

**St. Peter's Church, Maney**  
**Safeguarding Policy and Procedures 2023**

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The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of the whole church. Everyone who participates in the life of the church has a role to play in promoting a safer church for all. All Bodies and Officers of St. Peter's Church must follow this Policy and these Procedures.

This Policy is based on the document 'A Safer Church' published by the Church of England House of Bishops in 2017.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Child** - is aged from birth to 14th birthday.

**Young Person** - aged between 14th and 18th birthdays.

**Vulnerable Adult** - a person aged 18 or over whose ability to protect himself or herself from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, old age, emotional fragility or distress, or otherwise; and for that purpose, the reference to being impaired is to being temporarily or indefinitely impaired. Note an adult may not consider themselves vulnerable. (Definition taken from Section 6 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.)

**Church Bodies** - the PCC, committees and organisations run by or on behalf of the church, such as youth and children's groups.

**Church Officers** - anyone appointed or elected by the church to a post or role, whether ordained, lay, paid or unpaid.

**PCC** - the Parochial Church Council of St. Peter's Church, Maney, Sutton Coldfield.

## **POLICY**

### **1 Gospel**

The church is called to share the good news of God's salvation through Jesus Christ. The good news speaks of welcome for all, with a particular regard for those who are most vulnerable, into a community where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed and those in positions of responsibility and authority are truly trustworthy. Being faithful to our call to share the gospel therefore compels us to take with the utmost seriousness the challenge of preventing abuse from happening and responding well where it has.

### **2 Human Rights and the Law**

The church recognises the personal dignity and rights of all children, young people and adults, as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

All safeguarding work is undertaken within a legislative framework, taking into account national and local guidance and services.

### **3 Church Law**

Under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016, all authorised clergy, licensed readers and lay workers, churchwardens and PCCs must have due regard to safeguarding guidance issued by the House of Bishops.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **1 Promoting a Safer Environment and Culture**

All Church Officers will respect all children, young people and vulnerable adults and promote their wellbeing.

Church Bodies will strive to create and maintain environments that are safer for all, that promote well-being, that prevent abuse, and that create nurturing, caring conditions within the church for children, young people and vulnerable adults. They will work to continue to strengthen and review these environments. This will be done by training, support, communication learning, governance and quality assurance processes.

The church will strive to support all Church Officers to adhere to safer working, good practice and to challenge the abuse of power. It will ensure that processes are in place that listen to and advocate on behalf of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the knowledge that they will be cared for.

Inappropriate comments or behaviour by church members should be challenged - for example racist statements or jokes about domestic abuse. Healthy relationships can be discussed and encouraged - for example in marriage preparation sessions or youth groups.

### **1.1 Governance and Roles**

**Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** - a check that can be made of a person's criminal record and police history, for certain church paid and volunteer roles

The Diocese of Birmingham appoints:

a **Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser (BSA)** who is the first point of contact for concerns about individuals and will draw up the Safeguarding Agreement for any known offenders in the congregation.

a **Safeguarding Team** who organise training and will answer any other general safeguarding queries. If a person's DBS check shows any previous convictions, this team will review the certificate and will decide whether a person can take up the role applied for.

The PCC will appoint:

A **Safeguarding Lead** - usually the Vicar, who will:

- complete and retain the Confidential Declaration with applicants for paid and volunteer roles;
- receive references sent in for volunteers and paid staff;
- be the main point of referral for any safeguarding concerns in the church or concerning church members;
- usually be the person to refer safeguarding concerns to the BSA or statutory authorities.

During an interregnum the **Area Dean** will take on this role.

A **Safeguarding Co-ordinator** who will:

- draft policy and procedures and update these regularly (to be approved by the PCC). Minor updates will be made every year and a fuller review carried out every three years;
- maintain lists of staff and volunteers, DBS check status (if appropriate) and dates of any training undertaken;
- apply for references, on behalf of the Vicar, for new church officers.

This person may also be the **Parish Identity Verifier**, who will:

- arrange for staff and volunteers to complete DBS checks if appropriate, and will check identification documents as part of this

A **Children's Advocate**, who will be a member of the PCC and the Children's Team, and will speak up for the interests of children and young people in committee discussions and elsewhere in church life.

A **Vulnerable Adults' Advocate**, who will be a member of PCC and the Care Team, and will speak up for the interests of vulnerable adults in committee discussions and elsewhere in church life.

A **Health and Safety Officer** who will put procedures in place to ensure the physical Health and Safety of all church members, for example first aid and fire evacuation procedures.

The **Standing Committee** of PCC will consider safeguarding as an agenda item at each of its meetings and will refer any concerns or matters requiring consideration to the full PCC.

The **Children's Team** will, as part of its remit, consider safeguarding issues relating to children and young people. It will appoint Co-ordinators for Sunday groups.

The **Care Team** will, as part of its remit, consider safeguarding issues relating to vulnerable adults.

The **Parish Office** will ensure that: where organisations or individuals book church premises for activities for children, young people or vulnerable adults, they either provide a copy of their own safeguarding policy, or undertake to follow this policy.

## **1.2 Safer Working and Good Practice**

Church Officers leading or helping with a group for children, young people or vulnerable adults should:

- keep and process any personal data about children, young people or vulnerable adults in accordance with **GDPR**;
- where children are left without parents, have access to emergency contact and medical details for the child;
- ensure the environment is safe before inviting children, young people or vulnerable adults to a group or commencing an activity;
- when planning a new activity or taking children to a new location, such as outside the church, consider all risks - off-site visits such as day trips away must be approved by the PCC in advance;
- familiarise themselves with the locations of fire alarms, extinguishers and exits, first aid boxes and accident and incident books. Knowledge of first aid is always useful. The church has a defibrillator, the code is C34579 or call 999 for the access code.
- complete the accident book if any injuries are sustained;
- ensure there are a minimum of two adults with every group. The ratio of adults to children and young people should be as follows:

Children aged under 3 - the parents retain responsibility and should remain with their child

Children aged 3 - 8 maximum of 6 children for every adult

Children aged 9 - 12 maximum of 8 children for every adult

Young people aged 13 - 18 - maximum of 10 children for every adult

Higher risk activities such as any activity outdoors may need more adult helpers.

- ensure that children and young people are collected by or return to their own parents or carers at the end of a session, and that the handover point where the parents take back responsibility is clear. Where arrangements have been made for a different person to collect a child, the leader should be informed of the person's name in advance;
- treat individuals with respect and dignity, ensuring their own words are respectful and not prejudiced;

- maintain confidentiality in discussions - but recognise that if a safeguarding issue is raised, confidentiality may not be possible;
- take care to keep personal life and church duties separate.

Church officers leading or helping with a group for children, young people or vulnerable adults should not:

- take part in any personal care such as toileting or feeding. If a child or adult can not use the toilet independently, their parent or carer must accompany them;
- use any form of physical punishment;
- be sexually suggestive even as a joke;
- scapegoat or ridicule anyone;
- permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies or bullying;
- show favouritism;
- allow unknown adults e.g. guest speakers without supervision;
- initiate physical contact - though it is appropriate to respond warmly if someone needs comforting - any physical contact should be age appropriate, public and where possible led by the child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- transport a child or children in a car on behalf of the church (this may be permitted in certain circumstances such as organised trips, but please discuss with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator if this is planned, as certain conditions must be followed);
- smoke or drink alcohol whilst leading a group;
- socialise with members outside organised group activities (unless leaders and parents are pre-existing family friends).

Recreational drugs or weapons are never permitted on church premises, in church groups or used by group leaders or members. Please see the Policy on Drugs and Weapons for further details.

### **1.3 Visiting Vulnerable Adults at Home**

Church Officers may visit vulnerable adults at home, whether to deliver Home Communion or of general pastoral visiting. In these cases Church Officers should:

- if possible visit as a pair, especially a first visit to an address;
- call by appointment if possible;
- be clear and realistic about what support can be offered;
- obtain the person's permission before referring them to any external agencies;
- place any donations offered to the church in an envelope, pass to the Treasurer and ask for a receipt to be sent;
- report back to the Care Team on the date visited and the welfare of the person visited;
- refer any safeguarding concerns to the Vicar.

Church Officers should not:

- administer any medical or personal care (e.g. feeding, toileting, dressing);
- accept any gifts other than token items.

Church Officers may transport vulnerable adults in their own car only on the basis of a personal friendship. If Church Officers wish to transport vulnerable adults in an official capacity on behalf of the church, this should be discussed in advance with the Safeguarding Coordinator, as there are certain requirements relating to insurance and DBS checks which must be fulfilled.

#### **1.4 Young Helpers**

Young people aged 16 and 17 may be involved with groups as helpers or junior leaders. The law permits these young people to undergo DBS checks; however St. Peter's will not carry out checks on young people until they reach the age of 18.

No-one under 18 should be responsible for a group. They should work under the direction of an adult leader. They are still regarded as young people not adults and so are subject to safeguarding measures under this policy. They should not be counted in the ratios for adults to children given in 1.2 above.

Once a young leader reaches the age of 18, advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Co-ordinator as to whether the role is eligible for a DBS check.

#### **1.5 Photographs and videos**

All information below also applies to voice recordings and any other images or recordings.

Church Officers who take any photographs or videos on behalf of the church, which include children other than their own, should follow the following guidelines:

- photos/videos should only be taken of children and young people where consent has been obtained from their parents. Signed consent forms are kept by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the Sunday Group leader. They can also supply blank forms for new members;
- vulnerable adults do not need to give written consent before photographs/videos of them are used; however their verbal agreement should be sought and care should be taken if full names are ever used, that this does not put the adult in an increased position of vulnerability;
- where photographs/videos are taken on personal devices (phones etc) they should be stored in a computer folder set up especially for church photographs. They should not be kept alongside personal photographs/videos;
- names of children and young people should not generally be used with photographs/videos. Occasional exceptions to this may be appropriate, for example names and photographs of young people confirmed might be given in the magazine;
- during live streamed services, there should be a 'film free area' which ensures people can be free from being filmed. This area will be the main body of the church. The camera must be pointed away from those receiving communion.
- permission must be sought from all young people and adults of the age of 16 (or the parents/guardians of those under 16) if they will be appearing on live stream. See our live streaming policy for more information.

- general photographs/videos of the whole congregation may occasionally be taken for particular parish events and these may incidentally include children, without specific consent being required;
- individuals of any age should be able to exclude themselves from group photographs/videos if they do not wish to be photographed/videoed;
- photographs/videos of children and adults should only be taken by Church Officers acting on behalf of the church and for specific purposes, for example use in the magazine or on the church website.
- other members of the church should only take photographs/videos of their own family members and personal friends at church events or on church premises;
- the PCC recognises that some Looked After children must not be photographed/videoed in a public place and their images must not be used on the internet, for safeguarding reasons. Church Officers must respect the wishes of parents or carers in these situations.

A copy of the filming and photography policy can be found here, [St Peter's Church, Maney | Filming and Photography \(stpetersmaney.org.uk\)](http://stpetersmaney.org.uk).

## **1.6 Social Media**

If social media is used to communicate with children and young people:

- an official church account not a personal one should be used;
- children and young people accessing the site must follow age guidelines (minimum age of 13 for many sites);
- children and young people should not be befriended on a personal account;
- group messaging should be used where possible, and parents included where appropriate;
- anything that could be misinterpreted should be avoided;
- consider confidentiality and safeguarding if making any personal social media post referring to work for the church.
- social media messages should be regarded as being permanent and in writing.

## **1.7 Consensual Relationships**

Although the legal Age of Consent is 16, a Church Officer who has a sexual or personal relationship with a young person under the age of 18 is in a position of trust with regards to that young person, and should be aware that they are breaking the law (Sexual Offences Act 2003 - Abuse of Position of Trust).

## **1.8 Publicising Information on Safeguarding**

The PCC will ensure that safeguarding information is easily accessible to all church members, prior members and visitors. Information will be available:

- by link directly from the home page of the church's website;
- on a poster in church, giving names and contact details of key people;
- a copy of this Policy kept in the Policies folder in church;

- information on external organisations will also be provided, such as social services and voluntary groups;
- a copy of the policy (printed or electronic) will be distributed to anyone who requests it.

## **2. Safely Recruiting and Supporting all those with any Responsibility Related to Children and Vulnerable Adults Within the Church**

### **2.1 Recruitment - Application Process and Role Descriptions**

The PCC will follow the following procedures when recruiting new Church Officers to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Paid staff will be recruited by:

- advertisements will be placed;
- applicants will be shortlisted, interviewed and references taken up;
- if appropriate to the role, a DBS check will be carried out and renewed every three years - arranged by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator;
- staff will also be required to complete a Confidential Declaration form;
- see also section 6, the Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders.

New members of PCC are Charity Trustees and are required to have a DBS check and complete a Confidential Declaration form.

Volunteers to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are recruited by:

- for children's Sunday groups and Messy Church by the group co-ordinators, overseen by the Vicar;
- Pastoral Visitors by the Care Team coordinator, or the Vicar;
- Home Communion Assistants by the Vicar or Readers.

The Church Officers listed above will give prospective volunteers an application form and written role description. The volunteers will complete the application form, which will include the names and contact details of two referees, and will return to the Church Officer.

The Church Officer will keep the applicant's details in accordance with the church's Data Protection Policy and will pass names, contact details and referee details to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (a photocopy of the application form may be used for this purpose).

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will:

- send for the references, asking for them to be returned to the Vicar;
- establish if a DBS check and Confidential Declaration need to be completed, and if so arrange for this to take place;
- liaise with the Church Officers mentioned above and the Vicar, to establish when checks have been completed and so when a new volunteer can begin their role;
- arrange for renewals of DBS checks when necessary.



Where a DBS check or references indicate any concerns, the volunteer will not take up their duties until discussions have taken place with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, and a decision made as to whether the volunteer or member of staff is permitted to undertake the role applied for.

Other church volunteers not working with children, young people or vulnerable adults are not required to follow these procedures, for example coffee rota, grounds maintenance team, church cleaners.

## **2.2 Training**

Church Officers are required to complete training at certain levels as required by the Diocese, and to refresh this training at intervals.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator will maintain records of dates of training attended for Church Officers, and will remind officers when they need to renew their training.

Church Officers are individually responsible for completing online training, or booking to attend face to face training within the Diocese, as required.

## **3. Responding Promptly to Every Safeguarding Concern or Allegation**

Anyone who brings any safeguarding suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of current or non-current abuse to the notice of the church will be responded to respectfully and in a timely manner, in line with statutory child and adult safeguarding procedures and the House of Bishops safeguarding policy and practice guidance.

### **3.1 Categories of Abuse**

The PCC recognises the following categories of abuse:

**Physical** - hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions, female genital mutilation;

**Emotional/Psychological** - conveying to someone that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another, bullying including cyber-bullying, threat of abandonment, harassment;

**Sexual** - rape, sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact and touching, encouraging children to look at or produce sexual images, watching sexual activity, grooming, sexual exploitation and blackmail, giving someone drugs or alcohol to encourage them to engage in sexual activity;

**Financial** - theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure over a will, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;

**Neglect** - failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or heating, failure to protect a child from other forms of abuse, to provide adequate supervision or access to appropriate medical care;

**Discriminatory** - including racist, sexist, disability, sexual orientation and any form of harassment or slurs;

**Organisational** - neglect and poor care practice within an institution or care setting;

**Modern Slavery** - human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude;

**Domestic abuse** can fall into any of the above categories but is abuse that takes place between members of a family, current or former intimate partners, of any age. The PCC recognises that domestic abuse can be well concealed within a church community, and that victims of domestic abuse can find it especially difficult to report or leave an abusive relationship. This is due to concerns over housing, money, access to children, reputation or standing within the community. A child who witnesses domestic abuse is themselves a victim of abuse.

### **3.2 Procedures where Abuse is Suspected**

- An emergency situation requiring the intervention of Police or Ambulance should be referred to 999 emergency services by any Church Officer or member;
- an urgent situation not requiring the emergency services may be referred directly to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for a child or young person, or Adult Social Services for a vulnerable adult, by any Church Officer or member;
- if either of the above situations concerns church officers or members, or occurs on church premises or as part of a church activity (e.g. a pastoral home visit), the Vicar as Safeguarding Lead should be informed as soon as possible.
- any other concern not requiring urgent attention should be discussed with the Vicar as Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and within 24 hours. If unsure, the case can be discussed without giving names to start with, if this appears appropriate;
- the Vicar will seek advice from the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser where appropriate;
- if there is concern about the Vicar, one of the Churchwardens should be contacted. They will liaise with the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser in this case;
- where the Vicar is absent for a period such as holiday or sickness, the Churchwardens should be contacted though if the absence is likely to be for more than a month, the Churchwardens can contact the Area Dean or Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser for assistance.
- the Safeguarding Co-ordinator can advise on policy and procedures but would not normally deal with concerns about individuals.

Whatever action is taken, the Vicar will record details and keep in a secure file. This will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Policy but note that sharing of information for Safeguarding purposes is permitted under the Data Protection Act 2018, and that safeguarding information may be kept for up to 75 years, so that cases of historic abuse can be investigated.

All Church Officers will co-operate with the statutory authorities in all cases.

In responding to concerns or allegations of abuse relating to Church Officers, the PCC and all Church Officers will act in accordance with the requirements of criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law, and so will respect the rights and uphold the safeguards afforded in these, both to the victim/survivor and the subject of concerns or allegations.

### **3.3 Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse**

If a disclosure or report of abuse is made to any Church Officer, they should:

- listen and take the concerns seriously;
- explain what will happen next;
- if the person potentially abused is a child or young person, explain that the information can not be kept secret and that details will have to be shared with certain people;
- explain that information will not be shared with anyone who does not need to know;
- if the person is an adult, ideally gain consent before sharing the information, but it can be shared without consent if there is any doubt as to whether the person concerned has Mental Capacity, or to protect them from harm;
- reassure them that telling someone was the right thing to do;
- make notes as soon as possible as to what has happened including dates and times, and pass to the Vicar;
- the procedure is the same whether the abuse took place very recently or a long time ago.

Church Officers should not:

- ask leading questions;
- attempt to investigate further e.g. by talking to the alleged abuser or asking to see any marks on the body;
- offer explanations or assumptions as to what happened.

## **4. Caring Pastorally for Victims and Survivors of Abuse and Other Affected Persons**

The church will endeavour to offer care and support to all those that have been abused, regardless of the type of abuse, when or where it occurred.

The church is committed to continuing to learn how to respond in a supportive and healing way to the needs of those who have suffered abuse. Those who have suffered abuse within the church will receive a compassionate response, be listened to and be taken seriously.

The church will respond to any disclosure of abuse by taking advice from the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and, where appropriate, in collaboration with the relevant statutory agencies in accordance with criminal, civil and ecclesiastical law.

Any person who has been abused will, if they wish, be referred to appropriate agencies for pastoral care, counselling and support, which may be inside or outside the church. The Diocese offers a Listening Service of trained volunteers who can be contacted via the Bishop's Chaplain - this service is available for adult survivors of abuse.

Any person who has been the victim of abuse should, in the first instance, contact the Vicar as Safeguarding Lead, or they may approach other Church Officers with whom they feel comfortable.

## **5. Caring Pastorally for Those who are the Subject of Concerns or Allegations of Abuse and Other Affected Persons**

Occasionally a Church Officer (including members of the clergy) may become the subject of suspicions, concerns or allegations of abuse. The church needs to take responsibility if there is any possibility that a Church Officer represents a risk to children, young people or vulnerable adults. The safety and protection of the child, young person or vulnerable adult must be assured.

A member of the clergy suspected of abuse will be subject to church disciplinary procedures and possibly the criminal justice system.

Where allegations concern a Church Officer who is not a member of the clergy, whether paid or a volunteer, the Vicar will seek advice from the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and, if appropriate, will refer the concern to MASH, Adult Social Services or the Police. The person concerned will be suspended from duties with children, young people or vulnerable adults while church and statutory investigations are carried out. The accused person, however, has a legal presumption of innocence which must be maintained during the criminal, civil and church inquiry processes.

Should the person be convicted of an offence, further activity in the church will be the subject of a Safeguarding Agreement as in Section 6.

The PCC recognises that, whatever the outcome, there will be a need to provide support to family members of Church Officers who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse. The period of investigation may last for many months and during that time the information that can be shared with the congregation will be limited.

## **6. Responding to Those that may Pose a Present Risk to Others**

The church, based on the message of the gospel, opens its doors to all. It will therefore endeavour to offer pastoral care and support to any member of the church community who may present a known risk. Where a known offender is a member of the church, the risk will be assessed and managed in a Safeguarding Agreement drawn up and co-ordinated by the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser, taking into account any probation arrangements in place for an individual. The Safeguarding Agreement may cover topics such as:

- any restrictions on the church services and events that a particular person may attend, and where they may sit within the church;

- any restrictions on roles the person may undertake within the church;
- who amongst church officers need to be aware, on a confidential basis, of information about an individual. The PCC recognises that such knowledge is a burden for those who hold it and they may need pastoral support and guidance.

The Safeguarding Agreement will continue and will be reviewed regularly until such time as the individual is regarded as being no longer a risk to any member of the church community - this decision is made by the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser and is independent of any probation service arrangements that are in place. The Agreement may continue throughout the lifetime of an offender.

The Agreement will seek to balance support to the convicted person to lead a fulfilled life, whilst reducing the risk of future abuse.

Where it becomes known that an offender or possible offender is attending church, the person discovering this should speak in confidence to the Vicar, who will seek advice from the Bishop's Safeguarding Adviser as appropriate, if this person is not already the subject of a Safeguarding Agreement.

#### **APPENDIX - Further Help and Guidance - Statutory and Voluntary Sources of Support**

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (safeguarding concerns about children and young people)

Office hours (0121) 303 1888

Out of hours emergencies (0121) 675 4806

Birmingham Adult Social Services

acap@birmingham.gov.uk

Office hours (0121) 303 1234

Out of hours emergencies (0121)675 4806

Childline – 0800 1111

Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247

LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline – 0300 999 54 28

Samaritans, [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org), phone 116 123

*Approved by PCC in September 2023*