

St Mary the Virgin Safeguarding Policy.

Principles of the policy for Safeguarding Children, Young People & Adults

We are committed to:

- The care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and adults
- The safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable
- The establishing of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse

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 disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult, child or young person may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.

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

We will seek to challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.

We will seek to offer pastoral care and support, including supervision and referral to the proper authorities, to any member of our church community known to have offended against a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognized good practice.

A person is a **person in need** if:

- he or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him or her of services by a local authority;
- his or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him or her of such services;
- he or she is disabled.

The critical factors to be taken into account in deciding whether a child is in need under the Children Act 1989 are:

- what will happen to a child's health or development without services being provided;
- the likely effect of services on the child's standard of health and development.

The Law and guidance cited is that for England and Wales and is up to date as at August 2010.

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the safeguarding of children, both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principle first enshrined in the Children Act 1989:

the welfare of the child should be paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well-being of children. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or about the behaviour of an adult or someone under the age of eighteen in a position of trust, and will work with the appropriate statutory bodies when an investigation into child abuse is necessary. It is also committed to the support of those who have been abused and to listening to the voices of survivors, who can help the Church learn lessons from the past.

We are committed to:

- the care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and adults;
- the safeguarding and protection of all children and adults;
- the establishment of safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of informed vigilance regarding the dangers of abuse.

It is the policy of the Church 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;
- those who work only occasionally will be asked to apply for DBS checks;
- those who manage or supervise people who work with vulnerable groups will also be required to obtain DBS checks.
- 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 the use of criminal records disclosures and registration with the relevant vetting and barring schemes.

- We will respond without delay to every complaint made which suggests that an adult or child may have been harmed, co-operating with the police and local authority in any investigation.
- St Mary the Virgin accepts that, through its workers, it is responsible for children who are entrusted to churches by their parents: in the church building, on church property and other premises being used, and during church activities. Responsibility extends to travel between places, when it is organized by the church. However, the church is not responsible for private arrangements made by parents.
- 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 must be recorded and acted upon.
- We will seek to offer informed pastoral care with anyone who has suffered abuse, developing, with him or her, an appropriate ministry.
- The Church does not investigate allegations of abuse or neglect of children, young people and vulnerable adults itself but refers them to the appropriate statutory agencies. The Church may need to make preliminary enquiries to establish the accuracy of information being passed to the statutory body.
- If a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to notice as having suffered abuse in the past, church officers will notify the 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 challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust.
- We are aware that those in positions of trust and responsibility, in the Church as elsewhere, may be subject to temptation to abuse their power and exploit or harm others. We seek to take action to deal with any abuse.
- Allegations of abuse or misconduct in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults by church officers will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), and investigated in accordance with his or her advice.
- 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.
- If a member of a church community comes to notice as having a conviction, caution, reprimand or warning for offences against children, young people or vulnerable adults, or has been barred from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults or is considered to present a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults we will seek to draw up a written agreement, where it is safe to do so. Breach of this agreement, or other concerns, may lead to a referral to the statutory agencies.
- In all these principles we will follow legislation, guidance and recognized good practice. This will involve, in particular, openness among those with a legitimate need to know, confidentiality for those not directly involved, and the sharing of information with the statutory authorities.

The Church of England, within its national institutions and within dioceses, has an obligation to support parishes and those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults in exercising their primary responsibility for those entrusted to them. St Mary the Virgin is therefore committed to encouraging partnership with all statutory and voluntary agencies, other faith groups and ecumenical partnerships wherever possible. In particular, St Mary the Virgin recognizes the need to:

- keep abreast of research and policy developments in good safeguarding practice;
- listen and learn from victims of abuse, in order to provide the most effective support for them;
- regularly review and update St Mary the Virgin policy and practice, taking account of the latest safeguarding information available;
- ensure that there are appropriate systems of accountability and supervision at all levels of the church's life, and that disciplinary and employment procedures are robust enough to manage risk;
- listen to those who have been abused, so that we can learn how to improve our support and care for survivors of abuse;
- ensure that all licensed ministers and lay workers are carefully selected and trained, and that their training equips them for their safeguarding responsibilities in work with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- provide training and support for workers who have responsibilities for children, young people and vulnerable adults' work, so that they can undertake their tasks with confidence and without being unduly fearful of unfounded allegations being made against them.

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin:

- has adopted and implemented a safeguarding policy and procedures, accepting as a minimum the House of Bishops' Policy on Safeguarding informed by additional diocesan procedures and recommended good practice, while being responsive to local parish requirements;
- has appointed Mrs Judy Harris as co-ordinator to work with the incumbent and the parochial church council (PCC), to implement policy and procedures. The co-ordinator will ensure that any concerns about a child, young person or vulnerable adult or the behaviour of an adult are appropriately reported both to the statutory agencies and to the diocesan safeguarding children adviser. The co-ordinator is a member of the PCC and has the right to attend the council and will report at least annually on the implementation of the policy within the parish;
- has displayed in the church and St Mary the Virgin Church Hall where children's activities take place, the contact details of the co-ordinator, along with the 'Childline' and 'Parentline Plus' telephone numbers;
- ensures that all those authorized to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are appropriately recruited according to safer recruitment practice, and are trained wherever necessary and supported;

- has ensured that there is appropriate insurance cover for all activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults undertaken in the name of the parish;
- reviews the implementation of the safeguarding policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually;

OFSTED prescribes minimum staff–child ratios for those groups which are required to register with it. For those groups not subject to registration these ratios are advisory and should be seen as minimum standards.

- 0–2 years 1 person for every 3 children
- 2–3 years 1 person for every 4 children
- 3–8 years 1 person for every 8 children
- over 8 years 1 person for the first 8 children and then 1 extra person for every extra 12 children

Each group should have a minimum of two adults and while it is recommended that a gender balance be maintained it is recognised that this may not be possible.

If a person who has been assigned to help staff a group is prevented from attending at short notice, there is no automatic obligation to cancel the group. It may be possible to secure the services of another suitable person or to make other appropriate temporary arrangements so that the group can still run as scheduled.

If it is proposed that a student in an appropriate discipline be included on a rota, the diocesan safeguarding adviser should be consulted.

Volunteers may be recruited according to safer recruitment principles, although it will not be necessary to consult the diocesan advisers before recruitment. Only volunteers who have been formally appointed to an appropriate role may take responsibility for children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Other adults may help with children’s groups on an occasional basis but must be accountable to the appointed worker. If they are to join the team on a regular basis they must be properly recruited as above. They will all also be asked to complete a confidential declaration.

Young people aged 16 or 17 may help with groups but must be supervised by an adult worker and cannot be counted as part of the staffing. They will also need DBS checks. Young people aged under 16 may act as helpers but should not have responsibility for children and must be supervised. If they are on work experience a reference should be obtained from their school, with a specific question as to whether there have been any safeguarding issues.

All those who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults or who have significant contact with them and their families or carers on behalf of the Church are in positions of trust. Staff handbooks, codes of safer working practice and contracts should make clear the importance of accepting the expectations of such work and the possible grounds for disciplinary action if they are not met:

- They will be seen as role models by those with whom they are in contact at all times, including when they are off duty;
- All church workers should, therefore, conduct themselves in accordance with the reasonable expectations of someone who represents the Church;

- They should take care to observe appropriate boundaries between their work and their personal life. For example, they should ensure that all communications they may have with or about the children, young people or vulnerable adults are appropriate in their tone;
- They should seek advice immediately if they come across a child, young person or vulnerable adult who may have been harmed (including self-harm), or a colleague whose conduct appears inappropriate;
- They should not expose themselves or others to material which is sexually explicit, profane, obscene, harassing, fraudulent, racially offensive, politically inflammatory, defamatory, or in violation of any British, European or international law.
- It is contrary to the policy of the Church of England for those in a position of trust, including priests and youth workers among others, to have sexual or inappropriate personal relationships with those aged 16 or 17 for whom they are responsible. A breach of this is likely to be considered as a disciplinary offence. It will be referred to the local authority designated officer (LADO), and in some cases it may also constitute a criminal offence. Anyone found guilty of a criminal or disciplinary offence of this kind is likely to be dismissed and referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority for possible barring.

In this document, the term 'parish' is used to denote the Incumbent and PCC of St Mary the Virgin who are together responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding policy is implemented. During a Vacancy, the term 'parish' is used to denote the PCC of St Mary the Virgin which is responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding policy is implemented.

For further information please see:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/37378/protectingallgodschildren>

<http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/diocese/safeguarding/>

The Church Of England: Responding To Serious Safeguarding Situations Relating To Church Officers And Other Individuals: A Practice Guidance Consultation Document March – 31st July 2014