

Children's Safeguarding Policy

(To be read in conjunction with the church's Safeguarding Policy)

Safeguarding policy aims

As a church, we desire to bring glory to God by knowing Jesus and making him known.

To that end, the aims of our safeguarding policy are:

- To uphold the honour of God's name
- To keep the gospel from disrepute
- Designed to be read together with the Church of England's House of Bishops parish safeguarding handbook- Promoting a Safer Church

We do this by:

- Protecting the children in our care
- Protecting the Leaders who serve in this ministry

Safeguarding is an important part of our service in the gospel and one which we take seriously, aiming for a standard of excellence as we implement this policy.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has adopted a safeguarding policy in accordance with the House of Bishops' Policy Statements 'Promoting a Safer Church' (2017) and 'Protecting All God's Children' (2010) and the Diocese of Ely Safeguarding Policies.

Key Safeguarding Roles

1. **The PCC** has overall responsibility for safeguarding within St Andrew The Great. This policy is maintained, reviewed, and sanctioned by the PCC.

2. **The Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO)** is the PCC member given responsibility for safeguarding within the church family and all its various ministries.

Given the size of our church, it is necessary for the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) to delegate some of their responsibilities to Staff Ministry Area Leaders who oversee various ministries. However, the Parish Safeguarding Officer (or in her absence the Deputy Safeguarding officer) will retain the sole right to receive and manage disclosures.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer will also be included in decisions about whether to permit someone to be involved in ministry with children and vulnerable adults where their Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is blemished or information is provided about them under the DBS scheme.

3. **The Church Safeguarding Committee** is a source of advice and guidance on safeguarding issues. The committee is made up of members who have some understanding of safeguarding and are aware of its importance. They will advise the PCC on any matters relating to safeguarding, making recommendations for changes in policy and procedure, and hold ministry area leaders accountable for policy implementation.

4. Staff Ministry Area Leaders

Ministry area leaders have the responsibility to ensure that Leaders within their ministry area are recruited, assessed, and trained according to the safeguarding policy of the church. In this process they will be assisted by the Leaders Review Team (made up of senior staff) and the administrative team. Their role will be supervised by the Parish Safeguarding Committee, chaired by the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

Ministry Area Leaders will escalate any concerns or disclosures to the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours. The Parish Safeguarding Officer retains the sole right to receive and manage disclosures.

5. **Leaders** refers to anyone serving in any role within church which involves any oversight of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

All Leaders share a particular responsibility for:

- loving the person as Christ loves them
- setting an example of proper Christian conduct
- praying for those in their care

Every applicant who wishes to serve in any ministry area involving children or young people must complete a screening process prior to serving. Full information on the screening process can be found in the full policy.

A Leader can begin their role in Children's ministry **only when** the following have been completed:

- The Children's Leader Agreement Form has been filed as complete
- The personal references have been sent for, received, and reviewed as being acceptable
- The satisfactory DBS Disclosure outcome has been received

If an existing Leader moves to serve in a different ministry area, they must read the relevant information for the new area before commencing their role.

All Leaders are strongly encouraged to complete the online Ely Diocesan safeguarding training courses (C0 and C1). Additional training is provided on induction into the role.

We are planning to introduce safeguarding training as a standing item on our Leader's day.

- A list of key **contact details** can be found on the last two pages of this policy.

GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO POTENTIAL CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is serious. All Leaders need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

1. Definitions

Who is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

What is abuse?

Working Together to Safeguard Children¹ states that, *'As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online'*¹.

It recognises that, *'These threats can take a variety of different forms, including sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation'*¹. Abuse can be carried out by an adult or another child.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional abuse: including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying).

Sexual abuse: involvement of children or adolescents, in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, or to which they are unable to give informed consent, or which violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect: including failure to meet the basic essential needs of a child, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to provide adequate supervision and / or access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Although not a formal category of abuse covered by the statutory definitions, it is important to be mindful of the danger of spiritual abuse. **Spiritual abuse** is concerned with the harm caused within faith communities by the inappropriate use (that is, the misuse) of religious belief or practices, particularly where power or authority, masquerading in the name of God is abused, to attempt to 'force' religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God's name."

1. Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018

2. Recognising signs of abuse

Warning signs: these are not necessarily proof of abuse, but they should signal a warning.

Abuse type	Physical signs	Behavioural signs
Physical abuse	<p>Bruises, blackeyes, broken bones</p> <p>Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly</p> <p>Untreated or inadequately treated injuries</p> <p>Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen</p> <p>Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks</p> <p>Cigarette burns, human bites, scalds and burns</p>	<p>Becoming sad, withdrawn or depressed</p> <p>Having trouble sleeping</p> <p>Behaving aggressively or being disruptive</p> <p>Showing fear of certain adults</p> <p>Showing lack of confidence and low self- esteem</p> <p>Using drugs or alcohol</p>
Sexual abuse	<p>Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas</p> <p>Genital discharge or urinary tract infections</p> <p>Stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting</p> <p>Sexually transmitted infections</p>	<p>A marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically</p> <p>A young person may refuse to attend school or starts to have difficulty concentrating so their schoolwork is affected</p> <p>They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities</p> <p>They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age</p> <p>The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person</p>
Neglect	<p>Abandonment</p> <p>Unattended medical needs</p> <p>Consistent lack of supervision</p>	<p>Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep during activities</p> <p>Steals food, begs from other children</p> <p>Reports that there is no carer at home</p>

	<p>Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene</p> <p>Lice, distended stomach, emaciated</p> <p>Inadequate nutrition</p>	<p>Frequently absent or late</p> <p>Self-destructive</p> <p>School drop out(adolescents)</p> <p>Extreme loneliness and need for affection</p>
Emotional abuse	<p>Delayed physical development.</p> <p>Substance abuse</p> <p>Ulcers, severe allergies</p> <p>Speech disorders</p>	<p>Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting), antisocial, disruptive</p> <p>Neurotic traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play)</p> <p>Passive and aggressive behavioural extremes</p> <p>Delinquent behaviour (especially adolescents) Developmentally delayed</p>

Many symptoms of distress in a child can point to abuse, but there are other explanations too. This has sometimes been the reason for falsely accusing parents of abuse.

It is important that the above signs are not taken as indicating that abuse has taken place, but that the possibility should be seriously considered. They should make us stop and think—not jump to conclusions inappropriately.

3. Guidelines for when a child tells us they have been abused

It is not easy to give precise guidance, but the following general points may be of help:

Above all else, **listen, listen, and listen!**

- Keep calm, and show acceptance of what the child says, however unlikely it seems.
- Let them know you will need to tell someone else - don't promise confidentiality.
- Be aware the child may have been threatened.
- Never push for information. If the child decides not to tell you after all, then accept that and let the child know that you are always ready to listen.
- Avoid leading the child and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said- you might put something into their mind that was not there. If the case were to end up in court, the case could be thrown out if it is thought that the child had been led.

Helpful things you might say or convey:

- I am glad you have told me
- It's not your fault
- I will help you

In conclusion:

- Reassure the child that they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens. You might have to consider referring to social services or the police to prevent the child returning home if you consider them to be seriously at risk of further abuse).
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the child talking to you, but always within 24 hours), writing down exactly what the child said and when they said it, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity). Record dates and times, including when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and always within 24 hours.

4. Responding to concerns of abuse

If you suspect or witness abuse, or someone discloses information about a safeguarding concern or allegation:

- If a child is in immediate danger or emergency medical attention is necessary then this should, of course, be sought immediately, informing the doctors of any suspicions you may have.
- You must contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) immediately. Please refer to the end of this policy for contact details. If the allegation is against your ministry area leader, please contact the PSO.
At all stages in the reporting process, you retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer. (For contact numbers see the section at the end of this policy).
- Under no circumstances should a church volunteer or employee investigate concerns of abuse themselves. Our responsibility is, in consultation with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DSO), to refer concerns to statutory authorities who will do the investigating required.
- Apart from telling the PSO, this information must be treated as confidential. Do not inform or confront any alleged perpetrator under any circumstances.
- You should also consider your own feelings and ask your ministry area leader for pastoral support if needed.

Even if you may feel the child's story is unlikely, this must not prevent appropriate action being taken. For example, a child may say that they have been abused by a younger person. In reality, the

perpetrator could be a parent or a close relative, but naming another person may be the only way in which this child can seek help.

5. Procedures for responding to abuse—outcomes

When a safeguarding concern is reported to the Diocesan safeguarding officer (DSO) by a ministry area leader or PSO:

If the DSO advises **further action**, the ministry area leader/PSO must act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given.

If the DSO advises **no further action** required, this is not the end of the process. The PSO or the relevant ministry area leader must arrange a further meeting in the parish to discuss whether alternative action should be taken or whether support is required.

This meeting should include the PSO and the Vicar, and they can involve others as necessary, including church wardens, pastoral counsellors, and the relevant ministry area leader.

Guidelines for responding to a disclosure of historic abuse

In the course of their work ministers and those offering pastoral support may hear disclosure from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.

The church is required to take advice from the diocese and may need to report allegations or disclosures of criminal acts to the Police.

SUMMARY

When someone tells you they have been abused, or have committed abuse, whether recently or many years ago:

General points:

- Above all else, listen.
- Keep calm, and show understanding/acceptance of what is said, however unlikely it seems. Reassure the individual that they were right to tell you.
- Never push for information. Avoid leading questions and ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
- Let the individual know what you are going to do next and that you will keep them informed. Let them know that you will need to tell someone else—don't promise confidentiality.
- Tell the PSO as soon as possible and always within 24 hours
- Record clearly, if possible, within an hour of the disclosure.
- Do not tell anyone else!

Action you must then take:

You must contact the Parish Safeguarding officer and tell them what you know (you do not need to disclose any names at this stage unless told otherwise). If the allegation is against your ministry area leader, contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer.

- You retain the right to report serious matters directly to social services or the police. Even so, as soon as possible (and within 24 hours), you must also contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- Apart from telling the PSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with co-leaders, Bible study leaders or other church members.
- Under no circumstances should you investigate concerns of abuse yourself.
- The contact details for the PSO can be found at the end of this document.
- Make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour, but always within 24hours), writing down exactly what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation). Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Keep all hand-written notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept for an indefinite period in a secure place. A copy of these notes must be passed onto the Parish Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible and always within 24 hours.
- Consider your own feelings and ask your ministry area leader for pastoral support if needed and consider with your ministry area leader what pastoral support is needed for the individual involved.

Ministry Areas where care for Children is provided:

Sunday Morning Service 10.00am	Rev Tom Hutchings
Sunday Morning Service 11.30am	Rev Robbie Strachan
Sunday Evening Service	Rev Tom Hutchings
Children's Activities	Rev Tom Hutchings
Youth Group	James Townsend
Bounce A Round	Ruth Oakley

Contact Numbers

If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child, or the care that is being provided

OR

You need to talk to someone about something in our church that isn't right or has upset you

Please get in touch with:

Mary Burdett
Children's Advocate
01223 364458

Sarah Robinson
Safeguarding Officer
07803619872

Piyush Jani
Deputy Officer
07742118754

If you would rather speak to someone outside of the church, please see the contacts below or visit the Diocese Safeguarding website:

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor
Rebecca Boswell
T: 07904 487912
rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
Sarah King
T: 01353 652 735
sarah.king@elydiocese.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor (Part-time)
Sharon Gage
T: 01353652731
sharon.gage@elydiocese.org

Where immediate danger is likely

Call 999

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AS THEY ARRIVE AND DEPART

Transition of children from parents/guardians to caregivers

The St Andrew The Great Church safeguarding policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of the leaders of the advertised activity. This time period is clearly marked at the beginning and end by a formal system of hand-over between parents/guardians and the leaders. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children once they have been collected from their groups or returned to them by leaders.

Registering

All children and leaders present in each group must be registered. Completed registers will be filed and kept secure for an indefinite period. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come, then the church can immediately find who was present on any given date.

A child registration form must be filed for each child in crèche/Sunday school. These forms should be filled out by a parent/guardian and available in registration folders for the leaders to consult. Leaders should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their specific group.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN WHILST THEY ARE IN OUR CARE

Caregiver ratios

Two leader rule: two leaders must be present in each room at all times.

It is not necessary for the two leaders to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, children should not be left unattended in a room. At other times with some planning this scenario need not occur.

In addition to always having two leaders present, we have adopted the Church of England's **minimum** requirements which are:

Each group should have at least two workers, even for smaller groups, and if possible one male and one female. Staff ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. For example, staffing numbers would need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with disabilities or special needs are involved. Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested but the individual group may have fewer adults.

Age of children	Number of adults	Number of children
0-2 years old	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	8
9-12	1	8
13-18	1	10

If there are not enough leaders turning up on the day, the leaders must either:

- recruit another DBS-screened individual to help or;
- meet in the same venue as other screened leaders, in full view of those assisting.

For all groups and activities:

- Undertake a health and safety risk assessment.
- A registration form must be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities which should include up to- date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and any special needs.
- An attendance register must be kept and be available at all group meetings.
- A first aid kit must be available on any premises that are used by children.
- An accident and incident logbook must be available, and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Any significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between children). There should be access to a telephone, if possible.
- In premises where children's groups meet, the Childline and Family Lives telephone numbers should be displayed.
- Parents must sign a consent form before children are transported in a private car and before any photography or images are taken.

In addition, when taking children offsite:

- 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/s 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.
- Details of the activity and arrangements must be given to the incumbent and/or PSO.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken, and confirmation obtained that the activity is covered by PCC insurance.
- A leader must be designated to take responsibility for first aid.

Discipline

All caregivers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating them from the group for a brief time (particularly if his behaviour is endangering or upsetting other children).

Leaders should never use any form of physical punishment. If behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents/guardians will be contacted. Leaders should never yell at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

Acceptable touch

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is wholly appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

- Always ask permission.
- Be mindful of your body position.
- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the worker's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church helper.

Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.

- Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g when they need medical attention).

In addition:

You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.

- You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability
- You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
- You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
- You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

Can I have a child sit on my lap when we're all sitting on the floor?

You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.

Can I play rough and tumble games with children?

Yes, you may—as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Bear in mind that the chummier you are with children in this way, the less likely you are to have any authority in their eyes. Remember too that they are not as strong as you.

Can I hold hands with a child?

Yes, you may if there is a clear reason to do so—as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Reason could include walking a child across a road, or to the bathroom, playing a game requiring hands held. For younger children this might happen frequently. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

Can I ever hug a child?

Yes, you may if a child is clearly distressed—as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. There may be other occasions when this might be appropriate, like

congratulating them. Bear in mind your normal character—if you rarely hug anyone you should probably not ever hug a child in your care. If hugging is one way you interact with all kinds of people you might need to rein yourself in a bit but not necessarily completely. Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the worker's, and should be age- appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the worker. Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.

Can I ever tickle a child?

It is difficult to see why a child would need to be tickled by a caregiver. It is best avoided when acting as a leader. This is not to say that a child should not be tickled but there is a time and a place.

Can I ever physically restrain a child?

Yes. If a child is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should be required rarely.

Can I take a picture of a child in my care?

No. Leaders must never take any pictures of children they are caring for unless they have received explicit permission from the child's parents / guardians. For the avoidance of doubt, leaders must also never post any pictures of the children in their care on social media platforms including but not limited to Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and or Snapchat.

Toileting

A caregiver may change the nappy for any baby if required. If a preschool or school-aged child requires assistance in going to the toilet, it is best for assistance to be given by a caregiver of the same gender where possible. The caregiver should wait outside the closed cubicle door unless the child requires assistance. The cubical door must not be closed with the caregiver and child inside. The child and caregiver must wash their hands with soap before returning to the class group. School-aged children should be able to take themselves to the toilet without assistance.

Food

(requires completion - will vary in different groups)

Food for a specific child must not be shared with any other child. Some children in our care have severe allergies to certain foods and giving them the wrong food could be serious.

Risk management/illness/accidents

Leaders should consider the health and safety of all children and helpers when organising activities or planning games.

Children with infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the children's groups. If a young person appears ill whilst in the church's care, leaders will use their discretion to determine whether the young person should be isolated from other young people by a leader (who will remain with them), and whether parents/guardians should be contacted to collect their child.

A basic first aid kit must be readily available at all times. All leaders should be familiar with its location. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called first and the parents will be located and informed immediately. Leaders will report all injuries, whether major or minor to Tom Hutchings (tom.hutchings@stag.org).

Leaders should be familiar with evacuation procedures, including where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound.

****Requires final PCC approval at next meeting**

Reviewed in July 2020