

# Safeguarding Children and Young People



**St Luke's Church**  
**Benefice of Cheltenham Minster with St Matthew and St Luke**

Policy, Procedures & Guidelines

March 2019

Date for Review: March 2020

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**The Nominated Person(s) responsible for Child Protection matters in this Church is**

**Sarah Howard**

This document should be read in conjunction with 'Working with Children and Young People' Advice and guidance on the Diocese of Gloucester's policy for working with children and young people in our churches and in local communities May 2015.

# Introduction

*Christian communities are required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Clergy and laity who work for the church in a paid or voluntary capacity need to exercise the greatest care when working with those for whom they have been given responsibility. The highest standards should, therefore, be maintained in all pastoral, counselling, educational, worship and recreational circumstances.*

*Although it would be good to feel that children in church-led activities are always safe, we recognise that child abusers can be found in many situations and that the church is not immune. Consequently, the church, in common with other voluntary organisations, seeks to take appropriate steps to safeguard the welfare of people of all ages.*

*For this reason, the House of Bishops, in response to the Children Act (1989) and the Home Office guidelines Safe From Harm, published a Policy on Child Abuse (1995). The Diocese of Gloucester followed this with its own policy Working with Children and Young People (2015). More recent resources include Protecting all God's Children - The Child Protection Policy for the Church of England (2010) and Working with Children and Young People - Advice and guidance on the Diocese of Gloucester's policy for working with children and young people in our churches and in local communities (Updated May 2015) - Safeguarding Children in the Church (CCPAS summary document) (2009).*

*As a church we already model good practice in our work with children and young people. In accordance with the Diocesan Policy, our PCC has developed its own Policy, based on the above sources, in order to ensure the continuation of our good practice. This Policy affirms and documents that practice.*

This policy was adopted by the PCC in Mar 2019

Church Wardens

# The Policy

## Scope

This Policy applies to the following categories of people both prior to selection or appointment and whilst in post:

all those, ordained or lay, appointed to leadership in the church;

all those working with children and young people in the Parish, whether on a paid or voluntary basis;

all church workers who supervise and regularly have contact with children and young people, whether on a paid or voluntary basis.

## General Principles

In order to promote good quality children and young people's work, the policy in this Parish is:

**To seek to provide a caring, consistent and safe environment in which children and young people can develop and learn. Children and young people will be treated as individuals and have equal status to adults.**

The following areas of work are covered by the Policy: Toddlers, Sunday children & young people's groups, Journey Kids at St John's School, and any other ad-hoc events or short-term groups, such as 'biking@stlukes', Light Party, and other supervised activities with children.

The PCC accepts that it is the responsibility of the Incumbent, the Vicar, the Churchwardens and PCC:

to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people with whom the Parish works

to safeguard the adults who undertake to work with children and young people.

Furthermore, it is clearly recognised that the whole church has a responsibility to aim for the highest possible standards of child care and to protect children from harm.

Therefore, the PCC will ensure that:

- the standards and appropriate procedures in the recruitment, training and support of all those involved in the care of children and young people (as outlined in Appendix A) and the Guidelines to encourage good practice (in Appendix B) are adhered to.
- the Incumbent, the Vicar and the Nominated Persons are responsible for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy.
- the policy is reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised.
- a copy of this policy is available for inspection at the church office.
- parents or Guardians of children and young people involved in the church's activities are made aware that this policy exists and have the opportunity to view it.

## **Recruitment, Training & Support**

Care shall be taken in the appointment of all staff, ordained and lay, paid and voluntary. To this end a set application procedure has been laid down to ensure the suitability of workers (See Appendix A).

Children and young people's leaders, paid and voluntary, shall be given a clear job description setting out their work and responsibilities and to whom they are responsible.

All children and young people's leaders shall undergo training to be provided at St Luke's by the Vicar or delegated to another suitable person. In addition, workers will be encouraged to attend Diocesan training events, as appropriate, and where possible certified training courses. All those covered by this policy shall receive appropriate training for child protection.<sup>1</sup> Records of training will be kept.

Regular opportunities shall be given for leaders to meet together and review/plan work and talk about relationships with the children and young people. Records of these meetings are also to be kept.

Team members should take responsibility for monitoring one another and offering feedback on all aspects of their conduct in relation to the children or young people.

Those who work with children have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child. (See page 11).

An annual budget for children's work shall be agreed by the PCC in consultation with those involved in children's work.

The PCC Secretary, the Incumbent, the Vicar, Churchwardens and PCC shall ensure the provision of personal liability insurance for all children's workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Carried out by Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) through the diocese

## **Related Procedures**

Practical measures shall be adopted to encourage the highest standards in working with children and young people and to minimise situations where abuse may occur. (See Appendix B).

All activities shall be carried out in accordance with appropriate health and safety measures.

There shall be adequate provision of first aid material to be stored on the wall near the window adjacent to the tea/coffee station.

The recommended guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse shall be followed. (See Appendix C).

All those in positions of responsibility in the Parish and, in particular, all those involved with the children and young people's activities shall become familiar with the action to be taken if abuse is suspected. (See Appendix C).

If allegations of abuse are made the Diocese and the Parish shall co-operate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with investigating such allegations. Neither the Diocese nor the Parish will conduct investigations on its own.

## **Nominated Persons**

Nominated Persons for child protection matters shall be appointed and the PCC will ensure that they have appropriate training and that they are affirmed and supported by the church leadership.

The role and responsibilities of Nominated Persons is outlined in Appendix D.

All children and young people's leaders will be made aware of the role of the Nominated Persons and in what circumstances the Nominated Person should be contacted.

**The Nominated Persons responsible for Child Protection matters in this Church is**

**Sarah Howard  
07813 607659**

## **Contact Information**

Contact information for the following shall be displayed where children and young people can easily see it:

Need someone to talk to ? Ring Childline 0800 1111,  
or, NSPCC 0808 800 5000  
or, speak to any of the leaders of Toddlers or Sunday children & young people's groups.

## **Use of church building by other groups**

The following clause shall be added to the licence when letting the premises for use that involves work with children or young people:

"The Licensees confirm that they are familiar with the Home Office Code of Practice "Safe from Harm" and have an understanding of it and undertake to follow the code of practice contained therein in relation to work with children and young people under the age of 18 years."

Any groups using the premises specifically for regular or occasional work with children will be requested to produce their own policy and confirm that leaders have been checked through the disclosure system.

# Appendix A: Recruitment of Workers

## Application and Disclosure Forms

The completion of a standard Application Form shall be required for the following categories of people prior to selection or appointment:

all candidates for leadership in ministry, ordained or lay;

all candidates wishing to work with children or young people in the church community, whether on a paid or voluntary basis.

all candidates for Church work, whether on a paid or voluntary basis, who might reasonably be expected to have opportunities for contact with children or young people.

Prior to appointment, all the above categories of workers will also be required to complete an Application for DBS Disclosure. The DBS will issue the disclosure to the applicant who will take it to the Incumbent or Vicar for verification and passing of the details to the Diocese. The Incumbent or Vicar will also advise the candidate whether or not they are free to continue with the appointment.

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** - all statutory obligations will be met in terms of candidates having to be registered with this authority. (See [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about)).

## References

In addition, two external references for the above categories of prospective staff and volunteers shall be required and must be taken up. If the applicant has not been known in the Parish for at least two years then these references must be in writing. A pro-forma letter seeking a reference can be found in the Application Procedure document.

## Confidentiality

The Application form, Disclosure form and references shall be kept strictly confidential to the Incumbent, Vicar and PCC Secretary and securely locked away. Information regarding the names of those who hold DBS disclosures will be stored electronically in a pass-word protected database programme.

All records must be kept indefinitely.

## Interviews

When relevant to the vacancy, applicants' previous experience of work with children and young people will be explored as part of the formal or informal interview process to assess suitability for work with children and young people. As a minimum this will cover:

- previous work in the church
- personal contact with children e.g. family, baby sitting etc.
- work with voluntary organisations
- previous experience working with children and young people
- reasons for being interested in working with children and young people in the church
- Christian experience

The interviewer must be a member of staff or senior member, if he/she has any doubts about the suitability of the person they should ask further, more searching questions. They should also seek the advice of others on the staff team and the senior members of the children and young people's leadership team.

### **Probation**

Paid and voluntary appointments are subject to the successful completion of a six month probationary period.

### **Re-submissions of applications for disclosure**

Paid employees and volunteers will re-submit applications for disclosure every five years (according to Diocesan policy) as part of the ongoing strategy to protect children and young people.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Where an applicant feels that disclosure information has not been handled in a fair and sensitive way an appeals process is available through the diocesan advisor. See Diocese of Gloucester *Working with Children and Young People*.

## **Appendix B: Guidelines for working with young people**

*These guidelines are to be followed by those who work with children or young people in the Parish. The guidelines are not exhaustive and there are situations where they may need to be added to, or modified. However, an understanding of the principles underpinning these guidelines is vital.*

### **Checklist for work with children and young people**

- As far as possible arrange that an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of them being observed. The principle is that help (for either party) should be within earshot.
- As far as possible the situation where a single adult worker (male or female) takes a single child to the toilet away from the rest of the group should be avoided. When this is unavoidable, another adult should be informed.
- As far as possible ensure that if a child or young person is met away from church premises, a parent or other adult is present.
- At least two adults should be present with a group when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. Ideally, one should be female and one male.
- Never take a group of children or young people off the premises with fewer than two adults.
- Do not at any time allow anyone unknown to the group leaders to have unsupervised access to children or young people.

### **Guidelines on physical contact with Children and Young People**

- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's. Touch should not be prolonged.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the adult or child.
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others apart from in exceptional circumstances. i.e. when they need medical attention **or** for their own safety.
- Under no circumstances shall corporal punishment in any form be used.
- Under no circumstances shall bullying of children or young people, whether by their peers or by adults be tolerated.

## **Additional checklist for lock-ins on church premises, off-site trips and residential events:**

- Food Hygiene
- Expert supervision of risky activities (e.g. swimming)
- Information from parents (e.g. for medicines)
- Written delegation of "*in loco parentis*" for leaders
- Safe transport
- Supervision of sleeping arrangements
- Clear policy and planning on sending people home
- Clear and enforced boundaries about responsibility of leaders (e.g. signing out book for older young people on residential events)
- Fire and emergency evacuation precautions
- First Aid availability
- Completion of Risk Assessment

## **Transporting children**

- Only those who have gone through the church recruitment procedures for workers should transport children unless the parents have made a private arrangement not facilitated by the church.
- All drivers should have read this Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by this.
- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the children and youth work leadership.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in the car with a child.
- Having checked drivers, through the recruitment procedure, it is reasonable to expect them to be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Ensure a discussion takes place over who is the most suitable child to drop off last. It is worth noting that two adults in a car with one child is not necessarily a guarantee of protection for that child.
- At collection and dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that an appropriate adult collects children.
- Look at instances where it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a child e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening, where a child/young person has a "crush" on that adult etc. In such cases arrange for someone else to transport that child/young person.

## **Using minibuses**

In addition to the above,

- Ensure that you have adequate supervision. As well as the driver, another responsible adult sitting with the passengers will be needed.
- Ensure that the responsible adult has also gone through the church recruitment procedure.

## Appendix C: Suspected abuse - action to be taken

### Types of Abuse

- *Physical* - children or young people receive physical hurt or injury
- *Neglect* - results in significant impairment of a child's health or development
- *Sexual* - adults seek sexual gratification by using children and young people
- *Emotional* - children or young people are harmed by a constant lack of love and affection, or threats, taunting, etc.
- *Spiritual Abuse* – Churches need to be sensitive so that they do not, in their pastoral care, teaching or prayer ministry, attempt to force religious values or ideas onto children and young people.

### The following may be signs of abuse

Those who work with children have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs that all is not well with a child. *It is important to keep an open mind and to consider carefully what is causing you concern.*

- *Physical abuse*: unexplained injuries or those that have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect.
- *Sexual abuse*: allegations made by the child or young person, preoccupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults.
- *Emotional abuse*: regression of behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers or adults, attention seeking, running away or stealing or lying, looking uncared for.
- *Other abuse*: unexplained reluctance of children to be left in the care of an individual, unexplained mood changes.

If you have concerns of any kind speak to the Nominated Person.

### What to do if a child or young person wants to talk about abuse

It is very difficult for a child or young person to tell someone of abuse so:

- Let them know that you will listen to anything they have to tell you. Do not promise confidentiality. Explain to them that some things are so serious you will need to tell the Nominated Person.
- Accept what the child or young person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly.
- Listen carefully and do not stop a young person who is revealing painful events.
- Never push for information or ask leading questions.
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened.
- Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell you.
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.

- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he or she said it. Record the date, time and location and whether other people were present. Keep the hand-written record.
- **Keep the hand-written record** even if subsequently typed up, for an indefinite period.
- Do not speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Nominated Person for child protection.

**The Nominated Persons responsible for Child Protection matters in this Church is**  
**Sarah Howard**

### **What to do if you suspect abuse**

The person who first suspects or is told of alleged abuse is responsible for ensuring that his or her concern is taken seriously (i.e. by informing the Nominated Person)

Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet about possibly inappropriate behaviour to clear evidence of serious abuse, with many intermediate levels.

Information may reach you from a variety of different sources:

- a child or young person claiming that he or she has been abused
- another child or young person who is concerned
- a member of the child's family
- a fellow worker of the suspect
- someone who believes that he or she is the object of malicious or unfounded rumour
- your own concerns.

Do not speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Nominated Person responsible for child protection. (This is important to maintain confidentiality.)

If the way forward is unclear, the Nominated Person should consult the Diocesan Head of Human Resources and Safeguarding (Church House, Gloucester: 01452 835526).

If the suspicions concern the Incumbent, Vicar or an authorised lay worker then the Nominated Person should consult the Diocesan Head of Human Resources immediately.

## If there is clear evidence of abuse

While no one will want to react without careful consideration, when an allegation has been made it is important to avoid delay in order to forestall further abuse.

Clear evidence is

- where a child or young person is making a clear allegation of abuse
- where injuries to the child are raising strong suspicions

**Do not** speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Nominated Person responsible for child protection.

The Nominated Person should:

- Contact the county Safeguarding Children Service for advice if concerned about the child's safety. **Do not** inform the parents if you consider the child may be at further risk of abuse if you do so.

**Safeguarding Children Service 01452 426565  
(out of office hours contact the Police on 101)**

If the alleged abuse is taking place under the care of the Church or one of its organisations the Nominated Person should also inform the Vicar and Incumbent.

If the suspicions concern the Minister or an authorised lay worker then the Nominated Person should consult the Diocesan Head of Human Resources and Safeguarding (07801 750664) immediately.

If the suspicions concern the Vicar the Nominated Person must NOT speak to the Vicar.

If, for any reason, the Nominated Person is unsure whether or not to follow the above, then advice from the Diocesan Head of Human Resources and Safeguarding will be sought and followed.

Do not speak to the parent, suspected abuser or anyone else.

Under NO circumstance will the Nominated Person attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Nominated Person is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the Social Services Department, whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Nominated Person as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Social Services dept., that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters and should therefore take the action outlined above.

The PCC will support the Nominated Person in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

## **In the absence of the Nominated Person**

Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Nominated Person, the absence of the Nominated Person should not delay action outlined above. If unsure what action to take contact the Diocesan Head of Human Resources and Safeguarding for advice. Contact details are on the notice-board above the photocopier in the Church Office.

## **Allegations of physical Injury or neglect**

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Nominated Person will :

- Contact Social Services for advice about the child's safety. **Do Not** inform the parents if you consider that child may be at further risk of abuse if you do so.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Nominated Person will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor (or Health Visitor) will then initiate further action, if necessary.
- If appropriate the parent/carer will be encourage to seek help from the Social Services dept.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the Nominated Person will offer to go with them. If they fail to act, the Nominated Person should, in cases of real concern, contact Social Services or the Bishop's Advisor for advice.
- Where the Nominated Person is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services, then advice from the Bishop's Advisers will be sought and followed.

## **Caring for the child after disclosure**

On some occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact the social services and/or police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

**If you suspect a child or young person is at risk of abuse  
the one thing you must NOT do is nothing!**

## **Appendix D: Role of the Nominated Person**

The reason for a Nominated Person in each parish is to ensure that another person shares with the Incumbent the responsibility for child protection. He/she will be a person to whom the children's and youth leaders may turn for support and advice, particularly if they have concerns about a child or the behaviour of another worker.

The Nominated Person is jointly responsible with the Incumbent and Vicar for the protection of children who come into the care of the church and for the implementation of the Policy of this Parish and should:

- be familiar with both the Diocesan Policy and that of this Parish.
- be familiar with the work of the church with children and young people and know the leaders.
- ensure that the names of volunteers are recorded in the PCC Minutes.
- be alert to any unusual behaviour or inappropriate relationship on the part of any church worker with a child or young person.
- in the event of suspicion or an allegation of abuse, know when to seek advice from the Diocesan Advisers and when it is necessary to inform Social Services immediately.
- ensure the children and young people's leaders know who to talk to if the Nominated Person is not available.
- understand, and question, how church activities can ensure that children are best protected. With the PCC, monitor good practice and suggest better ways of doing things.
- attend training in child protection, seek advice and keep up to date on best practice. Pass this on to Staff and children's and youth leaders as appropriate.
- be clear about the Insurance cover for the church so that appropriate action can be made.

The Nominated Person may telephone the Bishop's Officer to explore answers to any questions he/she may have.