



# ST MATTHEW'S & THE MINSTER CHELTENHAM

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## Safeguarding Children and Young People

Policy & Procedures (Revised November 2023)

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**The Parish Safeguarding Officers for Children and Young People  
are Yamika Banda and Julia Sawers**

# Introduction

Every person has a value and dignity, which comes directly from being created in God's image. This means that we have a duty to value all people as bearing the image of God and therefore we are to protect them from harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's business. That is why we have a safeguarding policy, to commit ourselves to nurture, protect and safeguard all our members, particularly children, young people and adults at risk. We understand that abuse is harmful, with long-term impacts for both children and adults.

There are three areas we need to consider to have a good safeguarding church culture:

1. We want to protect children and young people from abuse within the church.
2. We want to protect church staff and volunteers who work alongside children and young people from false allegation.
3. We want to respond appropriately to children and young people who are experiencing abuse wherever the abuse has occurred.

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.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding well to those that may pose a present risk to others.

Volunteers should read the policy but are not required to read the appendices. Church Staff and PCC members should also read the appendices. The following policy was agreed at the Parochial Church Council (PCC) meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

Signed:

David Evans

Anna Laszlo

*Church Wardens*

# Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

## Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all** those, ordained or lay, appointed to the church staff
- all** those volunteers working with children and young people in the Parish

## General Principle

To seek to provide a caring, consistent and safe environment in which children and young people can develop and learn. We recognise the personal dignity, rights and equal value of children and young people, as well as those of adults.

## Definitions for the purposes of this document

- Child – any person under the age of 18 years.
- Young person – any child of secondary school age (11-18 years).
- Leader – any adult serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Volunteer – any leader in any role within church who is not on the Church Staff.

## Key church safeguarding roles

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has overall responsibility for safeguarding. This policy is maintained, reviewed, and sanctioned by the PCC. See [Appendix B](#).

Role	Contact	Key safeguarding responsibilities
Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSO)	PSOs for Children and Young People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Julia Sawers</li> <li>• Yamika Banda</li> </ul> PSOs for Vulnerable Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emma Abbey</li> <li>• Paul Collacott</li> </ul> <a href="mailto:safeguarding@stmatthewsandtheminster.org">safeguarding@stmatthewsandtheminster.org</a> 01242 519520	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PSOs are appointed by the PCC and given responsibility for safeguarding within the church family.</li> <li>• Given the size of our church, it is necessary for the PSOs to delegate certain responsibilities to Church Staff (see below)</li> <li>• The PSOs will assist and advise Church Staff if a safeguarding issue or risk arises and needs to be addressed.</li> <li>• See <a href="#">Appendix C</a> for further details of their role.</li> </ul>
Children's and Youth Minister	Children's Minister – Charlotte Butcher-Barnard <a href="mailto:charlottebutcher@stmatthewsandtheminster.org">charlottebutcher@stmatthewsandtheminster.org</a>  Youth Minister - Becca Horton <a href="mailto:beccahorton@stmatthewsandtheminster.org">beccahorton@stmatthewsandtheminster.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for safeguarding within their ministry area.</li> <li>• Safe recruitment and training of all Volunteers within their ministry area.</li> <li>• Risk assessments for all groups and activities within their ministry area.</li> </ul>
Rector	Richard Coombs <a href="mailto:richardcoombs@stmatthewsandtheminster.org">richardcoombs@stmatthewsandtheminster.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring all Church Staff are recruited in accordance with this safeguarding policy, and given appropriate training.</li> </ul>

Operations Manager	Rachel Hargreave <a href="mailto:rachelhargreave@stmatthewsandtheminster.org">rachelhargreave@stmatthewsandtheminster.org</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DBS administrator.</li> <li>• Ensuring all Volunteers and Church Staff undergo an appropriate DBS check.</li> </ul>
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### Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers

- Mel Biscoe ([safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk))
- Brett Riches ([safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@glosdioc.org.uk))
- 01452 835516, or out of hours 07944 680320

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers are a useful source of wisdom and advice, and they must be contacted in certain scenarios, as outlined in this policy.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers work with Thirtyone:Eight, a national independent Christian safeguarding organisation. The Thirtyone:Eight helpline is **0303 003 1111**. An Information Sharing Agreement between the safeguarding team and Thirtyone:Eight will allow them to receive a copy of any advice Thirtyone:Eight may offer the parish church/caller.

### National contacts

- Childline (0800 1111) – For children and young people
- NSPCC (0800 800500) – For adults concerned about a child
- Gloucestershire Children’s Social Care 01452 426565 (office hours 9.00 to 5.00)
- Police Child Protection Unit (24 hours) 01452 261112 or if no reply 01242 521321
- NAPAC (0808 801 0331) – Offers support to adult survivors of childhood abuse
- Stop It Now (0808 1000 900) – preventing child sexual abuse

### Supporting Documentation

Further relevant safeguarding guidance can be found in:

- St Matthew’s and the Minster “Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy”, which you can access from:

<https://www.stmatthewsandtheminster.org/safeguarding>

- The “Parish Safeguarding Handbook” issued by the Church of England 2018, which you can access from:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

- The “Safer Environment and Activities” issued by the Church of England 2019, providing practical, straightforward and clear guidance, which you can access from:

[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Safer%20Environment%20and%20Activities%20Oct19\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Safer%20Environment%20and%20Activities%20Oct19_0.pdf)

### Compliance

A breach of the conditions set out in this policy, resulting in a safeguarding issue will be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers or the police if appropriate. For Church Staff, more serious violations will also be pursued through the provisions of the Disciplinary Procedure and could include dismissal.

## Recognising and responding to abuse

### What is abuse?

Abuse can be carried out by an adult or another child. It can be the result of inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. The UK government categorises abuse in terms of:

- Physical Where children suffer physical harm or injury or where there is a failure to prevent such injury.
- Emotional Not receiving love and affection; may be threatened and taunted (could include cyber bullying); given responsibilities inappropriate for their age; witnessing domestic abuse.
- Sexual Involving children in sexual activity they do not fully comprehend or to which they are unable to give informed consent; producing or watching pornography; sexting and sexual exploitation.
- Neglect Where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children or protect them from danger.

**In addition, we recognise:**

**Spiritual Using Scripture or faith to coerce or control people.**

### Recognising signs of abuse

The following behavioural signs *may* be indications of past or present abuse:

- Physical Unexplained or hidden injuries; lack of medical attention; fear, low self-esteem, withdrawn behaviour.
- Emotional Reverting to “younger” behaviour; nervousness; sudden underachievement; attention seeking; running away; stealing or lying; delayed physical development.
- Sexual Preoccupation with sexual matters (evident in words, play or drawings); being sexually provocative; disturbed sleep, nightmares, bedwetting; secretive relationships.
- Neglect Appearing ill cared for or unhappy; being withdrawn or aggressive; having injuries or ongoing health problems.

**All of the above will involve some level of trauma for the child or young person and this will be seen in their behaviour.**

### If a child or young person tells you about abuse

Receive	Be composed, sympathetic and listen carefully. Do not ask leading questions. Do not start to investigate. You are an alerter, not an investigator. Accept what you hear without passing judgment.
Reassure	Reassure the child that they were right to speak to you. Do not promise confidentiality – explain that you will have to tell the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Stay with the child until they are reassured and tell them what you intend to do next.
Record	Make careful notes (the circumstances, what the child said, what you said etc.) as soon as possible (preferably within one hour). Include dates and time of incident/recording and keep safely. Do not talk to others about allegations. Pass a copy of the notes to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
Report	Immediately tell the Parish Safeguarding Officer (unless they are implicated in the allegations, in which case approach the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers). Pray for all concerned.

### **If you suspect abuse**

Possible signs of abuse are not taken as indicators that abuse has definitely taken place. Nonetheless, the possibility that abuse has occurred should be seriously considered.

Do:

- Do write down what you have seen or heard. Suspicion may vary from a vague disquiet to apparent evidence of abuse.
- Do promptly inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Do not:

- Do not investigate an allegation or make a judgement about it.
- Do not speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Parish Safeguarding Officer. This is important to maintain confidentiality.

### **If there is clear evidence of abuse**

Promptly inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer. Clear evidence of abuse is:

- Where a child or young person is making a clear allegation of abuse.
- Where injuries to the child are raising strong suspicions.

As with the two previous scenarios you should write down all that you have seen and heard about the concern. Do not speak to the possible abuser or anyone else except the Parish Safeguarding Officer. If the Parish Safeguarding Officers are not available, and there is concern for the immediate safety of a child or young person, you should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and the Rector. If none of these are available, you should contact the Police or Social Care. While no one will want to react without careful consideration, it is important to avoid delay in order to prevent further abuse.

### **Next steps**

The actions to be taken by the Parish Safeguarding Officer are outlined in [Appendix C](#). The “Quick Guide” in section 7 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook gives a flow chart of actions to be taken. All concerns or allegations of abuse by a church officer (e.g. Rector,

Church Staff or Volunteer) must be reported to a Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser immediately. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation/suspicion and the Parish Safeguarding Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral to the relevant authorities, that person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters and should therefore take the matter to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers, and – if relevant – the Police. The decision about when and what to tell the parents will be taken by the Parish Safeguarding Officer in discussion with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and the Rector. If a matter is referred to the Statutory Authorities, the police or Social Care, then this decision will be taken by them.

## Screening procedure for recruiting Volunteers

Every applicant who wishes to serve as a volunteer in any ministry area involving children or young people must complete a screening process prior to serving. We acknowledge that there may be exceptional circumstances when some flexibility with the process is required, for example when someone is a refugee with incomplete documentation.

Responsibility for the appointment of volunteers is delegated by the PCC as follows:

- The Youth Minister – any volunteers for Young People’s groups
- The Children’s Minister – any volunteers for Children’s groups (inc. creche)

### 1. Recruitment

- All Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older (see [Appendix E and F](#) for guidance on when a young person wishes to act as a helper).
- A written role description is made available to the potential Volunteer.

### 2. Application

- All potential volunteers must have a face-to-face conversation with either the Children’s or Youth Minister (or a named leader to whom they have delegated that task), in order to go through the role description and to have the opportunity to ask any follow-up questions needed to confirm their suitability.
- The volunteer must complete and sign a church Application Form, which includes the honest declaration of any criminal convictions.
- The Application Form also requires the naming of two referees. Referees will not usually be relatives/partners, current parish clergy, or church staff.
- All Volunteers must complete a DBS check. The church Operations Manager is the DBS Administrator.

### 3. Assessment

- A Volunteer can begin their role only once the following have been completed:
- The Application Form has been filed as complete.
- Two references have been sent for, received, and reviewed as being acceptable.
- The satisfactory DBS Disclosure outcome has been received.



- The Volunteer confirms that they have read this Safeguarding Policy.

#### 4. Appointment

- Written confirmation of appointment will be given to the applicant by either the Children’s Minister or Youth Minister, as appropriate.

#### 5. Training

- Ongoing training is periodically arranged by the Children’s or Youth Minister.
- Volunteers are asked to complete the Diocesan “Basic Awareness” course and the “Foundation” course within three months of beginning in role.

### **Confidentiality**

The paperwork associated with any appointment will be kept in accordance with the church’s information storage policy. This means it is strictly confidential to the Rector, the Children’s or Youth Minister, the Rector’s PA and the Parish Safeguarding Officers. The information is stored on Share Point. All records must be kept indefinitely. See [Appendix A](#) for further guidance about Safer Recruitment.

## **Expectations for Leaders**

All Leaders share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving those in their care as Christ loves them.
- **Trying to live a life which pleases God.**
- Praying for those in their care and pointing them to God’s word as appropriate.

These expectations are to be followed by those who work with children or young people. The guidelines are not exhaustive and there are situations where they may need to be added to or modified.

### **Guidance for work with children and young people**

- Treat everyone with respect, do not ridicule them.
- Respect people’s rights to personal privacy.
- Record and report any concerns about a child, young person or adult and/or the behaviour of another Leader to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Think about peer bullying and help children to be kind to one another.
- Talk with the children and young people, learn their names and interests so that you build a relationship with them.
- Ensure children know who they can talk to if they have a concern.
- Adults should not be left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of them being observed. The principle is that help (for either party) should be within earshot.
- Some children have severe allergies to certain foods and giving them the wrong

food could be serious. The only food given to children should be that provided by the Children's/Youth Minister or food provided by a parent/guardian for that child.

- Ensure that if a child or young person is met away from church premises on their own it is in a public place such as a café.
- Do not at any time allow anyone unknown to the group leaders to have unsupervised access to children or young people.
- Generally, Leaders should not take photos/videos of young people/children.
- Photos will only be taken by a designated person (for example, the Children or Youth Minister) with parental consent. If using a personal device, these photographs should be promptly transferred to a church computer for storage, and then deleted from the personal device.
- Leaders will be mindful of the circumstances of praying with young people because this can be a very intimate experience.
- Leaders will not develop exclusive, close relationships with young people.
- Leaders must not arrange social occasions with children and young people (other than events which also include adult family members / carers) outside organised group occasions.
- Leaders of any youth activity will not be in a romantic relationship with any young person in the group.
- Do not smoke, **vape** or drink alcohol in the presence of children and young people, except when this is a social situation with family members/carers present.
- Do not use Scripture to coerce or control a person and be sensitively aware of this form of manipulation in relation to our children and young people. Further information can be found in: "Escaping the Maze of Spiritual Abuse: Creating Healthy Christian Cultures" by Humphreys and Oakley.

### **Guidelines on physical contact with Children and Young People**

- Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the adult's. Touch should be age-appropriate. For example, holding a young child's hand to cross the road is appropriate; whereas holding a teenager's hand would likely not be.
- Keep everything in public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should not be prolonged. A brief hug for a distressed child is fine, but a child sitting on your lap for prolonged periods shows favouritism and could be misinterpreted. Leaders and helpers are advised to offer comfort and reassurance and then gently move the child to sit next to them.
- Think about rowdy physical activity such as piggyback rides and be alert to the possibility of this becoming out of control or the children becoming over-excited.
- Touch should be initiated by the child rather than the adult, apart from in rare circumstances. i.e. when they need medical attention or for their own safety.
- Under no circumstances shall physical punishment be used.

### **Promoting positive behaviour**

**We understand that children come from a variety of backgrounds and some who have**

experienced adversity may behave in a way which is disruptive for the group. This may be due to their trauma, anxiety and need to be in control to feel safe. We want to provide an environment of high structure and high nurture for all children. If a child is struggling to be regulated, we might ask a parent to come into the group to support them to become calm again. Our approach is child-centred and we will always take measures to support the child in the most appropriate way.

Leaders should never use any form of physical punishment. Leaders will never raise their voice at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

## Registers

A register will be taken of all the children and Leaders attending a group on each occasion the group meet. The register will be uploaded onto Share Point for long term storage. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come then the church can find who was present on any given date.

## Parental consent

Parents or guardians will complete a form registering a child for an activity or group. The registration forms should be available for Leaders to consult. Leaders should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their specific group. It will include:

- the name and address of the child
- a contact phone number for a parent or guardian in an emergency
- information about any allergies, medical conditions, medications and consent for emergency treatment if necessary
- agreement to the child or young person being photographed by a designated photographer and then used in official church publications, the church's Social Media, website and displays.
- agreement to the young person having email contact with the Youth Minister, to receive calls and texts to and from the Youth Minister and to connect to their group's social media accounts.

## Leader ratios

At least two adults should be present with a group when it is the only activity taking place on the premises. Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, individual groups may have fewer adults. Never take a group of children or young people off the premises with fewer than two adults. Ratios of Leaders to children for all groups/activities should be based on a risk assessment. For example, Leader numbers would likely be higher for outdoor activities or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved. For guidance, Church of England's minimum requirements are:

Age of children	Number of adults	Number of children
0-2 years old	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6

9-12	1	8
13-18	1	10

## **Risk assessments**

Every activity must have a risk assessment, followed by all Leaders. It is the responsibility of the Children’s or Youth Minister to write these. There are Diocesan templates for this held by the Rector’s PA. For regular groups and activities, the assessment should be reviewed annually to ensure relevance. A basic first aid kit should be readily available at all times, and Leaders should be familiar with its location. Leaders should be familiar with where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound. Activities away from the church premises need to ensure they cover more detail as potentially there are more risks or hazards away from the building. Adequate provision of first aid cover when off-site is essential. An up-to-date list of those with relevant qualifications will be clearly accessible with the First Aid box (to be stored in the kitchen, Tyndale Office and Ministry Office).

## **Transfer of responsibility for a child from the parents/guardians to the Leaders**

This safeguarding policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of the Leaders of the advertised group or activity. This time period is clearly marked at the beginning and end by a handover between parents/guardians and the Leaders. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children once they have been collected from their groups or returned to their parents/guardians.

## **Toileting**

Ensure another adult is told if a child needs to be taken to the toilet. Toilet breaks should be organised for young children. Leaders should not change a baby’s nappy; the expectation is that parents will do this. School-aged children should be able to take themselves to the toilet without assistance. If a preschool or school-aged child requires assistance, it is best for assistance to be given by a Leader of the same sex where possible. The Leader should wait outside the closed cubicle door. If the child requires assistance inside the cubicle, the cubicle door must not be closed with the Leader and child inside.

## **Grooming**

Grooming is when a person seeks to gain trust in order to have access to children and young people to abuse them. People who operate in this way are unlikely to apply to work in a formal role within the children’s and youth work. They are more likely to seek friendship amongst families and vulnerable teenagers gradually building a relationship which they can exploit, perhaps through babysitting. Guarding against this form of abuse is very difficult and that is why safeguarding is everyone’s business.

## **Social media, video conferencing & private messaging**

The use of social media requires extra care when dealing with young people and vulnerable adults. These guidelines relate to internet, email, mobile phone and social networking. While these bring opportunities there are also significant risks, including forming inappropriate relationships, grooming, impersonation, bullying and harassment.

### **Guidelines for the Children's Minister**

- Children in Year 6 and below should not normally be communicated with by the church using social media or mobile phones.

### **Guidelines for the Youth Minister**

- The Youth Minister has a church mobile phone, separate from his/her personal mobile, which will be used for any communication with young people.
- The Youth Minister church mobile phone should be the only number that young people are given; his/her personal number should remain private.
- Before communicating with young people, written permission from the young person's parents/guardians will be given via the registration form.
- One-to-one communication between the Youth Minister and a young person should normally be avoided. Communication should be in a group context.
- If it is necessary for the Youth Minister to communicate with a young person individually, it should be by the Youth Minister church mobile phone, which will be checked periodically by the Parish Safeguarding Officer and/or line manager.
- Young people must be made aware that any one-to-one communication will be public in this way. Where there is concern about abuse, the usual safeguarding procedures must be followed.
- Texts that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

### **Guidelines for Leaders**

- Leaders with personal social networking accounts should customise their privacy settings in order to maintain the boundaries with their personal life. They should avoid uploading inappropriate personal information.
- Leaders will not share personal contact details with young people, should not add children as friends on personal social media accounts nor 'Facebook stalk' (i.e. dig through children's Facebook pages to find out more about them).
- Leaders will not contact young people directly whether by text message, direct social media message or phone call without the expressed and documented permission of both the young people's parents and the Youth Minister.
- If a Leader is contacted directly by a young person (e.g. Friend request, direct message etc), it should not be responded to. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should be informed, and the guidelines reiterated to the young person tactfully (e.g. with another adult present at the next youth group meeting).

**St Matthew's Youth Instagram account** - the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Youth Minister's line manager should be aware of the account name and password so that they

can at any time log onto the account to monitor the communications. Young people should be made aware that information is shared in this way.

**St Matthew's Youth WhatsApp group** – with parental consent, young people can be added to the Youth WhatsApp group. The Youth Minister will be part of the group, via the Youth Minister mobile phone. Other Leaders will not be part of the group, as that would make their personal mobile numbers visible to all young people in the group.

**Online Zoom Meetings** - Any online group meetings should happen through Zoom video conferencing software, with the following guidelines followed:

- Links for the regular meetings will be emailed directly to parents, rather than shared publicly.
- Always have two safely recruited and DBS checked leaders present, even in breakout rooms. Both leaders will be 'live' before young people 'arrive'.
- Have a register taken of all present at the meetings, including Leaders, preferably including a register for each breakout room.
- Will not be recorded to avoid breaching GDPR and data storage policies.
- The host should edit settings prior to the meeting so that 'Meeting Participants' cannot share their screen, cannot join before the host, cannot message one another privately, cannot share files.
- Zoom, nor any other visual media (Skype, Facetime etc), is not to be used for one-to-one conversations with young people – use only in group settings.
- Leaders must be appropriately dressed, as they would be for a usual children's or youth group and sitting in an appropriate location

**Other Social media pages for the wider church family include:**

- Closed Facebook group for St Matthew's
- Closed Facebook group for Cheltenham Minster
- Public Facebook page for St Matthew's
- Twitter account for St Matthew's
- Instagram account for St Matthew's

**Considerations for using social media safely**

- Public - Say nothing on social media that you would not say in a public meeting, to someone's face or write in a local newspaper. Young people should also note that, whilst Church Staff and Volunteers will exercise appropriate discretion in dealing with the substance of online communication, they cannot promise confidentiality.
- Privacy – Draw clear boundaries around social media associated with your private life and social media for public ministry. Church Staff and Volunteers should not add children or young people as friends on their personal accounts, nor comment on photos or posts of children or young people, nor share personal contact details.
- Permanence – Assume that everything written is permanent and may be viewed by anyone at any time; everything can be traced back to you personally and to the church. Think before you post. Content or links must not be libellous, defamatory, breach copyright or data protection, contain illegal or inappropriate material.
- Politeness – Treat online communication as you would communication that is face to face. Be polite, honest, transparent and consistent. Use clear and unambiguous

language and avoid abbreviations that could be misinterpreted.

## **Guidelines for specific situations**

### **Transporting children by car**

- Parental consent should be given and all journeys should be carried out with the knowledge of the Children's or Youth Minister.
- All drivers will have a driving licence, insurance and an MOT certificate if needed.
- Drivers must have been through the Volunteer screening procedure, unless the parents have made a private arrangement not facilitated by the church.
- Having gone through the Volunteer screening procedure, it is reasonable to expect that a Volunteer can be alone with a child for short periods e.g. dropping off the last child. Ensure a discussion takes place over who is the most suitable child to drop off last. It is worth noting that two adults in a car with one child is not necessarily a guarantee of protection for that child.
- Drivers should not spend unnecessary time alone in the car with a child.
- At collection and dropping off points do not leave a child on their own. Make sure that an appropriate adult collects children.
- Consider whether it may be unwise for a particular driver to transport a child e.g. where they have had a disagreement that evening, where a child/young person has a "crush" on that adult etc. In such cases arrange for someone else to transport that child/young person.
- Drivers should obey speed limits and not drive in convoys.

### **Transporting children by minibus**

In addition to the above:

- At least two adults must be present in each minibus. As well as the driver, another responsible adult sitting with the passengers will be needed.
- The second responsible adult must have been through the Volunteer screening procedure.

### **Checklist for sleepovers on church premises, off-site trips and residential events**

- The church leadership must be informed and agree to the activity.
- Details of the activity and any itinerary must be given in advance to parent/carers and consent forms received in advance of the activity taking place.
- Details of the activity and a list of contacts must be left with someone in the church, and shared with the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is

covered by PCC insurance.

- Expert supervision of risky activities (e.g. swimming)
- Health and dietary needs for each child, young person and adult attending.
- Food Hygiene
- Safe transport. Clear policy and planning on returning children or young people home
- Clear and enforced boundaries about responsibility of leaders (e.g. signing out book for older young people on residential events)
- Fire and emergency evacuation precautions. Leaders should familiarise themselves with the weekend away site so they are aware of where fire exits are located.
- Leaders should inform the young people of where fire exits are located and where the assembly point is should the fire alarm sound.
- First Aid availability. A leader must be designated to take responsibility for first aid.
- Sleeping arrangements. Leaders should not sleep in the same rooms as young people.
- Leaders should not be alone in a bedroom with a young person.
- Leaders should not go into bedrooms of young people of the opposite sex except in an emergency situation.
- Activities should be appropriate. In particular leaders should consider the age-appropriateness of films that are shown.
- Leaders should not smoke, **vape** or drink alcohol socially in the presence of children and young people.

## **Document Storage**

- Documents relating to recruitment, training certificates, DBS checks, risk assessments and registers are held on Share Point. This is a backed up, on-line storage system with access controls. The Parish Safeguarding Officers and the Operations Manager have “write access”. The Rector, Children’s and Youth Ministers have “read access”.
- On occasions, there will be details of very sensitive situations about which records need to be kept. These will be saved individually with passwords within the portal. Only the Rector and Parish Safeguarding Officers will have access to this information.

## **Babysitting**

From time to time, the church may organise specific courses to which parents are invited. In order to attend, the parents may need babysitters. The church will not make babysitting arrangements for any family, but if asked, we may suggest a link with someone. It is crucial to be clear that the church is not arranging this, endorsing it, or taking responsibility for it. It would be an entirely private arrangement between the relevant adults. It is the parents’ responsibility to be confident that their child would be safe in the care of the person concerned and to ensure that the person caring for their child knows the child well, could respond appropriately if there were a crisis and that the child feels happy and comfortable to be left in their care. Parents should not make the assumption that because someone attends church, they are suitable to care for children.



# Appendix A: Safer Recruitment Guidance

This checklist outlines the Diocesan Safer Practice Guidelines. The steps are the same regardless of whether the role is employed or voluntary, however for Volunteers, the process may be less involved.

Generally, the process will start with an informal discussion around the role description which would provide the discernment for ministry and opportunity for the candidate to withdraw at that point. If there is mutual agreement to proceed, then the process continues with an application form, references and confidential declaration. The interview is a formal one to discuss what the application form and references have revealed. Assuming the appointment is to be made, the next step in the process is obtaining DBS clearance and then a letter of appointment.

1. **Responsibility for appointment of Volunteers is delegated by the PCC.** The person responsible for the appointment (the “appointer”) are:
  - The Youth Minister – any Volunteers for Young People’s groups:
  - The Children’s Minister – any Volunteers for Children’s groups (inc. creche):
  - The “appointer” will have completed the C of E on-line Safer Recruiting Training
2. **A Role Description is made available.** The appointer must prepare a written role description. Short and simple beats long and detailed. It should outline the expectations of the role, the time commitment, experience required and must make clear whether or not a criminal records check will be required, and if so at what level (the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers can advise).
3. **Advertising**, which clearly outline the pre-appointment checks that are required.
4. **Application form and two references.** The proposed appointee must submit a completed **application form** to the appointer who must take up both **references**. The application form should include a confidential declaration for signing regarding any criminal record and which confirms the applicant has not had children removed from their care by Social Care and that they have read and agree with this Safeguarding Policy.
5. **Shortlisting (if necessary) and interview.** The appointer must arrange a face to face **interview** or discussion (in most cases, an informal chat) with the proposed appointee. If the appointer has any doubts about the suitability of the person they should ask further, more searching questions and seek advice.
6. **DBS checking.** The applicant needs to show the clear certificate to the person responsible for their recruitment. Applicants are expected to sign up to the DBS updates service. Paid employees and Volunteers will re-submit applications for DBS disclosure every five years (according to diocesan policy).
7. **Policy for recruitment of ex-offenders:** PCC has adopted a statement on the employment of ex-offenders (September 2021).
8. **Approval.** The appointer must ensure that any checks (including DBS check where appropriate) are completed satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed. A **letter of appointment** can be given, which will include a copy of the church’s Safeguarding Policy. A register must be kept of all Volunteers working with children, which will be shared with the Parish Safeguarding

Officers periodically.

9. **Induction.** Induction must include the expectation that the person has read the Safeguarding Policy. Paid and voluntary appointments are subject to the successful completion of a six-month probationary period.
10. **Settling in.** Training is arranged periodically by the Children's/Youth Minister, and Volunteers are asked to complete the Diocesan "Basic Awareness" course and the "Foundation" course.
11. **Supervision and review.** The appointer is responsible for ensuring that the appointee is inducted, trained as necessary, and supervised and supported in post.

### **Appeals Procedure**

Where an applicant feels that disclosure information has not been handled in a fair and sensitive way an appeals process is available through the diocesan advisor.

### **"Extra pair of hands"**

There are infrequent occasions when someone volunteers as "an extra pair of hands", not on a rota but as a one off at a special event. These people will not necessarily go through the normal recruitment procedure. They will only be allowed to undertake this role if the Children's or Youth Minister is confident that they are able to do so having consulted with one of the Parish Safeguarding Officers if possible. They will not be allowed to:

- assist children with the toilet
- be on their own with children at any time
- have access to information about the children or young people's contact details

# Appendix B: Role of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Safeguarding is everybody's business, but it is the particular responsibility of the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC. Therefore, the PCC will ensure that:

- there is a standing "Safeguarding" item on the PCC agenda.
- the standards and appropriate procedures in the recruitment, training and support of all those involved in the care of children and young people are adhered to.
- the Rector, Churchwardens, PCC and Safeguarding Officers have completed the levels of training required of them by Diocesan policy and undertake to renew their training before its expiry dates.
- the PCC has adopted the Safeguarding Dashboard offered by the Diocese and undertakes to work to be compliant in all aspects.
- the Rector and the Parish Safeguarding Officers are responsible for implementing and monitoring the PCC's policy.
- the policy is reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised.
- a copy of this policy is available for inspection at the church reception.
- the Diocesan poster about safeguarding is displayed where children and young people can easily see it along with information about the Parish Safeguarding Officers and contact information for Childline (0800 1111) and the NSPCC (0800 800500).
- parents or guardians of children and young people involved in the church's activities should be made aware that this policy exists and have the opportunity to view it.
- the PCC Secretary, the Rector, Churchwardens and PCC will ensure the provision of personal liability insurance for all paid and voluntary workers.
- the PCC will ensure that when letting the premises to any other groups, they will be asked to complete the Diocesan safeguarding agreement.
- the PCC will approve the use of social media platforms used by the church for official church communication and for communication with young people and vulnerable adults, meaning that accountability is necessary.
- the PCC will ensure there is a named person who is aware of social media account names and passwords so that they can at any time log onto the account to monitor the communications. The named person should be proactive in fulfilling this role.

# Appendix C: Role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)

The reason for a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) in each parish is to ensure that another person shares with the Rector the responsibility for child protection.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer has three main responsibilities: (1) Advocacy (2) Reporting concerns (3) Policy. The Parish Safeguarding Officer should;

- be known to the congregation and the clergy and be able to respond if there are any safeguarding issues.
- be familiar with the work of the church, with children and young people and know the leaders.
- be involved in the recruitment of Volunteers and employees and ensure that the names of Volunteers are recorded.
- be responsible for maintaining the list on behalf of the PCC of those who work with children in conjunction with the evidence checker.
- be a part of the annual APCM review of the PCC policy, and to maintain the dashboard, to which the Diocese has routine access.
- be alert to any unusual behaviour or inappropriate relationship on the part of any church worker with a child or young person.
- give advice and support to those leading activities for children.
- be involved in drawing up the Safeguarding Agreement if a person posing a risk to children is worshipping in the church.
- in the event of suspicion or an allegation of abuse, know when to seek advice from the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers and when it is necessary to inform Social Care immediately.
- ensure the children and young people's leaders know who to talk to if the Parish Safeguarding Officer is not available.
- help, support, develop and implement PCC policies and practices and to be familiar with the activities undertaken by the church and those groups using the church premises.
- attend training in child protection, seek advice and keep up to date on best practice. Pass this on to Church Staff and children's and youth leaders as appropriate.
- review with the PCC that appropriate insurance cover is in place.
- ensure that Diocesan safeguarding policies are followed.

## **Following an allegation of abuse, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will:**

- Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for advice about the child's safety and the next steps to be taken. They will not inform the parents if they consider that child may be at further risk of abuse by doing so.
- If agreed, they will contact Children's Social Care or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team for advice if they are concerned about the child's safety. Under no circumstance will the Parish Safeguarding Officer attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegation or suspicions of abuse. The role of the Parish Safeguarding Officer is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and to provide this information to the relevant authorities whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

**Gloucestershire Children's Social Care 01452 426565 (office hours 9.00 to 5.00)**

**Police Child Protection Unit (24 hours) 01452 261112 or if no reply 01242 521321**

- In the extreme situation where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Parish Safeguarding Officer will inform the doctor of any suspicions of abuse.
- In other circumstances the Parish Safeguarding Officer will speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical help/attention is sought for the child. The doctor or Health Visitor will then initiate further action, if necessary.
- If appropriate the parent or carer will be encouraged to seek help from Children's Social Care.
- Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the Parish Safeguarding Officer will offer to go with them. If they fail to act, the Parish Safeguarding Officer should contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser for further advice.

If the alleged abuse is taking place under the care of the Church or one of its organisations the Parish Safeguarding Officer should also inform the Rector.

If the suspicions concern the Rector, an authorised lay worker or member of the Church Staff, then the Parish Safeguarding Officer should not speak to the Rector but consult the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, immediately.

## **Caring for the child after disclosure**

We will seek to ensure that a child or young person feels safe to go home and that there is a trusted, safe adult for them to support them. As explained above, on some occasions it might be necessary to take immediate action to contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Children's Social Care and/or police to discuss putting into effect safety measures for the child so that they do not return home.

## **Caring for the person who the child has spoken to**

We acknowledge that being involved in a situation where a child or young person has talked about abuse is very painful and can be traumatic. We will seek to look after the person to whom the child has spoken, we will offer a supportive debrief and as far as possible, keep them informed of all the actions resulting in the disclosure of abuse or concern. If it is helpful, we will consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers for any further support or counselling which might be needed.

### **Responding to survivors of abuse**

We understand that the impact of abuse can be devastating for survivors. It takes great courage for someone to come forward and talk about their experiences and we acknowledge that historically, the Church of England has not always responded well, respectfully or kindly to survivors.

At St Matthew's and the Minster, if someone makes an allegation of abuse against someone within our church family, we will follow it up according to the process outlined in this policy. We can never promise to keep a disclosure of abuse confidential, but we undertake to keep the survivor informed of our actions at every stage so that they know they are being taken seriously and to tell them what is happening. If statutory agencies are involved, we will be guided by them in the information which can be shared.

We promise to treat every survivor with dignity and respect. This means that we will ask them who they would like to have supporting them and walking with them through their journey. We understand that they may find counselling helpful and will listen to how they would like this to be set up. If there are practical arrangements which could be made to help them continue to feel part of the church family safely, for example sitting with a certain person or in a certain area of the church, entering the church building with a supporter, not being alone in the service, we will do all we can to enable this to happen.

### **Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons**

When any adult is suspected to be a risk to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, the church has a responsibility for ensuring that steps are taken to protect others. Alongside this, when responding to suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations of abuse, the church will endeavour to respect the rights under criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law of the accused adult. As the process progresses additional support services may be offered. Any adult who is the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse belongs to families, congregations and church communities. We will be mindful of the need to provide support to members of families and congregations affected in such situations.

# Appendix D: Responding to Those Who May Present a Known Risk to Children and Young People in the Congregation

Where people may pose a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults, their position within the congregation needs to be carefully and sensitively considered. This may include those with criminal convictions for sexual offences or those who may pose a risk to others for other reasons. Further information can be found in Section 10 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure risks are mitigated and also to support them to worship appropriately.

As soon as we know a person may pose a risk to children is in our congregation, we will notify the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisers. The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser is also the person who risk assesses any blemished Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. They will be responsible, on a case-by-case basis, to undertake a risk assessment and, along with the church wardens, Rector and Parish Safeguarding Officers, form a plan, called a Safeguarding Agreement. The Safeguarding Agreement will, amongst other things, cover:

- forming a small group of people around the person to offer friendship, monitoring and support
- ensuring that the person is never offered an official role within the church which may lead others to consider him/her trustworthy
- attend designated meetings or services only
- sit apart from children and families
- decline hospitality if children will be present
- maintaining a high level of confidentiality, unless there is a breach of the agreement and it is necessary to inform others to protect a child

The Safeguarding Agreement will be signed by the person concerned with the full involvement of the church wardens. This is because church wardens can direct parishioners where to sit and have a duty to maintain good order in a service. If necessary, church wardens can eject a person causing a disturbance.

The Children's and Youth Ministers will be informed that this person is within the congregation. If a person refuses to sign the agreement, then further advice should be sought from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and possible statutory agencies too, such as the police. The Safeguarding Agreement will be reviewed annually to ensure it is still relevant.

# Appendix E: Working with Young People in Saturday Kitchen

## Principles:

- Saturday Kitchen is primarily a service for guests wanting a meal.
- It is great to include young people in serving others, for them to see faith in action and adult role models at work. It is also good for adults to learn from young people.
- We need to be aware of possible safeguarding concerns for young people who volunteer, this might be a risk from other adults (not all adults are DBS checked), or a risk to their emotional health and wellbeing through witnessing an incident occurring amongst the guests.
- When calculating required ratios, such volunteers contribute towards the number of children and not the number of adults.

## Guidelines:

- A briefing conversation will be held between the head of Saturday Kitchen, the young person and the parent or carer before they start to volunteer. This will be to ensure:
  - ~ that they are aware of what they are offering to do and still want to do it,
  - ~ there is an opportunity for them to ask any questions,
  - ~ the parent or carer is reassured that their young person will have the capacity to do the task,
  - ~ they understand the adults on the team do not necessarily have DBS checks and they should not be alone in a room with them with the door closed, nor should they give any adult their contact details
  - ~ they understand that they cannot take photographs of the session without explicit consent
  - ~ that the head of SK understands any additional care they need from the adults
  - ~ they understand which named person they should go to if they have any concerns during the session
- We will have only one young person on a team at any session. Some young people will be volunteering to help with Saturday Kitchen as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme (Service section) and this will mean they cannot volunteer every week if we have more than one young person wanting to volunteer.
- Young people under the age of 16 will leave by 11.00am.
- We do not anticipate any trouble amongst the guests, but we understand that when some people have deep distress in their lives, this may be shown in their language or behaviour. If an incident occurs, our priority has to be on the welfare of the guests. That being the case, we expect the young person to immediately take themselves away from the scene so that they do not witness or encounter distress (washing up area, back corridor, crèche room). The responsible named person will seek them out afterwards, check the young person is okay and offer a debrief of what has happened as appropriate to the event and the age of the young person.



# Appendix F: Working with Young People in Sunday Club and Holiday Bible Club

## Principles:

- Sunday Club and Holiday Bible Club are primarily a place for children in Primary School to learn about God through Bible stories, craft activities, games and fun.
- The Children's Minister has the responsibility to make sure that the Sunday Club and Holiday Bible Club sessions are run well and smoothly. Their first responsibility is to the children who attend.
- Teenagers have a lot to offer this work because often they can relate to the interests and ages of children in a more relevant way than older people. So, both the children and the Leaders can learn from the young person.
- Helping with Sunday Club or Holiday Bible Club may encourage a young person to test out their gifts and grow in faith.
- Young people can pose a risk to younger children and we must make sure that the young volunteers are aware of safeguarding practice and behaviours.
- When calculating required ratios, such volunteers contribute towards the number of children and not the number of adults.

## Guidelines:

- When a young person indicates that they would like to help with the children's work, the Children's Minister will have a conversation with them and their parent or guardian. This will be to ensure:
  - ~ that they are aware of what they are offering to do, they understand the time commitment and the sorts of tasks they will be asked to undertake and after hearing this, that they still want to do it,
  - ~ there is an opportunity for them to ask any questions,
  - ~ the parent or carer is reassured that their young person will have the capacity to do the task,
  - ~ that we never smack a child in our care and always treat them with dignity and respect, however young they are,
  - ~ the young person understands that although some children may be particular family friends, they cannot show favouritism to any children,
  - ~ the young person understands any protocol for taking children to the toilet,
  - ~ the young person understands that we discourage children from sitting on their laps to avoid any children feeling left out,
  - ~ the young person understands that they cannot take photographs of the session or discuss information about the children on any social media site,
  - ~ the young person understands that some children have allergies and cannot be allowed to eat certain snack food,
  - ~ that the Children's Minister understands any additional care the young person may need from the adults,
- If the young person has any concerns about their volunteering role, they can talk to the Children's Minister or a Parish Safeguarding Officer at any time.

- If the young person wants to increase their responsibilities, for example lead a game or tell the story, they should feel free to ask the Children's Minister about this.