

# **St. Mary the Virgin, Bathwick, Bath**



## **Parish Safeguarding Policy**

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The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will promote the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It fully accepts and endorses the Children Act 1989 & 2004 & The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse. The Church is particularly called by God to support those less powerful and those without a voice in our society.

### **Our Commitment**

Our Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Bathwick, is committed to the implementation of the Diocese of Bath and Wells Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and the relevant statutory legislation and guidance for the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We are committed to creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment by being aware of some of the situations that create vulnerability. Issues which need to be considered include both the physical environment and the attitudes of workers and volunteers.

A person (adult or child) who might be considered vulnerable has the right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity.
- have their privacy respected.
- be able to lead as independent a life as possible.
- be able to choose how to lead their life.
- have the protection of the law.
- have their rights upheld regardless of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, impairment or disability, age, religion or cultural background.
- be able to use their chosen language or method of communication.
- be heard.

In any situations where there may be a difference of opinion about priorities, the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult should be the paramount concern.

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children, young people and adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children and adults
- The establishment of a safe, caring community which provides an environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse, and where victims of abuse can report or disclose abuse and find support.
- The promotion of best practice that contributes to the prevention of abuse.

### **Parish Safeguarding Representatives**

The Parish will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. It will work with the Diocesan Safeguarding team, statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The PCC will appoint a minimum of one Safeguarding Representative who will be responsible on behalf of the incumbent and PCC for implementing the Diocesan policy in respect of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

## **Safer Recruitment**

We will carefully select and train all those with any responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults within the church in line with safer recruitment principles, including taking up references and the use of criminal records checks.

The suitability of an applicant or nominated volunteer for work with children, young people or vulnerable adult should not be solely dependent upon Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosures and vetting checks. Someone whose DBS disclosure is clear may still be unsuitable. Hence the need for an interview and references to assure ourselves, as far as we can, that someone is suitable.

As part of the Safer Recruitment process, it is the policy of this Parish that:

- All those who regularly work with children, young people and vulnerable adults including those who work on a rota, should have enhanced DBS checks if they reach the criteria;
- Those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for a DBS check if they reach the criteria;
- Those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will be required to be DBS plus Barred List checked if they reach the criteria.

This Parish accepts that, through its workers and volunteers, it is responsible for children, young people and vulnerable adults when in a church building, on church property and other premises being used by the church and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organised by the church. However, a church is not responsible for private arrangements.

The safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, not just parents or those who have formal leadership or caring responsibilities. Procedures and formal processes alone, though essential, will not protect children and adults. The community, including all its members, needs to be aware of the dangers and be prepared to report concerns and take action if necessary.

## **Complaint Procedures**

The term 'complaint' can cover an allegation, disclosure or statement, something seen or something heard. The complaint need not be made in writing but once received it should be passed on to the Safeguarding Officer who must record and act upon the information. Complaints can be taken from alleged victims and third parties.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and appropriate authorities to ensure that the matter is on record. Support will be offered to adult survivors of child abuse, who will also be encouraged to make a statement to the Police if they have not done so before.

We will seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to anyone who has suffered abuse, developing with them an appropriate ministry that recognises the importance of understanding the needs of those who have been abused, including their feelings of alienation and / or isolation. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of abuse in any setting, including in their own home, and in a church environment, and will work hard to make our church a safe place for people to disclose any concerns they have and receive appropriate support. We will seek to protect survivors of abuse from the possibility of further harm and abuse.

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust and responsibility, where they are trusted by others.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision, and referral to the appropriate authorities, to any member of our Church community known to have offended against a child, young person or adult who is vulnerable. We will support them in continuing to attend church services whilst supervising their attendance to reduce the risk of further harm.

If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult please contact Nicola Parker, as our Safeguarding Officer.

Nicola Parker: 01225 834108

[Njackland@aol.com](mailto:Njackland@aol.com)

Alternatively you can contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, Glenys Armstrong

Glenys Armstrong: 01749 685135

07834 514842

[glenys.armstrong@bathandwells.anglican.org](mailto:glenys.armstrong@bathandwells.anglican.org)

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## **Appendix 1**

### **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.