

**All Saints Church, Earls Barton**

**Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults:**

**Policy and Procedure**

This Policy and Procedure was adopted at the Parochial Church Council meeting held on 22/08/2023. It follows and is consistent with the Church of England House of Bishops’ Parish Safeguarding Handbook 2019.

*Promoting a Safer Church*

*Each person who works with children and vulnerable adults will agree to abide by this policy.*

*Policy to be reviewed in August 2024.*

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**1.INTRODUCTION**

* 1. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
	2. This Policy and Procedure applies to all who have received the Bishop’s License or Permission to work and all others who work with children and young people and vulnerable adults in our parish.
	3. The term ‘Parish’ is used to denote the PCC and Incumbent who are together responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented.

1.4 The PCC will:

1. Appoint a Designated Person to work with the Incumbent on safeguarding matters
2. Follow the **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Guidelines**
3. Report any abuse or suspected abuse if discovered
4. Have adequate insurance cover in place
5. Ensure all those whose work for the parish church brings them into regular contact with children and vulnerable adults are compliant with the safer recruiting procedures.

**2. SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

2.1 The Peterborough Diocese has adopted the Principles of the House of Bishop’s Policy for Safeguarding Children and Adults

2.2 Every person has a value and dignity, which comes directly from the creation of male and female in God’s own image and likeness. Christians see this as fulfilled by God’s re-creation of us in Christ. Among other things this implies a duty to value all people as having the Holy Spirit within them and therefore to protect them from harm

**2.3 Principles**

We are committed to:-

1. The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults, care and nurture of the children within our church communities.
2. The care nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, children, young people and adults
3. The establishing of safe, caring communities that provide a loving environment where there is a culture of vigilance as to the dangers of abuse.
4. We will respond without delay to every complaint made, which suggests that a child, young person or adult may have been harmed, cooperating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
5. We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility within the Church in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of criminal records disclosure and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.
6. We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care
7. We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust
8. We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to proper authorities, of any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult
9. We will follow statute, guidance and recognized good practice

**3. CHILD AND ADULT PROTECTION PROCEDURE.**

3.1 We will follow the procedure below where there is concern that a child or vulnerable adult may have been harmed and action is needed.

3.2 Responding to child or adult who may be disclosing abuse:

 **We will endeavour to:**

1. Listen carefully and take the child or vulnerable adult seriously.
2. Tell the child s/he has done the right thing by telling someone.
3. Clarify if necessary but will not ask questions about the account given.
4. Say if we can what we propose to do next.
5. Make an accurate record as soon as possible. (Please use a separate piece of paper when ever possible).

**We will not**

1. Promise ‘absolute’ confidentiality, (In some circumstances we will have to take the concern to others with specialist knowledge).
2. Investigate
3. Ask leading questions
4. Repeatedly question/ask the child or adult to repeat the disclosure over and over (this may contaminate their account when asked by professionals)

3.3 If we encounter a child in a situation where the child or adult is in imminent danger, we will act immediately to secure the safety of the child. We will seek the assistance of the police and then make a referral to Local Authority Social Care in accordance with the Child and Adult Protection Procedure below. If a child or adult needs emergency medical attention, we will seek this immediately and directly from the emergency services. We will keep parents, if available and appropriate, fully informed.

3.4 **DISCLOSURE by Child or vulnerable adult.**

3.4.1 Respond well to the victim / survivor – listen and take what is being said seriously. If there is concern that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent who will take advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Local Authority Social Care. **If the incumbent is implicated, inform the DSO.** In an Emergency, if someone is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm we will contact the emergency services on 999. If you are able record the details of the concern / allegation. Where notes cannot be taken at the time a written record will be made as soon as practicable afterwards. A copy should be passed on to the DSO and/or the Parish Safeguarding officer or incumbent

The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know

3.4.2 If there is a concern that a child or vulnerable adult has been harmed, immediately inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Incumbent or DSO (Diocesan Safeguarding Officer) and agree who will make the referral to the Local Authority Social Care Team. If no one is available contact the Local Authority Social Care Team or Police directly. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSO team within 24 hours

3.4.3 When making an immediate telephone referral to the Local Authority Social Care. Make it clear from the first point of contact that you are making a child or adult protection referral.

3.4.4 Describe the event or disclosure and give information about the child and family or adult for example the child/adult’s name, date of birth, address, telephone number and GP if known.

3.4.5 Follow up your telephone call with a completed referral form, (sometimes available on the Local Authority web site) or letter. This should be acknowledged, if not follow up with a further phone call requesting written acknowledgement.

3.4.6 Remember that the child and family should, wherever possible, be informed about and consent to the referral **unless this would put the welfare of the child or vital interests of the adult who may be vulnerable, or another person at further risk. If you have serious concerns, the absence of consent should not prevent the referral.** The Duty Social Worker will give you advice over this if necessary.

3.4.7 Be prepared to have further discussions with the social work team or the police investigation team. Say if you do not want your details disclosed to the family.

3.4.8 For out of hours referral, call the Emergency Social Work Team or where urgent, the Police.

3.4.8 Consult with the DSO at any point in this process but in any case always ensure the DSO is informed of the concern and any actions taken.

**3.4.8 Do not delay your referral. Clergy and Diocesan Officers are NOT authorised to investigate any allegations and must never attempt to do so. Only the Police and the Local Authorities are granted such powers in law.**

3.4.9 Most situations are not emergencies, however, if a child or adult who may be vulnerable needs immediate medical help, call emergency services and ensure that ambulance and hospital staff are informed of any protection concerns. If it would be dangerous for the child or adult who may be vulnerable to return home, or he or she does not want to return home and you are sufficiently concerned for their safety, contact the emergency social care services or the police. If you observe a child or adult who may be vulnerable being harmed or at risk of harm by someone other than a family member, you should inform the parents or carers immediately and work with them on appropriate referral to police or social care.

3.4.10 The DSO will offer advice, support and guidance to signpost those affected by the concern / allegation to other agencies. Pastoral support will also be identified and offered to all those affected by the concern / allegation

3.4.11 As a church we pledge to respond promptly to every safeguarding concern and will conduct the following:

We will respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation where: there is a concern that a child, young person or adult is, or may be, being abused or that a church officer is, or may be, abusing a child, young person or adult.

We will ensure that people within our church know how to make a disclosure or raise a concern by:

· Attending appropriate safeguarding training relevant to our roles, including voluntary roles.

· Ensuring safeguarding arrangements are clearly visible on the front page of our parish website

· Displaying contact details of our Parish / Benefice Safeguarding Officer and the incumbent and how you can contact them to raise a concern or disclose a safeguarding matter

· Displaying the contact details of your Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Team and how you can contact them to raise a concern or disclose a safeguarding matter

· Displaying other organisations who provide support and advice on safeguarding matters

**4 Safeguarding children and adults training**

4.1The Parish will make every effort to ensure that clergy, licensed workers and lay ministers, PCC, volunteers and employees working with children and vulnerable adults regularly seek and obtain safeguarding training to the level of their responsibility.

4.2Clergy should attend the Diocesan Safeguarding Children level 2 Refresher training once every 3 years.

**5 Safer Recruitment**

5.1 All church workers paid or volunteer who work with children or vulnerable adults will complete and sign an application form and complete a Criminal Disclosure Form.

5.2 Two written references and identification will be required, one of which should be provided by the incumbent or member of the PCC.

5.3 Completed application form, criminal disclosure form and references will be forwarded to the Parish Safeguarding officer, who will if appropriate instigate the Disclosure Barring Scheme procedures. If the applicant is approved the person responsible for the role they are performing will be notified.

5.5 All paid church workers with children and adults will be interviewed in relation to a role/job description.

5.6 After appointment, support and training will be offered including safeguarding training.

5.7 Ex-Offenders should an applicant provide that they have a criminal conviction, or this is revealed during the DBS process. The Incumbent and Safeguarding Officer will discuss this with the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, each case will be dealt with individually.

**6 Those who pose a risk to children**

6.1 When it is known that a member of the congregation, or someone wishing to join the congregation, has sexually abused a child or young person, or who is not a sexual offender against children but nevertheless may pose a risk, we will consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, so that a safe course of action in accordance with recommended Church of England procedure can be pursued in conjunction with the relevant statutory agencies.

**7. Care of Survivors of abuse and their families**

7.1 We will seek to work with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry of informed pastoral care.

**8 Safe Practice with children**

**8.1 Best Practice**

1. The ratio of leaders to children will comply with the Children Act 1989
2. Each group will have a minimum of 2 adults and a gender balance will be maintained if possible
3. Adults will not work alone with children
4. We will seek to ensure meeting places are safe, secure and suitable for purpose
5. We will be clear about boundaries with regard to touching always related to the child’s needs and normally initiated by the child
6. We will obtain parental/guardian permission for attendance at groups, trips, use of images and transporting children in private cars
7. All those who drive children in church-organised activities should have held a full driving license for over two years which must be ‘clean’ i.e. with no current points
8. All cars that carry children should be comprehensively insured for both private and business use. The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church-sponsored activities.

**8.2Unaccompanied Children**

8.2.1 If children attend our church services without their parents’ or carers’ knowledge, we will welcome the child(ren) and try to establish whether their parents are aware of where they are.

8.2.2 It is advised that an adult recruited for work with children takes care of the child and try to discover when they are due home and encourage them to keep to that arrangement. Depending on the age and competence of the child, we will ring the parents or ask the young person to ring to gain the parents’ consent to the child remaining. If the child comes regularly, we will endeavour to establish regular contact with the parents or carers.

**8.3 Bell Ringing**

8.3.1 The bell ringers will appoint the Tower Captain and others who are likely to be in charge of ringing at any time. All Tower Captains and ringers are expected to abide by the Child Protection policy of the Central Council for Bell Ringers.

8.3.2 No adults will work alone with children and young people, at least one adult should be in calling distance at all times and instruction should be given without physical contact.

**8.4 Choir**

8.4.1 The PCC will appoint a Musical Director/Choir Leader who will be responsible to ensure that a person who has DBS clearance is present with any children in the choir.

8.4.2 Members of the choir & Musicians (Including those who assist with church music), are expected to abide with the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

**8.5. Social Media and Engaging with Young People and/or Vulnerable Adults**

8.5.1 Children and Young People’s workers should be familiar with the full policy set out in the **Church Communications Guidance\*.**

8.5.2The PCC must approve the use of social media and mobile phones by the church. Where there are Facebook or similar online groups set up on the churches behalf, The PCC must ensure there is a named person to whom all workers are accountable.

**8.5.3 E-mails on line chat and texting**

* Parental agreement should be obtained before communicating with young people
* Language should be clear and unambiguous
* All conversations must be made available for viewing by a worker’s supervisor
* Workers may provide advice and support, but avoid counselling

**8.5.4 Mobile Phones**

* Group texts should be used wherever possible
* There should be an agreed length of time for conversations and a curfew e.g. no communication between 10.00 pm and 7.00 am
* Conversations causing concern should be saved and passed to a supervisor
* Photos should only be taken with consent and in accordance with safeguarding guidance
* Images should not be downloaded to a church computer

All of the above should be shared with young people

**9.Visiting adults who may be vulnerable, in their homes (including residential homes**

9.1 Church workers & volunteers will always complete an assessment of risk before visiting someone in their own home.

9.2 It is advisable that a visitor has a mobile phone with them on a home visit and also ensures that someone knows where they are and when they are expected to return.

9.3 Visitors will always call by appointment and carry identification (photo ID is suggested).

9.4 When a volunteer believes there is a need to refer the person visited to another agency we will talk this through with the vulnerable adult, seeking his/her consent ( whenever possible) before passing on personal information.

9.5 All workers and volunteers will always endeavour to be clear about what behaviour from the vulnerable adult is acceptable and what is not.

**10 MISCELLANEOUS**

**10.1. Record Keeping and Storage**

10.1.1 Notes will be made of all safeguarding incidents involving children and adults. They will be treated confidentially and will be securely stored by the incumbent or designated person. They will be retained even if the information received was judged to be malicious, unsubstantiated or unfounded. During an interregnum, the designated person will be responsible for all safeguarding records which will be passed to the incoming incumbent.

10.1.2 All volunteer forms and other documentation will be stored in accordance with GDPR.

**10.2 Organisations hiring Church Building or Premises**

10.2.1 The PCC is responsible for all activities and events which take place in church buildings or grounds which are not run directly by the PCC and will require vising groups to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected at all times, follow safe recruitment procedures, and aware of health and safety issues in the building.

10.2.2 Visiting groups will be required to sign a hire agreement and agree to abide by the Parish Safeguarding Policy.

**11.CONTACT DETAILS**

**Incumbent** for All Saints Church Earls Barton is Revd. Jennifer Ingram Telephone 01604 810447 email thevicar.earlsbarton@outlook.com

**Parish Safeguarding Officer** Is Hayley BALL 07833220268 safeguarding.earlsbarton@outlook.com

**Northamptonshire Police**, All Areas, 24 hours 101 (999 only to be used in an emergency).

In the event of any other safeguarding concern then please contact: Children and young people – MASH for your area; for vulnerable adults: Adult Social Care team for your area You can also find the referral forms on their websites:

Northants:

**Children’s MASH**: 0300 126 7000 or out of hours 01604 626938MASH@northamptonshire.gcsx.gov.uk

**Adults Social Care**: Refer to their on-line referral or out of hours 01604 626938 or 0300 126 3000

**Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Team:** 01733 887000 safeguarding@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

**Diocesan Safeguarding** **Officer** -carole.fitzsimons@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Other useful numbers:

**NSPCC** 0808 800 5000

**NSPCC** for those wanting to report church related abuse: 0808 80 20 20

**Childline** 0800 1111

**Action on Elder Abuse** helpline: 0808 808 8141

24-hour **National Domestic Violence helpline**: 0808 2000 247

**Samaritans** helpline for people struggling to cope and needing someone to talk to: 116 123

**Stop it Now** helps prevent child sexual abuse: 0808 1000 900

**Cruse** bereavement helpline: 0808 808 1677

**Family Lives** provides support and advice on family issues: 0808 800 222

**MACSAS** for people who have been abused by church officers: 0808 801 0340

**MIND** mental health charity: 0300 123 3393

**Thirtyone:eight**: Organisation who completes our DBS checks: 0303 003 11 1