

Safeguarding Policy **PROMOTING A SAFER CHURCH**

Introduction

At St Mary's we are committed to the well-being of all people involved in the life of the church. The Bible teaches us that every human being is made in the image of God. Each person therefore has a unique value and dignity in the sight of Almighty God. Our practice and attitudes as Christian people, knowing Jesus ourselves and making Jesus known to all, need to embody this.

As we seek to serve our community, and to make disciples of Jesus Christ, we do so as members of the wider church and nation. This brings with it the responsibility of observing the law and promoting best practice in our care of all people.

The church council therefore annually reviews our Safeguarding Policy and our guidelines for the care of young people and vulnerable adults. We take advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, aim to stay abreast of current advice from the Church of England, and encourage attendance at training events.

In January 2021 the council approved this revised safeguarding policy, guidelines for working with young people and vulnerable adults, and recruitment policy. This document – which is being given to every youth and children's worker and those working with vulnerable adults and will be available to parents and the general public – publishes the commitments and standards which we intend to uphold. Please read it carefully, and raise any questions with the overall leader of your group, with our safeguarding co-ordinator, or with me.

Our great aim is to bring glory to God in our ministry with young people and vulnerable adults. 'Safeguarding' is no exception. Fulfilling our safeguarding responsibilities helps establish the secure and safe environment in which the wonderful work of 'making disciples' can flourish.

I commend this document to you.

Peter Ackroyd

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Safeguarding Policy for Children and Vulnerable Adults 2021

This Policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council Meeting held on **25th January 2021**

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy St Mary's Church, Wootton is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church in accordance with the Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (June 2015).
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons following advice from Section 8 of Protecting All God's Children (2010).
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

St Mary's Church, Wootton will:

- Create a safe and caring place for all.
- Have a named Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to work with the incumbent and the PCC to implement policy and procedures.
- Safely recruit, train and support all those with any responsibility for children, young people and adults so that they can recognise and respond to abuse.
- The highest standards will be maintained on social media and protective boundaries between adults and children will be observed in all contact and in all contexts.
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the parish.
- Display in church premises and on the Parish website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Listen to and take seriously all those who disclose abuse.
- Take steps to protect children and adults when a safeguarding concern of any kind arises, following House of Bishops guidance, including notifying the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA) and statutory agencies immediately and we will not conduct our own investigations.
- Offer pastoral support to victims/survivors of abuse regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.
- Care for and monitor any member of the church community who may pose a risk to children and adults whilst maintaining appropriate confidentiality and the safety of all parties following advice from Section 8 of Protecting All God's Children (2010).
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

The PCC appoints **Kate Wilson** as Parish Safeguarding Officer and **Emma Hearn** and **Pauline Kendall** as Deputy Parish Safeguarding Officers.

Signed:..... Date:.....

What you should do...

...if you suspect a child or a vulnerable adult is being abused:

- Record the facts as known to you -
- Including when and where conversations took place as well as what was said and being careful to distinguish facts from allegations and opinions.
- Inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer or vicar in the first instance or in their absence report to Diocesan Safeguarding Officer. Any concerns raised with the PSO or vicar may be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Where there is risk of immediate harm contact the police immediately.
- Always consider whether immediate medical attention is required.

...if a child or vulnerable adult tells you something which suggests they have been abused:

- Listen to the person rather than asking direct questions or pressing for details
- Do not stop the person while they are freely recalling significant events
- Reassure the person (who may have been threatened, told to keep what is happening secret, or told that no one will believe them) that they have done the right thing in telling someone, and that they are not to blame
- Let them know that there are other people who need to be told so that they can help them
- Record the facts and tell someone (as listed above in 'if you suspect a child or vulnerable adult is being abused')
- Do not delay or decide to give the benefit of the doubt to parents or others
- Detailed enquiries must be left to the investigating agencies

...if an allegation is made against you:

- Inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Vicar and in every case they MUST inform the Diocese Safeguarding Advisor as soon as possible. The PSO and PCC should follow the Serious Incident Reporting guidelines.

Contact Details

Parish Safeguarding Officers:	Parish Safeguarding Officer: Kate Wilson safeguarding.saintmarys@gmail.com	
	Deputy PSO: Emma Hearn 07455948611 / saintmarysycw@gmail.com	
	Deputy PSO: Pauline Kendall pauline.kendall1@ntlworld.com	
Vicar	Peter Ackroyd 01234 768391 / vicar@stmaryswootton.org.uk	
Children's Services	Bedford Borough 01234 267422	Central Bedfordshire 0300 300 8142
Diocesan Safeguarding Officers	Jeremy Hirst 01727 818107 / 07867 350886/ safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org	
	Martyn Hedley 01727 818106 / 07391010033	
	Mandy Davies 01727 818103 / 07771 179015	
Police	Emergency 999	Non Emergency 101
Helplines	NSPCC-0808 800 5000	ChildLine 0800 1111

Guidelines for those working with young people

Recommended staffing levels:

0–2 years old one adult to every three children

2–3 years old one adult to every four children

4–8 years old one adult to every six children

9–12 years old one adult to every eight children

13–18 years old one adult to every ten children

- Each group should ideally have at least two adults and it is recommended that there should be at least one male and one female if possible
- If groups are in the same room or adjoining rooms with open access between them then it is possible to have only one adult per group, dependent on the nature of the activity.
- Young people who are being encouraged to develop their leadership skills through helping should always be overseen by an appointed worker. Helpers under 18 years old count as children and not adults in these ratios.
- Adults who assist infrequently must be responsible to an appointed worker. If they start to assist on a regular basis they should be properly appointed following the safer recruitment policy and undertake the appropriate training.

Registration:

- A registration form should be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. The form should be updated annually and include the following:
 - Name and address
 - Date of birth
 - Emergency contact details
 - Medical information including consent for emergency medical treatment
 - Any special needs including activities that the child is unable to take part in
 - Consent for photography
- The processing of personal data is governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (the "GDPR"). The church Privacy Notice is available to read on the St Mary's website.

Other recommendations:

- Undertake a health and safety risk assessment for each group/activity.
- An attendance register must be kept.
- A First Aid kit must be available on any premises that are used by children and a trained First Aider should ideally be present or if not another adult needs to be responsible for First Aid.
- An accident and incident logbook must be available and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Parents/Guardians should be informed of any accident. Any significant incidents must be recorded and reported to the PCC Health & Safety Officer.

Best Practice Guidelines

We hope these Guidelines are helpful with the work you have offered to do.

Do

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- Always seek the parent's and child's consent if he or she is very young or disabled and needs help to go to the toilet
- Leave doors open where possible for observation
- Encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and confident enough to point out attitudes and behaviours they are concerned about.
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments of counselling, such as dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse.
- Beware of position of fire exits, fire extinguishers & first aid equipment.
- Provide an example you wish others to follow.
- Make sure that any work or activities with children and young people involves more than one adult, or at least takes place within the sight/hearing of others
- Ensure separate sleeping quarters for leaders and young people, if activities involve overnight stays.
- Make sure that allegations or suspicions are recorded and reported to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Do Not

- Engage in rough physical games including horseplay
- Touch a child in an intrusive or sexual manner
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke
- Use physical discipline
- Help a child with things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes etc
- Show favouritism to any individual
- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. initiation, ridiculing, bullying)
- Rely on your good name to protect you
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Spend too much time alone with just one child or young person
- Give under 18's overall responsibility

Safer Recruitment Process

Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults will continue to be appointed by the PCC on the recommendation of the incumbent. Assistant leaders for each group will be recruited with the involvement and agreement of the Youth & Children's worker and overall leader, after consultation with the incumbent. Overall leaders will be recruited by the incumbent in consultation with the churchwardens. Interviews will take place but may be informal or formal and references will be sought.

New regular leaders will:

- have read and understood the House of Bishops Policy for Safeguarding Children and/or the Policy for Safeguarding Adults when they are Vulnerable.
- have read and understood The Diocese of St. Albans Best Practice Guidelines document.
- sign a standard Role Description, acknowledging appointment and indicating awareness of safeguarding policies and risk assessments.
- sign a Confidential Declaration Form.
- receive a DBS clearance and then renew every 5 years
- undertake Diocese Safeguarding training and renew every 3 years.
- provide two referees, one from within St Mary's and one from another source.

Visiting Adults

Visiting vulnerable adults in their homes is an essential element of many church officers' roles. Many parishioners will be well known to the church officer and where there have been no previous concerns, the level of risk to the church officer or parishioner during visits will usually be low. However, unexpected circumstances can be encountered, some of which may place a church officer at risk. Unfortunately case histories also show that a parishioner may be at risk from a church officer. For these reasons it is very important for parishes to ensure their church officers and parishioners are as safe as they can be and that there is accountability and transparency in the manner in which church officers engage in lone working or visits to homes.

To assure the person you are visiting of their safety, and for your own as a church officer:

- If possible undertake a risk assessment before an initial visit, especially if you do not know the person.
- Visiting in pairs may be advisable, especially if the adult is perceived to be vulnerable.
- Do not call unannounced; call by appointment, if appropriate telephoning the person just before visiting.
- Be clear about what support you can offer and the purpose and limitations of any pastoral care/support that is available.
- Do not make referrals to any agency that could provide help without the adult's permission, and ideally encourage them to set up the contact, unless there are safeguarding concerns.
- Never offer 'over-the-counter' remedies to people on visits or administer prescribed medicines, even if asked to do so.
- Do not accept any gifts from adults other than token items to avoid misunderstandings or subsequent accusations from the person or their family. If someone wants to make a donation to the church, put it in an envelope, mark it on the outside as a donation and obtain a receipt from the Treasurer.
- Make a note of the date when you visit people, report back about the visit to the agreed named person and say what is concerning or going well.
- Report safeguarding concerns to the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or incumbent or directly to the DSA if they are not available.

Useful Documents

- Parish Safeguarding Handbook

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

- Best Practice Guidance for Working with Children

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Practice-guidance-for-working-with-children-St-Albans-Diocese.doc.docx>

- Best Practice for Working with Vulnerable Adults

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Practice-Guidance-Vulnerable-Adults-St-Albans-Diocese.docx>

- Protecting All God's Children (2010)

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Protecting-All-Gods-Children-Safeguarding-Policy-for-Children-and-Young-People-4th-edition-2010.pdf>

- Promoting a Safer Church (Safeguarding for Adults)

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Promoting-a-Safe-Church-Safeguarding-Policy-for-Adults-2006.pdf>

- Types of Abuse Factsheet

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/Type%20of%20Abuse%20Reference%20Document%20September%202018%20-%20PROOF%20COPY.pdf>

- Guidance on Touch

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Touch.docx>

- Guidance on transport

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Transport.docx>

- Serious Incident Reporting Guidelines

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Safeguarding-SIR-Guidance-REVISED-1-August-2019.pdf>