

CHURCH POLICY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with all the policies set out on the Diocese of Ely Safeguarding Policy and Procedures website: <http://www.elydiocese.org/safeguarding>, including:

- **The Church of England Policy 'Promoting a Safer Church', which is included as PCC Policy 4a**
- **Church of England Practice Guidance: Responding to Safeguarding Concerns or Allegations that relate to Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

It should also be read in conjunction with the following PCC policies:

- **Code of Practice for Those Working with Children and Young People**
- **Digital Communication Policy**
- **Use of Photographic Images**
- **Reporting Serious Incidents**
- **Code of Practice for the use of Audio and Video Recordings to be Used in Social Media Posts and Live Streaming.**

Introduction

We are committed to safeguarding all those who attend the worship and other activities that we offer. We follow the House of Bishops' Policy 'Protecting All God's Children' (2010); the House of Bishops' document Promoting a Safe Church (Policy for Safeguarding Vulnerable adults in the Church of England) 2006 and the Diocese of Ely Policy and Procedures (2015) and The Church of England Practice Guidance: Safer Recruitment (2015).

We believe that Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe. The church is particularly called by God to support those less powerful and without a voice in our society and to create a safe and non-discriminatory environment

We seek to create a culture where everyone is included, respected, listened to, and taken seriously. We accept the prime duty of care for children and vulnerable adults, and have appointed a Parish Safeguarding Officer to ensure that what we do is informed by up-to-date policies and procedures from local and national authorities. We have also appointed a Children's Advocate to promote the interests and needs of children in our work.

We follow recommended safeguarding practice in recruiting, training and supporting our ordained and lay ministers, our employees and our volunteers. Recruitment includes Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for those working regularly or substantially with children and/or vulnerable adults. Health and safety policies are in place and we have provided adequate insurance cover for all activities undertaken in the name of the parish. All those working on behalf of the parish must agree to comply with the safeguarding policy and Code of Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young People

We respond without delay to any complaint that a child or vulnerable adult in our care may have been harmed by the behaviour of an employee or volunteer working on behalf of the church. We always seek advice on such matters from outside this church, and we will co-operate with statutory agencies during any enquiries they need to make into allegations against a member of the church community. During those enquiries we will do our best to ensure that those making an allegation, and those against whom an allegation is made, are supported appropriately.

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We seek to offer informed pastoral care and support to any child or adult whose life has been affected by abuse, whether the abuse was recent or long ago. Where there is a current risk to vulnerable people that has not yet been brought to light, we support the person who has suffered abuse in taking information to the appropriate agencies.

This church wishes to welcome and support all members of its community. Those who have a history of offences against children or vulnerable adults, and/or who may pose a risk to them are offered a supportive agreement to help them take part in church life; they are supported pastorally, and boundaries are set to protect those who might be vulnerable within the church. Confidential safeguarding agreements are the responsibility of the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and the incumbent, who work together.

We regularly review and update our safeguarding policy, and we welcome comments from those using our services on how we could improve our awareness and safeguarding practices.

Specific Policies for Safeguarding Children 0-18 yrs and Vulnerable Adults 18-24 yrs

In this parish we will:

- Create a culture of '**informed vigilance**,' which takes children seriously.
- Pay particular attention to children with special needs, those from ethnic minorities and vulnerable adults (18 – 24) to ensure their full integration and protection within the church community.
- Display the Policy Statement, names of Parish Safeguarding Officer and Children's Advocate and "Childline" telephone number in church and at activities.
- Ensure that all those authorised to work with children and young people or in a position of authority are appropriately appointed (see Recruitment of Volunteers' Policy), trained and supported.
- All leaders and volunteers working with children and young people are required to abide strictly to the PCC Safeguarding Policy; 'Diocese of Ely Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the Church of England's [Code of Safer Working Practice.pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org) ([churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)). We will ensure all leaders and volunteers have access to these documents.
- Review the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, procedures and good practice, at least annually.

Specific Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Over 24 years

In this parish, we recognise that vulnerable people should be treated with respect and dignity and we will do what we can to support them and to uphold their right to live as independent a life as possible and to be able to choose how they live it. In particular:

- We recognise that everyone has different levels of vulnerability and that each of us may be regarded as vulnerable at some time in our lives.
- We commit ourselves to the safeguarding of people who may be vulnerable, ensuring their well-being in the life of this church.
- We commit ourselves to promoting safe practice by those in positions of trust.
- We commit ourselves to promoting the inclusion and empowerment of people who may be vulnerable.
- It is the responsibility of each of us to prevent the physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse of vulnerable people and to report any such abuse that we discover or suspect.

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- The parish is committed to supporting, resourcing, training and regularly reviewing those who undertake work amongst people who may be vulnerable.
- Each person who works with vulnerable people will agree to abide by these recommendations and the guidelines established by this church.

Guidelines for Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults.

We adopt the policies and guidelines of the Diocese of Ely for those working with Children and Vulnerable Adults as set out in Appendix 1

Appendix 1 Diocese of Ely Guidelines for Work with Children, Teenagers and Vulnerable Adults

As far as possible, avoid working in one-to-one situations with children or vulnerable adults. Make sure there is a colleague within earshot. Try to have a man and a woman at each mixed-age activity. Leaders of activities should not use alcohol whilst on duty.

Those undertaking one-to-one counselling or pastoral work must adhere to the highest standards of conduct, and should have received appropriate training. Know your own level of competence, and do not step beyond it; if a situation becomes difficult, seek advice straight away. Be clear at the start what you and the person you are working with are planning to achieve by meeting, and the limits of what you can offer. Meet at an agreed time, in a place that affords an ability to talk confidentially without being secretively 'tucked away', and let a colleague know that you are meeting, and why. If you are working with a child, make sure that the parent/carer is aware of the meeting.

At the first meeting, explain that the conversation will be confidential unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the person is being harmed, if they are harming others or if they know that a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed, the information will have to be passed on. If this level of confidentiality is not acceptable, try to arrange access to an appropriate anonymous telephone helpline; do not be tempted to promise absolute confidentiality.

When working in sensitive situations or 1:1, keep a written record of the session, properly dated (including year). Where there are potential safeguarding issues, make a written record (include date, time and signature), and seek advice.

Socially acceptable physical contact in a public place is quite proper and appropriate where it can be readily seen by others and is not hidden away. Physical contact should be:

- Minimal
- Intended to meet the needs of the receiver rather than the giver
- Understood and welcomed by the receiver
- Open to the scrutiny of others

It is important to respect each individual's sense of personal space. Avoid playing rough games or making provocative or 'teasing' comments, even in fun.

It is equally important not to be paranoid about responding to someone who is clearly in need of physical contact e.g. when injured or distressed. Use cautious common sense, keep contact minimal, and create an ethos of shared scrutiny and support in the workplace.

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In children's work, keep an up-to-date register of all children attending a group: home address, telephone number and names of parents/carers should be included. The register should be taken for each session, and the record of attendance should be kept on file for a minimum of three years.

The ratio of adults to children must be sufficient to ensure safety and comply with the requirements of current Government policy and legislation. These requirements are particularly relevant to work with children under the age of eight. For the latest guidance and registration requirements, you can call Ofsted's helpline on 0845 601 4771, or speak to the Diocesan Children & Families Adviser.

All U18s (except where an U18 is married) need to provide a parental consent form when they join a group or activity. A shorter form is used for an activity when parents are present all the time.

Children may attend worship or other activities unaccompanied by an adult. Where this is the case, try to establish if parents know where the child is and what time s/he is expected home. If necessary, encourage the child to leave at the appropriate time to get home for this deadline. If a child is joining a regular activity, record his/her name, age, and address on a registration form and ask the child to bring it back signed next time. Make every effort to establish contact with the parents, particularly of a younger child, by sending information home or providing a church telephone number or email address for them to call. No child can be taken on a trip away from the church site without a parental consent form.

With vulnerable adults, if there is a carer or key-worker, try to establish a line of communication with them. Keep a note of those who have responsibility for the vulnerable adult and who can give advice where necessary about how to include the adult's individual needs in church activities.

The premises used should be safe and well maintained. Seek advice if necessary on the latest Health and Safety regulations, including appropriate risk assessments for activities and outings. Keep a suitably stocked First Aid kit always accessible. Where children's activities are offered, obtain a special children's First Aid kit in addition to the standard adult one. Ideally, one or more of the workers on the premises should be trained in First Aid (for children and adults). Make sure that all planned activities, on or off site, are covered by an adequate insurance policy.

Workers must be prepared to listen attentively and supportively to those for whom they have a duty of care. If someone makes a complaint or an allegation about the behaviour of someone within the church or the community, listen carefully without making a judgement on how plausible what you are hearing might be. If a complaint is made about someone in the church, this must ALWAYS be referred outside the church for advice about how to proceed. Contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or Diocesan Safeguarding Officer for help.

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Safeguarding Statement

The following statement will be displayed in our churches and other premises, and (without photographs) on our website, in our handbooks and in other relevant publications.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

In this Parish, we are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of the children within our church community and we believe that Christian communities should be places where all people feel welcomed, respected and safe. We are therefore committed to safeguarding all those who attend the worship and other activities that we offer.

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Our Parish Safeguarding Officer is:



Mrs Jo Proctor and she may be contacted on:

Telephone: 07388 470207

Email: llm@stmarysburwell.org.uk

Our Safeguarding Administrator is Mrs Dee Smith

Childline Number is 0800 1111

SIGNED

Revd Canon Dr Eleanor Williams

4th May 2024