

St. Mary the Virgin, Bathwick, Bath



Parish Safeguarding Policy

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Parish Safeguarding Policy Promoting a Safer Church

In accordance with the Church of England Safeguarding Policy our church 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
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others

The Parish 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 to have the confidence and skills to recognise and respond to abuse
- Ensure that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children and adults undertaken in the name of the church.
- 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 Advisor and statutory agencies immediately.
- Offer 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 safety of all parties.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Practices at least annually.

Each person who works within this church community will agree to abide by this policy and the guidelines established by this church.

The person appointed as Parish Safeguarding Officer is : Nicola Parker.....

This policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council meeting held on22.03.23.....

Appendix 1

Procedures for reporting suspected abuse.

If you are concerned about a child or adult and/or you are concerned that a church officer may be abusing a child or adult.

1. Respond well to the victim/survivor, if it is a direct disclosure, to ensure they feel listened to and taken seriously. Explain what will happen next and check out support requirements. They should be informed that their identity and the identity of the respondent will be shared with key church officers, and may be shared with statutory agencies, if there is any current risk to children or adults. The concern or allegation should not be shared with anyone other than those who need to know (eg the statutory agencies and appropriate church officers)
2. **Emergency** – If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the emergency services on 999
3. **Non-emergency** – Contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent, in the first instance. They **must** then contact the DSA. If neither are available, contact the DSA directly. If the concern arises in an activity, discuss with the group/activity leader, who will contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent.
4. Any safeguarding concerns **must** be reported to the DSA **within 24 hours**.
5. If the PSO/incumbent or the DSA are not available within 24 hours, contact Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care and/or the police directly, if the concern is that a child or adult is being abused. Contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or police if the concern is that a church officer may be abusing a child or adult.

Advise the Parish Safeguarding Officer or incumbent as soon as possible that you have made a referral; they will advise the DSA.

If in doubt don't delay – seek advice from statutory agencies.

6. Do not contact the respondent or anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory agencies.
7. Record the details of the concern or allegation. Where it is not appropriate to take notes at the time (usually it will not be), make a written record as soon as possible afterwards or before the end of the day. Record the time, date, location, persons present and how the concern or allegation was received, eg by telephone, face-to-face conversation letter, etc. The record should include details of information provided to that person as well as the information received. Always sign and date the record. Keep it factual. Pass on a copy to the DSA (and /or the PSO/incumbent). The records should be kept secure and confidential.

If the concern is about a child or adult

8. The DSA will act in line with the House of Bishop's guidance. They will offer advice, support and guidance and help to make the required referrals. If there is a risk of harm, the concerns must be reported to the statutory agencies within 24 hours of the DSA receiving the concerns. This would be Children's or Adult Social Care and/or the police.

There should be close communication between the DSA and PSO/incumbent until the situation is resolved. The archdeacon should also be informed.

If the concern also involves a church officer

9. The DSA will act in line with the House of Bishop's guidance. They will offer advice, support and guidance and refer the concerns to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or police within 24 hours. The DSA will now take over management of the safeguarding concern in conjunction with the core group (which will be convened within 48 hours) and statutory agencies. There may also be a requirement for parish representatives to attend a subsequent core group/s. If there are doubts about whether or not to make a referral and under what route, the DSA will seek advice from the LADO.

Please note that the procedure is the same for non-recent abuse.

A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and adults, and respecting the rights of the person against whom an allegation is made. In such circumstances the welfare of the child, young person or adult must come first. The rights of the person against whom the allegation is made are important and must be given due weight, once the immediate safety and protection of the child, young person or adult have been assured.

Appendix 2

Communications

Social networking

Social networking sites e.g. 'Facebook', have become increasingly popular for contacting people and advertising events. Users need to be careful about those they accept as 'friends' on sites such as these, as they are essentially designed for peer to peer contact.

Many youth groups use social networking sites to share information and photographs. Young people often initiate these groups and promote them with friends.

If an account is set up in the name of the church or youth group, it is important that an adult leader becomes a member and oversees the content and activity.

Considerations to be aware of:

- Leaders should maintain boundaries between their personal and professional lives by customising their privacy settings and avoid uploading inappropriate personal information.
- Diocesan guidelines on photographs should be followed when uploading images.
- Leaders should monitor conversations, images and behaviour of members of the group and challenge as necessary.

Emails

Consideration when using email to communicate with children and young people

- Make sure the child's parent or guardian know and agree to this method of communication.
- Use clear, appropriate language.
- Where possible have a separate email account for church activity communications.
- Never use the terms such as 'love' or kiss('x') to end the message.
- Never forward chain emails.
- Make sure any image sent is appropriate.
- Make sure any hyperlinks do not lead to inappropriate content.
- Always copy another adult into the emails and save copies sent.

Text Messages

The benefit of sending a text message is the ability to communicate and respond immediately in a given situation. It is important to ensure that the content of the message can not be misinterpreted.

Consideration when using text message to communicate with children and young people:

- Make sure the child's parent or guardian know and agree to this method of communication.
- Where possible use a separate mobile phone from your personal one.
- Only give out to young people contact details that the church has placed in the public domain.
- Use appropriate language.
- Never use kiss ('x') to end a text.
- Always copy another adult into the text message.