



CHRIST CHURCH with ST. MARY, SWINDON

Safeguarding the Church Community (as relates to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults)

PCC approved 25 November 2019

The Diocese of Bristol is committed to working within the Principles of the House of Bishop's Policy for Safeguarding (contained within '[Protecting All God's Children 2010](#)'), the requirements of Working Together 2015, and the Care Act 2014.

Churches hold a position in the community. We are fully committed to follow the recommendations so that all who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults, as well as the church's leaders, know how to:

- protect them from abuse
- act responsibly if abuse is discovered or disclosed.

This document has been written to give our church members and leaders the guidelines they need to keep our children, young people and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them in their work with these.

The guidelines are as follows:

1. OUR POLICY STATEMENT ON SAFEGUARDING

'It is everybody's duty to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of everyone to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all.'

2. PLAN TO MINIMISE SITUATIONS WHERE ABUSE MAY OCCUR.

Few people actually wish to harm children, young people or vulnerable adults but we must be aware of the risk at all times and reduce the opportunities for abuse to take place.

For children and young people, we will:

- ⇒ Inform all parents that they are responsible for their children until the time that they have transferred their child to the care of a member of staff or leader.
- ⇒ Inform all parents of the expected finishing time of an activity, at which time they assume responsibility for their own children.
- ⇒ Arrange that, as far as possible, no adult is left alone with a child or young person where there is little chance of the activity being observed by others. This may mean groups sharing a large space or working with adjoining doors open. A lone volunteer should tell someone else that he or she is working unaided.
- ⇒ Make sure that no worker with children and young people meets with a child or young person off church premises without a parent or other adult being present.
- ⇒ Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two adults.
- ⇒ Aim to have two adults with a group, particularly when there is only one activity taking place on church premises.
- ⇒ Not expect children or young people to have to walk along a dark unsupervised path to get to a church hall or other premises.

⇒ Ensure that, as far as possible, when children have to be transported by car or minibus, there will be more than one passenger in the vehicle.

For vulnerable adults, we will:

⇒ Recognize that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.

⇒ Commit ourselves to respectful pastoral care for all adults to whom we minister.

⇒ Commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well being in the life of this church.

⇒ Commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.

⇒ Promote the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.

⇒ Ensure it is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

⇒ Exercise proper care in the appointment and selection of those who will work with people who may be vulnerable.

⇒ Commit ourselves to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.

⇒ Adopt the guidelines of the Church of England and the Bristol Diocese.

⇒ Ensure each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this Church.

3. NOMINATED FIRST CONTACT FOR SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

A named person (or persons) will be available to children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk to if they feel they have been abused in any way.

Christ Church and St. Mary's appoints **Mrs Pamela Bridgeman**, telephone number **521408**.

This person has been given guidelines on how she should respond to a child or young person's disclosure. Contact will be by telephone **ONLY**. Her telephone number will be displayed on a poster in the church with the message:

'Want someone to talk to?

Ring Pamela on 521408'

When there is a membership or joining form for an activity involving children, young people or vulnerable adults, then the above contact information will be displayed on that. The number of Childline will also be displayed **0800 1111**

All workers/helper/leaders must know the contact name and telephone number.

The contact person must be consulted annually for their comments and to check on continued activity.

Christ Church and St Mary's also appoints Nitin Shinde as our adviser on vulnerable people.

4. APPLY AGREED PROCEDURES FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS TO ALL PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

We will include all helpers/workers/leaders in the safeguarding process. No one, regardless of previous years of experience, will be excluded from the Policy. All staff and volunteers will be required to read and confirm their understanding of the safeguarding policy.

5. ALL PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WILL HAVE CLEAR ROLES

Abuse among children, young people and vulnerable adults is most easily concealed when there is confusion over roles and responsibilities. Each person will have a clear, written job description. This applies to existing as well as new workers.

6. USE SUPERVISION AS A MEANS OF PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

As workers we will meet at regular intervals to plan and review work and to share experiences.

Special attention will be paid to any situation in which a child or young person is being highly favoured or harshly treated as these could be signs of abuse.

Group leaders should try to observe those for whom they are responsible as they carry out work with children and young people.

7. TREAT ALL WOULD-BE PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AS JOB APPLICANTS FOR ANY POSITION INVOLVING CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

Child and vulnerable adult abusers do exist - even in church circles.

Everyone wishing to regularly work with children and young people or vulnerable adults, including existing workers, will be asked to complete an application form and gain enhanced DBS clearance.

8. GAIN AT LEAST ONE REFERENCE FROM A PERSON WHO HAS EXPERIENCE OF THE APPLICANT'S PAID WORK OR AS A VOLUNTEER INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OR VULNERABLE ADULT ACTIVITIES

Before a volunteer is accepted, a reference will be obtained. It is his or her previous work with children, young people or vulnerable adults that will be emphasised.

If it is clear that a person is unsuited to the task then great attempts must be made to find other more appropriate work.

9. EXPLORE ALL APPLICANTS' EXPERIENCE OF WORKING OR CONTACT WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE OR VULNERABLE ADULTS IN AN INTERVIEW BEFORE APPOINTMENT

This will take the form of an extended conversation (with notes made at the time or immediately afterwards) to obtain the required information.. Experience gained through church work, voluntary organisations or family activities could each be relevant. Any doubts must be explored by more searching questions.

10. FIND OUT WHETHER AN APPLICANT HAS ANY CONVICTION FOR CRIMINAL OFFENCES

This is not a particularly effective method of finding out if a person has abused children, young people or vulnerable adults as most abusers have not been convicted. However, convicted abusers admit that they constantly seek new opportunities to abuse.

All situations which involve children, young people or vulnerable adults are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions, however old, which relate to children or young people or vulnerable adults must be declared. Information about other criminal convictions must also be given as they may reflect on the suitability of the volunteer.

Of course, a determined person may well lie. Churches have no access to police records. For this reason, the reference is seen to be very important.

On satisfactory completion of all relevant forms and recommendation by the appropriate group leaders, new applicants will be appointed by Christ Church with St. Mary's PCC.

11. MAKE PAID AND VOLUNTARY APPOINTMENTS CONDITIONAL ON THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A PROBATIONARY PERIOD.

Christ Church with St. Mary has decided that each volunteer will serve a probationary period of twelve months.

At the end of the probationary period the volunteer will meet with the person to whom he or she is responsible. That person must be satisfied with the volunteer's general competence and their commitment to prevent abuse.

Volunteers for short-term work, such as holiday activity weeks, will be supervised as if they were undertaking a probationary period.

12. GUIDELINES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE DISCLOSURE OR DISCOVERY OF ABUSE.

[See Appendix 1](#) of this policy below.

13. TRAINING PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS, THEIR LINE MANAGERS OR SUPERVISORS AND POLICY MAKERS IN THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE.

Training in the prevention of abuse, and the action to take if abuse occurs, will be included as part of the training programmes provided for all workers involved with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Local training will be provided for all who come into contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Guidelines without training won't do!

14. NON-CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

When appropriate, organisations using premises belonging to the PCC will need to assure the PCC that they have an effective policy for safeguarding the children, young people and vulnerable adults in their care.

CHRIST CHURCH with ST. MARY, SWINDON

Guidelines for action in safeguarding Children and young people from abuse

As the people of the Parish of Christ Church with St. Mary's we are concerned with the wholeness of each individual within God's purpose for everyone. We seek to safeguard all members of the church community, of all ages. It is the responsibility of each one of us to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of children and young people.

It is the duty of a person working with children and young people to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

General Guidelines

1. Kinds of abuse

- Physical, where children or young people receive physical hurt or injury.
- Emotional, where children or young people are harmed by a constant lack of love and affection, or threats, taunting, etc.
- Sexual, where adults seek sexual gratification by using children and young people.

2. The following may be signs of abuse

- **Physical abuse:** unexplained injuries or those, which have received no medical attention, hidden injuries, signs of neglect.
- **Emotional abuse:** regression in behaviour, nervousness, sudden under-achievement, inappropriate relationships with peers/adults, attention-seeking, running away/stealing/lying, looking uncared for, being withdrawn.
- **Sexual abuse:** allegations made by the child or young person, pre-occupation with sexual matters, sexual activity through words, play or drawings, severe sleep disturbances with fears and phobias, being sexually provocative with adults.

NB. Physical abuse and neglect are difficult to hide. Sexual abuse can be almost impossible to identify and prove. Many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations.

It is important; therefore, that the above signs are not taken as indications that abuse has taken place. They should make us stop and think, but not necessarily jump to conclusions.

3. If you suspect abuse

- Do not delay

- Consult with the person to whom you are responsible for work with children and young people as well as the independent person/persons appointed who will contact the statutory services responsible for child protection in your area i.e., Social Services, NSPCC or the Police.

4. Be aware

In every area there are procedures for investigating cases where a child is suspected of being at risk. The Social Services department has the principal responsibility and will usually convene a Case Conference. You may be asked to attend either to give information or to support the child/parent/family. **It is important to clarify in what capacity you have been invited.**

5. If a child or young person wishes to talk about abuse

[It is usually very difficult for a child or young person to tell someone else that they are being abused. If you are the person they have chosen to tell, you owe it to them to react appropriately]

- Accept what the child or young person says, keep calm and maintain eye contact
- Do not promise confidentiality - let them know that you may need to tell someone else
- Assure the child or young person that even if they have broken a rule they are not to blame
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened
- Do not ask leading questions or push for unoffered information
- Reassure the child or young person he/she is right to tell you and you believe him/her
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let him/her know what happens
- Make careful notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said, the words used and when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand-written record