

## **St Mary the Virgin Parish Church Safeguarding Policy Summary 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022**

**Details of the place of worship:** St Mary the Virgin, Willingdon  
Address: Church Street, Willingdon, Eastbourne, BN20 9HT  
Telephone number: 01323 501763

Parish Office email address: stmarys.willingdon.church@gmail.com

(Office hours: Tuesday to Saturday 9.30 to 12.30pm. Closed Mondays)

Membership of Denomination/Organisation: Church of England

St Mary the Virgin, Willingdon comes under the umbrella of the Diocese of Chichester

Charity number: 1133784

Insurance Company: Ecclesiastical Insurance

### **The following is a brief outline of the type of work and activities we undertake with children/vulnerable adults:**

Sunday and midweek worship and children's groups

Pastoral support and prayer ministry

Visiting: home, hospital and nursing home visits

Children's activities including

Kids on Sunday, Junior Church, Junior Serving Team, Junior Choir, Sonbeams, Messy Church, Roots and Shoots (after-school club)

Coffee mornings

Hearing Aid assistance

Contact Care (good neighbour scheme) including visiting, shopping and transporting adults to appointments

**The full Safeguarding Policy** is available from the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and should be read in conjunction with Policies for Safer Recruitment and The Safe Use of Mobile Technology.

## **Our Commitment**

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and adults in need of support, to protect them from harm and exploitation and protect their rights.

We acknowledge that children, young people and adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and also spiritual abuse. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to “all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child.”

As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to building constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding and to supporting those who have been harmed.

Our policy and practice guidelines are based on five foundations of safeguarding standards published by the Church of England for Promoting a Safer Church.

### **The Leadership undertakes to:**

- Endorse and follow all national and local safeguarding legislation and procedures, in addition to the international conventions outlined above.
- Provide on-going safeguarding training for all its workers and will review the guidelines annually.
- Ensure that the premises meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and all other relevant legislation, and that it is inclusive.
- Support the Safeguarding Coordinator in their work and in any action they may need to take in order to protect children and adults who may be at risk.
- The Leadership agrees not to allow the document to be copied by other organisations. Therefore only a summary will be posted on our website.

# Recognising and responding appropriately to allegations or suspicion of abuse

## Safeguarding Children/Young People

### Definition of a Child

The legal definition of a child is someone **under the age of 18**. Some legislation in the UK allows young people from age 16 to make certain decisions for themselves (e.g. getting married), but safeguarding legislation applies to anyone under the age of 18 because this is the legal definition of a child. The Children Act 1989 and 2004 in England and Wales, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 in Scotland and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 in Northern Ireland similarly define a child as someone under 18. Throughout this policy when we refer to a child our meaning (unless otherwise stated) is a person under the age of 18.

### What is Abuse and Neglect of Children?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, or via the internet. They may be abused by an adult, group of adults or another child or children.

There are **four recognised categories** of abuse based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (Revised 2015):

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse including bullying and cyberbullying (online)
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

There are also **other kinds of abuse** that are becoming increasingly well researched and documented:

- Online Abuse
- Spiritual Abuse
- Radicalisation
- Child Marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

### Signs of Abuse

#### Physical

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games or childhood play
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, scalds or fractures which do not have an accidental explanation\*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse\*

### **Sexual**

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia\*

### **Emotional**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying
- Self-Harming
- Eating disorders and self-harm including anorexia, bulimia\*

### **Neglect**

- Under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food,
- Untreated illnesses,
- Inadequate care

\*These may indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.

## **How to respond to a child/young person wishing to disclose abuse**

### **Effective Listening**

Ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child to talk in private **but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place**. It is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk. Above everything else listen without interrupting. Be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking

- Show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used.
- Try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different.
- Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality.
- If they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen.

- Use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language or Braille.
- Write detailed notes as soon as possible using the child/young person's own words.
- Report to the **Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Priest-in-Charge as soon as possible.**

#### **DON'T SAY**

- Don't ask leading questions e.g. Did mummy do this to you? Better to ask gently "What's happened here...?"
- Why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- Are you sure this is true?
- Why? How? When? Who? Where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else.

#### **HELPFUL RESPONSES**

- You have done the right thing in telling.
- I am glad you have told me.
- I will try to help you.

## **Safeguarding Adults at Risk**

### **Definition of an Adult at Risk/Adult in Need of Protection or Care and Support**

Any adult aged 18 or over who due to disability, mental function, age, illness or traumatic circumstances may not be able to take care or protect themselves against the risk of significant harm, abuse, bullying, harassment, mistreatment or exploitation.

### **What is Abuse of an Adult at Risk?**

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It comes from a misuse of power and control that someone has over another. Harm is the result of this mistreatment or abuse. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The abuse of adults can take many forms:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological or Emotional Abuse
- Financial or Material Abuse
- Neglect or Act of Omission
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Institutional or Organisational Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Cyber Abuse

- Self-Harm / Self-Neglect.
- Mate Crime
- Modern Slavery
- Human Trafficking
- Spiritual Abuse
- Radicalisation
- Honour marriage / forced marriage
- Historic Abuse

## **Signs of Possible Abuse in Adults**

### **Physical**

- A history of unexplained falls, fractures, bruises, burns, minor injuries
- Signs of under or over use of medication and/or medical problems unattended

### **Sexual**

- Pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- Unexplained change in behaviour or sexually implicit/explicit behaviour
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear and/or unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- Infections or sexually transmitted diseases
- Full or partial disclosure or hints of sexual abuse
- Self-harming

### **Psychological**

- Alteration in psychological state e.g. withdrawn, agitated, anxious, tearful
- Intimidated or subdued in the presence of the carer
- Fearful, flinching or frightened of making choices or expressing wishes
- Unexplained paranoia
- Self-harming

### **Financial or Material**

- Disparity between assets and living conditions
- Unexplained withdrawals from accounts or disappearance of financial documents
- Sudden inability to pay bills
- Carers or professionals fail to account for expenses incurred on a person's behalf
- Recent changes of deeds or title to property

### **Neglect or Omission**

- Malnutrition, weight loss and / or persistent hunger
- Poor physical condition, poor hygiene, varicose ulcers, pressure sores
- Being left in wet clothing or bedding and/or clothing in a poor condition
- Failure to access appropriate health, educational services or social care
- No callers or visitors

### **Discriminatory**

- Inappropriate remarks, comments or lack of respect
- Poor quality or avoidance of care

### **Institutional**

- Lack of flexibility or choice over meals, bed times, visitors, phone calls, etc.
- Inadequate medical care and misuse of medication
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Sensory deprivation e.g. denial of use of spectacles or hearing aids
- Missing documents and/or absence of individual care plans
- Public discussion of private matter
- Lack of opportunity for social, educational or recreational activity

### **Domestic Abuse**

- Domination and control
- Use of fear, shame and guilt to wear a person down
- Threats
- Verbal abuse
- Isolation from friends and family
- Victim experiences feelings of fear, helplessness, self-loathing, desperation

#### **Cyber Abuse**

- Harassment, receiving offensive/insulting messages
- Posting of derogatory information about a person
- Impersonation, hacking of email or social media accounts
- Cyberstalking

#### **Self-Harm / Self-Neglect**

- Dehydration, malnutrition, untreated medical conditions
- Poor personal hygiene
- Hazardous / unsafe / insanitary living conditions
- Inadequate clothing
- Lack of necessary medical aids
- Substance abuse

#### **Mate Crime**

- Changes in routine, behaviour, appearance
- Unexplained injuries
- Coercion into sexual acts
- Losing weight
- Unpaid bills
- Short of money, losing possessions, changing will
- Controlled by a 'friend'

#### **Modern Slavery**

- Malnourished, unkempt
- Isolated, controlled
- Poor living conditions
- Few or no personal effects
- Restricted Freedom of Movement
- Unusual travel times
- Reluctant to seek help

#### **Human Trafficking**

- Fear of police and authorities
- Signs of physical / psychological trauma
- Limited freedom of movement
- Unpaid or paid very little
- Limited access to medical care
- No passport
- Regularly moved to avoid detection

#### **Spiritual Abuse**

- Loss of sense of self- worth
- Loss of faith /difficulty trusting God
- Difficulty committing to a church
- Spiritual abuse may also have involved financial abuse

#### **Radicalisation**

- Sudden or gradual changes in physical appearance
- Sudden adoption of religious clothing
- Tattoos displaying various messages

- Sudden growth of beard/shaving of head
- Unexplained gifts
- Becoming socially withdrawn and isolated
- Dependent on internet and social media
- Attending extremist groups, rallies, demonstrations
- Displays hatred

#### **Honour marriage / forced marriage**

- Persistent absence from work
- Drop in performance
- Surveillance
- Self harm, depression, social isolation
- Accompanied by family members
- Unreasonable restrictions

#### **Historic Abuse**

- Fear, shame, humiliation, guilt
- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder
- Nightmares and flashbacks
- Distorted perception of self
- Chronic and diffuse pain
- Anxiety and depression
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse
- Tendency to being victimised by others

## **How to Respond to an Adult at Risk Wishing to Disclose Abuse**

### **Do:**

- Stay calm and try not to show shock;
- Listen carefully;
- Be sympathetic (I am sorry this has happened to you):
- Tell the person that:
  - They did the right thing to tell you;
  - You are treating the information seriously.
  - It was not their fault;
  - You are going to inform the appropriate person;
  - You will take steps to protect and support them.
- Write down what was said as soon as possible using the person's own words
- Report to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and possibly Adult Services.

## **Mental Capacity**

Within safeguarding of adults, mental capacity is whether or not someone has the capacity or ability to make decisions about themselves and their safety and well-being. If there are any concerns about the mental capacity of an adult at risk, always refer to your local authority Adult Social Care Services for advice.

## **What if an Adult at Risk Refuses Help?**

The mental capacity of the adult at risk is vital in deciding what should be done. All actions should be based on the assumption that the individual has the capacity and the right to make their own choices in relation to their personal safety and well-being. This includes



upholding their right to follow a course of action which others may deem unwise or eccentric, including staying in a situation of abuse. If the adult at risk doesn't want help it may still be necessary to inform the police or Adult Social Care Services in these circumstances:

- When the person lacks the mental capacity to make such a choice.
- When there is a risk of harm to others.
- In order to prevent a crime.

If at all unsure of whether or not to pass on information about abuse without permission, please contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Priest-in-Charge.

## **Responding to Allegations of Abuse for Children or Adults**

**Under no circumstances should a worker or volunteer or any unqualified person carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. They must follow procedures as set out below:**

- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse relating to children should report concerns as soon as possible to the **Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Priest-in-Charge**.
- The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse relating to adults at risk should report concerns as soon as possible to **Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Priest-in-Charge**.
- Whilst allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Priest-in-Charge, the absence of these people should not delay referral to **Children's or Adult Social Services, the Police or taking advice from CCPAS**.
- Where anyone is felt to be in immediate danger, the police should be called on 101 and the Safeguarding co-ordinator should be informed as soon as possible.
- Suspicions must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place

## **Allegations Against Workers**

### **ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE**

If an accusation is made against a worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff), the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or Priest-in-Charge will report the matter to the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, who would be the prime communicator with statutory agencies and ensure that there is close collaboration and co-operation between the church all agencies involved in the situation.

### **ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH ADULTS WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS.**

The Care Act places the duty upon **Adult Services** to investigate situations of harm to adults with care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to decide, not the church.

## **Management of Workers – Codes of Conduct**

As a Leadership we are committed to supporting all paid and volunteer workers and ensuring they receive support and supervision. All workers will be issued with a code of conduct towards children, young people and adults. The Leadership undertakes to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse Of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office and it is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour, which might allow a sexual relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues.

## **Pastoral Care**

### **Supporting those affected by abuse**

The Leadership is committed to offering pastoral care, working with statutory agencies as appropriate, and support to all those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the place of worship / organisation. Pastoral support will be offered in addition to signposting where appropriate to professional counselling agencies.

### **Working with offenders**

When someone attending the place of worship / organisation is known to have abused children, or is known to be a risk to adults in need of protection the Leadership will supervise the individual concerned and offer pastoral care, but in its safeguarding commitment to the protection of children and adults, set boundaries for that person which they will be expected to keep. This will include risk assessments and attendance agreements that are drawn up in consultation with statutory agencies.

## **Practice Guidelines**

As an organisation/place of worship working with children, young people and adults we wish to operate and promote good working practice. This will enable workers to run activities safely, develop good relationships and minimise the risk of false accusation.

### **Running Activities Safely**

As well as a general code of conduct for workers we also have specific good practice guidelines for running activities safely. These and the relevant consent forms will be reviewed as needed and circulated to all those working with children, young people and adults along with this policy. This includes required standards of behaviour in the use of mobile technology and social media as well as guidance regarding lone working.

## **Working in Partnership**

The diversity of organisations and settings means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have to develop clear guidelines in regards to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and have a partnership agreement for safeguarding.

## **Other users of our Buildings**

It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of the letting agreement will have their own policy that meets our safeguarding standards or that they will sign an agreement to abide by this policy.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children and adults and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding policy is just one means of promoting safeguarding.