

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY FOR ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, BASSINGBOURN

Introduction

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle enshrined in the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004, that the welfare of the child is paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and by supporting parents. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and wellbeing of children. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child, young person or vulnerable adult about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into abuse is necessary.

The principles of our policy

We are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of children and vulnerable adults within our church community. We will respond without delay to any complaint that a child, young person or vulnerable adult for whom we are responsible, may have been harmed in our care, taking advice as necessary from statutory agencies. We will refer to the Disclosure and Barring service anyone who is removed from an activity with children or vulnerable adults because they harmed or might have harmed someone. We will fully co-operate with statutory agencies during any investigation they make into allegations concerning a member of the church community. In addition, we will seek to offer informed pastoral care to any child, young person or adult whose life has been affected by abuse.

In fulfilling our responsibilities in child protection, we will seek to create a culture of 'informed vigilance' where the welfare of the child is paramount. We will pay particular attention to children with special needs and those from ethnic minorities, to ensure their full integration within the church community.

Health and safety policies are in place, and we have provided appropriate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish.

The Church wishes to welcome and support all members of its community. Those who have a history of offences against children or vulnerable adults and/or who may pose a threat to them will not be permitted to work with children/vulnerable adults, but will be supported pastorally. Where necessary, an agreement of appropriate conduct will be drawn up between the member and the incumbent, with the help of the Bishop's Adviser.

Recruitment

We accept the prime duty of care placed upon the incumbent and parochial church council to ensure and/or supervise the well being of children, young people and vulnerable adults in our church community. Therefore, we will carefully select and train ordained and lay ministers, volunteers and paid workers. Recruitment will include Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for each person involved in working with young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults.

We will follow recommended safeguarding practice in the appointment of all these workers, and for anyone who is in a position of authority. They will be appropriately trained and supported.

Pictures, Computer Images and Social Networking

We opt for cautious common sense in our approach to the taking, storing and sharing of pictures (whether these are photos, moving images, computer-generated images or other pictures) of our young people. We would like to take pictures to publicise our events and illustrate our activities, and also to provide a memento for those taking part.

However, we also accept that there may be people who are not comfortable with being included in pictures and that for some people, particularly those who have relocated after domestic violence or adoption, pictures can be inappropriate and put someone at risk. Therefore, we will always ask permission for each activity, seeking agreement from participants themselves if they are adults, or from parents/carers where activities involve children or vulnerable adults. We will respect a person's right to decline to be included in pictures without asking them to explain why.

In addition, our leaders will remind participants, including children and youths, who wish to take their own photographs or mobile phone images NOT to take pictures or videos without the permission of those involved. We will also remind everyone that images of other people should not be posted on Facebook or other social networking sites without permission, and that they must be careful not to take pictures that could be deemed to be insulting or indecent, whether or not the person involved gives permission.

Leaders of activities will be discouraged from using their own mobile phones to take pictures and will try and use church cameras or devices wherever possible. If use of personal equipment cannot be avoided, the photographs of individual children should be deleted once they have been used for the purpose for which they were taken. All images will be stored securely by the church office, not on computers or other equipment belonging to leaders. Images may be used on the church or Diocesan websites but will not be electronically shared with other individuals.

No person under the age of 18 who appears in a photograph will be named, or other specific identifying details given.

We recognise there are additional safeguarding challenges when doing church activities online and we will make sure we take appropriate action to safeguard anyone who joins a zoom meeting. We will develop a digital policy for this purpose.

In all the above we will follow legislation, guidance and recognised good practice. The Church of England has approved the following safeguarding policies and we adopt these locally:

Safeguarding e-manual (the House of Bishops safeguarding guidance), June 2021

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual>

Promoting a Safe Church (safeguarding policy for adults, 2006)

Responding to Domestic Abuse (guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility, 2006)

Protecting all God's Children (safeguarding policy for children and young people, 4th edition, 2010)
Responding well to those who have been sexually abused, 2011
Safeguarding guidelines relating to Safer Recruitment, 2016
Responding well to domestic abuse practice Guidance 2017
Promoting a Safer Church; House of Bishops policy statement, 2017

Reviewing and implementing our policy

We will review the implementation of our child and vulnerable adults protection policy, procedures and practice every year. All those who work with children and vulnerable adults have been given a copy of this policy and good practice guidelines, and have agreed to follow them. We will display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.

People to contact

We have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures. This person is:

Renate Marsh
31 Queens Road
Royston SG8 7AN
Telephone number: 07989 885998

We have also appointed an independent advocate for children and vulnerable adults, who can be contacted for advice and support if children are in difficulties. This person is:

Lesley Bond
17 North End, Bassingbourn

Telephone number: 01763 246405

This policy was last reviewed and agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 21 November 2023
