

**CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HALL GREEN
PARISH POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

STATEMENT OF VALUES

The Parochial Church Council recognises the need to safeguard children and young people in our care. We welcome children and young people as an integral part of our church life and we aim to create a welcoming, secure and safe environment for the nurture and development of children and young people.

Children and young people are a precious gift from God and their welfare is our first priority. We have a clear responsibility to do all that we can to ensure their safety and well-being. We will treat them with dignity and respect and take their views seriously. We will treat them as individuals and pay particular attention to anyone with additional needs or from minority ethnic groups to ensure their full integration and protection within the church family.

We will create policies and procedures that recognise our responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people entrusted to our care. Everyone in the church community is called upon to adhere to these values. Anyone who has a concern about a child has a responsibility to take action.

OUR POLICY

- We commit to providing a safe physical environment for work with children and young people.
- We will ensure the children and young people in our care know who they can talk to if they have any concerns.
- We will seek to be honest and open in our relationships with our children and young people and ensure that we listen to them, taking into account both what is said and what may be communicated by posture, tone or gesture.
- We will always listen to and take seriously any child or young person who reports that they have been abused, following our procedures.
- We recognise our responsibility always to respond to and report abuse in whatever context, inside or outside the church environment.
- We will always report all allegations of abuse to the appropriate statutory agency and the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Advisor.
- We will keep securely all records in relation to safeguarding concerns, allegations and the recruitment of volunteers and paid workers.
- We commit to the safe recruitment of all new and current volunteers and paid workers who have contact with children and young people.
- We will challenge unacceptable behaviour e.g. bullying.
- We will respect personal privacy of children and young people and be sensitive if they wish to opt out of an activity.
- We will raise awareness within the whole church community that we are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITIES

Those with a leadership role within the church are expected to work with the whole congregation to promote the welfare of children in the church and the community. Specific responsibilities are:

PCC

- Reviews Parish Child Protection Policy annually and ensures it is being implemented.
- Appoints Parish Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator(s) and Children's Advocate
- Ensures insurance cover is adequate.
- Ensures premises where young people meet are of an acceptable standard.

Incumbent

- Ensure that everyone who works with children has been recruited and appointed in accordance with Parish child protection policy.
- Ensures issues relating to children within the church are considered at PCC meetings.
- Has regular contact with children and leaders in the parish.
- Will raise any issues at PCC meetings regarding children and represent their views and needs in regard to ministry, worship and pastoral care.

Parish Safeguarding Children Co-ordinators: Sarah Barnes and Margaret Hyde

- Provide support, advice and take action where necessary on concerns about a parent or child.
- Acts as a link between the parish and diocese in terms of information sharing and training opportunities.
- Ensure safeguarding records are being maintained and kept securely.
- Ensure that all safeguarding information is treated sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.

Parish Identity Verifiers: Sarah Barnes and Margaret Hyde

- Verify the identity of those applying for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in accordance with DBS guidelines.

Children's Advocate: Jon Meadows 0121 778 6367

- First point of contact for children & parents to report worries or concerns. The contact name and telephone number for the children's advocate' will be visibly displayed in the premises. If the 'named person' is unavailable, the Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator is the nominated deputy.
- Report allegations and concerns about a child to the Bishop's Safeguarding Children Adviser and, where appropriate, social services.

In the Diocese:

The Bishop's Advisor for Safeguarding: Claire Wesley

Offers training opportunities and support and advice relating to safeguarding children and young people.

The Bishop's Child Protection Advisor (BCPA)

Is available to give advice on child protection issues and must be informed if a referral is to be made to social services. Will work with parishes to set up child protection agreement if a known perpetrator of abuse joins the church.

In the event of a child protection enquiry in a parish, the BCPA is responsible for helping diocesan and parish staff to manage the impact. This includes ensuring appropriate support is offered to those who are involved.

If an allegation of child abuse is made against a member of the clergy or someone holding the Bishop's licence the procedure outlined in Section 10 of 'God's Children Our Diocese' will be followed.

PARISH SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Responsibilities of the Church in Recruitment:

- We will assess all new and current volunteer and paid worker roles and, where the role is deemed to be eligible, apply for an appropriate level DBS check.
- Records should be kept of recruitment interviews of staff and volunteers.
- Staff and volunteer recruitment procedures will include a DBS check¹ at an enhanced plus level for all personnel engaged in regulated activity and should include self-declaration and the use of references.
- Anyone with a significant or regular contact with children, but whose role is not regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS check.
- In the event of the disclosure check revealing previous offences, this will be referred to the Archdeacon in accordance with Diocesan policy.
- We will keep a Parish Information log of Disclosure and Barring Applications and renew application every 5 years
- Any contract of employment will clearly specify the action to be taken in the event of issues arising which relate to Child Protection.

Responsibilities of volunteers and paid staff

Leaders and regular helpers that work with children and young people will;

- Complete an application form and confidential declaration
- Name 2 referees, one of whom should be from a current employer or previous church
- Complete a disclosure if required
- Have an appropriate interview
- Be open to support and review
- Attend safeguarding training at a level appropriate to their role on appointment and attend a refresher every 3 years.
- Receive supervision and support in their role
- Inform the vicar of any relevant change in circumstances

Creating a Safe Environment:

¹ A DBS check contains information held by the police and helps employers and voluntary organisations make safer recruitment decisions. The Diocese of Birmingham requires all DBS checks to be at the enhanced level and adherence also to the House of Bishops' Child Protection Policy (including the signing of a Confidential Declaration).

- We accept responsibility for initiating and providing initial and on-going training for all paid workers and volunteers and will keep records of this.
- We will provide every worker and volunteer with clear instructions and information in respect of their role, adequate support and supervision and regular opportunities for review
- Staff and volunteers working with children will be appropriately trained and qualified to ensure the safe provision of services and use of equipment.
- All staff and volunteers will be encouraged to attend a Child Safeguarding course, which is available through the Diocese of Birmingham
- Staff and volunteers working with children will carefully plan activity sessions with care and safety of children as their primary concern.
- Wherever possible, staff and volunteers will avoid being alone with a child, including offering lifts or taking children to their own home.
- Staff and volunteers will only train children in a non-intrusive manner and should encourage children to be responsible for getting themselves ready, such as getting themselves changed before and after activities.

Other Responsibilities:

- Staff and volunteers planning sessions should comply with the standards set by the appropriate professional body e.g. National Arts Council.
- Records relating to the safeguarding of children should be kept securely and for the period set out in guidance.
http://cofebirmingham.contentfiles.net/media/documents/document/2016/04/SAFEGUARDING_RECORDS_RETENTION.pdf
- All accidents involving staff or volunteers or participants will be recorded in the accident book immediately or as soon as practicably possible.
- Staff and volunteers are responsible for familiarising themselves with building safety issues, such as fire procedures, location of emergency exits, location of emergency telephones and first aid equipment.
- Leaders will have access to any parent consent forms for all children taking part in the organised sessions.
- Staff, or the volunteer in charge, will keep an attendance register for all organised sessions with more than 10 children.
- Staff and volunteers are expected to promote and demonstrate the values of fair play and trust throughout the course of their activities.
- The PCC as a body holds Public Liability insurance against claims for negligence arising from Child Protection issues.
- If there are concerns about a volunteer, or an allegation has been made against that individual, the volunteer will cease to act in that role until the results of the investigation are made clear.
- We will ensure appropriate supervision of anyone known to have offended against a child or young person who attends activities organised by us.
- We commit to the support of adult and child survivors of abuse

- We commit to providing appropriate support and guidance to any individual within our church community who is accused of causing harm to a child or young person in our care.
- This policy covers the minimum of the House of Bishop's measures as listed in 'All God's Children' and approved by the appropriate Diocesan personnel. The PCC will review the policy on an annual basis. Previous versions should be retained to show which version was in force at any particular moment, should a claim for negligence be initiated.

Responding to Signs of Abuse:

- Staff and volunteers are responsible for reporting suspected cases of child abuse to the child advocate. **IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS TO INVESTIGATE SUSPECTED ABUSE.**
- If a child reveals they are being abused, staff / volunteers should reassure them and tell them that they were right to reveal the abuse. They should not promise to keep it secret - it is their responsibility to inform others.

Photography:

Formal permission should be obtained for the use of any images of children or young people. Even if permission has been granted, only images of groups of children should be displayed and children must not be identified. Images must not be displayed on the Internet without explicit separate approval from parents.

Staffing or Volunteer ratios:

A minimum of 2 adults will be present with a group of children or young people.

Reviewed and Updated by the Parochial Church Council, 17.11.16

APPENDIX 1

Signs of Child Abuse:

- These are signs which could alert staff and volunteers to the fact that a child might be being abused: -
 - Unexplained bruising and injuries
 - Sexually explicit language and actions
 - Sudden changes in behaviour
 - Something a child has said
 - A change observed over a long period of time e.g. losing weight or being increasingly dirty or unkempt.

If a child displays these signs it does not necessarily mean that they are being abused. Similarly there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried, it is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by reporting it appropriately.

Types of Abuse:

(i) Neglect:

Neglect is a 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to adequate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect in recreational or social activities might occur if staff and/or volunteers fail to ensure that children, in their care, are safely protected or are exposed to undue risk, cold, sunburn or injury.

(ii) Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetration 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.

Recreational and social situations may involve physical contact (e.g. supporting and guiding children) and could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Abusive situations occur if adults misuse their power over children.

(iii) Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. In recreational

activities this might occur where the nature and intensity of activities exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after (Munchausen's syndrome by proxy).

(iv) Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe 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 inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

(v) Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose God's acceptance and approval.

(vi) Organised Abuse

'Organised or multiple abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abuser and a number of related or non-related children and young people. 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'. (Government Guidelines-'Working Together to Safeguard Children'1999).

What should you do if a child tells you that they are being abused?

Always:

- Stay calm – ensure the child is safe and feels safe.
- Accept what you have been told - this should not be seen as believing or disbelieving what you have been told.
- Reassure the child and stress that they are not to blame.
- Tell the child that you will offer support but you will have to pass the information on.
- Make a note as soon as possible after the event detailing what you and the child discussed.

Never:

- Rush into details that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Take sole responsibility – consult someone else so that you can protect the child and gain support for yourself.

Using e-mail, chat rooms, text messaging and instant messaging software

These are the means of communication of choice for most young people, and church leaders and youth workers are increasingly likely to use them. You need to bear in mind the following points when doing so:

- E-mail You should ensure that any communication they have with young people is always public, not private. If sending e-mails to young people, e.g. to remind them of future youth meetings, ensure that the vicar is aware you are communicating with young people via e-mail and that the parents/carers are happy with this. The content should be 'public'. Ideally send group e-mails rather than individual e-mails and copy to a colleague.
- Text messages: are private by nature, so take care when you use this medium. Save messages as text files to ensure an open record exists.
- Chat rooms: It is strongly recommended parishes do not use chat rooms to communicate with young people.

(Written by Childnet International for the DfEE, March 2001)

- Instant messaging software: as with text messages and chat rooms, care should be taken when using this form of communication. It is recommended seeking approval from church leaders and obtaining parental consent before adding under 18s to your address book or contact list. Save 'conversations' to ensure an open record exists. All forms of instant messaging and email are conversational in style. However, it should be remembered that these forms of communication are written and that the written word is more permanent than verbal conversation. You should therefore consider the following:
 - All communication should be appropriate to your church role.
 - Communication should be clear and not open to misinterpretation. If you are using an 'online name' rather than your real name, be open and transparent about this so that this is not misinterpreted as an attempt to conceal your true identity.
 - The agreement of protocols and boundaries between children, young people and their leaders.

General Guidance

This guidance is vital to protect staff and volunteers from allegations of abuse.

You should avoid:-

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Taking children alone in a car or on a journey, however short.
- Taking children to your home. If you do need to meet with one or more children / young people, you should do this in a suitable public place.

Where occasions arise where one of the above is unavoidable e.g. in an emergency situation, this should be done with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge of the organisation and/or the children's parents.

You should never:-

- Engage in rough physical activities or sexually proactive activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child even in fun.
- Let an allegation a child makes during a group session go unchallenged or unrecorded.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves. If you do have to do things of a personal nature for children (take to toilet, support, give lifts), then you should obtain the full consent of their parents.

APPENDIX 2: Sources of Further Information:

Diocese of Birmingham Information and Contacts:

If you have any concerns about individual cases or a person at risk, advice can be sought from the Archdeacon unless the matter is urgent in which case the matter should be referred straight to the Bishop's Chaplain. The Bishop's Advisers for Safeguarding and a team of trained listeners can be contacted through the Bishop's Chaplain:

The Revd Kate Stowe, Tel: 0121 427 1163

Email: bishopschaplain@birmingham.anglican.org

Archdeacon of Birmingham – h.osborne@birmingham.anglican.org

Bishop's Adviser for Safeguarding Children- clairew@birmingham.anglican.org

Birmingham Information and Advice Support Services (IASS)

Birmingham City Council contact, for professionals and members of the public with concerns about a child.

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/concerned>

Disclosure and barring service advice and further information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

NSPCC - A registered charity established to prevent cruelty to children. Help line for concerns about a child's welfare: 0808 800 5000, web-site www.nspcc.org.uk

The Protection of Children Act 1999

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/14/pdfs/ukpga_19990014_en.pdf

Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) Safe and Secure Document

- An online manual containing the 13 recommendations from Safe from Harm (The home office code of practice)

<http://www.ccpas.co.uk/Documents/key%20facts.pdf>