief or practice which may harm somebody spiritually, emotionally or physically.
- **Domestic Abuse:** It must be recognized that children and young people may be harmed in homes where there is domestic abuse. The Archbishops Council has produced guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility "Responding to domestic abuse" Archbishops' Council (2006).

## **Action for Dealing with Reports of Abuse**

The following procedures are designed to support you in dealing with a disclosure of abuse that may arise in the course of your work with children and young people. For the purposes of this work a child is a person under the age of 18 years. The parish's designated Safeguarding Officers will advise you.

### **DO**

- Make it clear to the child that you cannot be asked to keep a secret.
- Listen to the child or young person, let them express their views and feelings without interruption, accept what they are saying.
- Reassure the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- Explain that you must pass this information on.
- Make notes of what was said using the child or young person's words whenever possible.
- Speak to the Vicar, Parish Safeguarding Officer or line manager.
- Refer to the Diocesan Child Protection Adviser.
- If the subject of the allegation is the Vicar, contact the Archdeacon or Diocesan Child Protection Adviser (the Bishop cannot be involved as per Clergy Discipline Measure).

### **DO NOT INVESTIGATE ANY ALLEGATION**

### **DO NOT**

- Show shock or disbelief.
- Agree to keep the disclosure a secret.

- Make a promise or suggestion that you can stop the abuse.
- Ask questions seeking further detail – you risk contaminating evidence.
- Investigate any allegation - specially trained professionals undertake this role.
- Contact the alleged perpetrator.
- Make any statement or comment to the press.

In emergency, and if the risk to the child is deemed to be urgent, the Local Authority Designated Officer can be contacted on 0151 666 4582, out of hours: Emergency Duty Team 0151 677 6557, or telephone the police.

## CONTACTS

- Designated Parish Safeguarding Officer, Coral Greenwood..... 0771 085 1201
- Incumbent: Chris Slater..... 07899 807 507
- Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor..... 01928 718834 Ext. 221
- If immediate risk contact the police on 999

*This policy was amended and confirmed by the PCC, July 2022*

CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON  ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

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